Matrix Recruitment Group released findings of a survey last week that shows that 72% of the 700 workers polled now work outside of regular 9 to 5 hours. Nearly half of those (45.9%) work outside these hours every day.

The report states, “Workers believe the typical eight-hour day is outdated with over half (59.8%) checking work emails during their downtime. In fact, 66% of those who check emails outside of the office admitted to checking on a daily basis”.

Despite this, 72% do not receive overtime, and 68% do not receive time-in-lieu.

The survey questioned whether these out-of-hours commitments were a choice, or an obligation, and the results were split: “48.6% felt it was a choice while 51.4% felt it was an obligation”. Further, “Some respondents (11.4%) said it was the culture of their organisation to stay connected outside of work hours, while 16.4% blamed their smartphones.”

Scottish law establishing minimum pricing for alcohol was passed in 2012. However, it was met by a legal challenge, and consequently ruled to be at risk of breaching free trade laws.

Now, despite the ruling by the European Court of Justice, Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar TD, has announced that the Irish Government will go ahead with their plans to introduce a minimum pricing scheme themselves.

The Minister was encouraged by the fact that the ruling seemed to leave room for improvement on the proposal; if it can be proven to be more effective than other measures, he believes it will be accepted. Alcohol Action Ireland supported this by explaining that “[t]he ruling indicated minimum unit pricing for alcohol was not precluded by EU law if it was considered to be a better measure than taxation for reducing alcohol harm”.

Mr Varadkar commented, “I will be asking my officials to study this opinion and its implications as we wait for the final judgment of the court which is expected towards the end of the year.”

The Public Health (Alcohol) Bill, the Bill detailing provisions for minimum pricing, as well as other drink control measures, is expected in the coming weeks.
Pay terms public consultation launched by Nash

On Friday 4 September, The Minister for Business and Employment, Ged Nash TD announced a public consultation process on statutory pay terms for public bodies. Minister Nash proposes halving the current pay-time from 30 days after receiving an invoice to 15 days after receiving. The proposal is for public bodies, excluding commercial semi-state bodies.

Minister Nash said, “This is a further step in the Government’s commitment to combat late payment. Not getting paid on time poses a significant threat to the survival of businesses and their opportunity to expand and create jobs … One initiative we are currently looking at is reducing the statutory payment terms for public bodies from 30 days to 15 days.”

Further, “Improvement in payment performance across the public sector will assist cash-flow, help reduce business costs, and improve business confidence and competitiveness across the economy. It will also encourage and facilitate a drive in the change in our payment culture.”

Over 90% of Government payments made within 15-day period

On Friday 4 September, the Government agreed the Local Property Tax allocations for 2016. Press Release about the allocations stated that “80% of LPT will be retained locally to fund vital public services in 2016. The remaining 20% will be re-distributed to provide top-up funding to certain local authority areas that have lower property tax bases due to the variance in property values across the State.”

They have decided that, due to varying factors in decision-making, such as size and population, local authorities will at least retain the funding they received last year. Where income from LPT is higher, a small amount of money will be available to that authority for discretionary spending. “That portion will be an amount equal to 20% of the total expected LPT income for each local authority (before any decision to vary rates) or alternatively the full amount of the additional funding where that is less than the value of 20% of LPT income.”

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly TD spoke at the announcement: “These measures will provide certainty and balance to the finances of local Government and give councillors a greater say in how their authorities are funded, ensuring 80% of LPT is spent locally. All local authorities will be funded to their 2015 levels.”

He went on to say, “The Local Property Tax is designed to become a stable and sustainable source of funding and will enable local authorities to become more self-sufficient in terms of their funding. This will provide Government with more options in terms of other taxation and expenditure policies in our future budgets.”

PAI BLOG

Department of Finance’s Consultation on Taxing Expenses of Travel and Subsistence
read Tom Ferris’ article here

SIPTU proposal for new Social Solidarity Contribution to replace USC
read Ger Gibbons’ article here

Healthy Workplaces
read Kate O’Flaherty’s article here

Dynamic capability: A basis for sustainable performance?
read Dr Brian Harney’s article here

Government doesn’t take climate change seriously, can energy policy fill the gap?
read Oisin Coughlan’s article here

Low Pay Commission recommends an increase in the National Minimum Wage
read Tom Ferris’ article here
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| **SEANAD**                                               |
| **Tuesday 08 September**                                 |
| No Seanad session                                       |
| **Wednesday 09 September**                              |
| No Seanad Session                                       |
| **Thursday 10 September**                               |
| No Seanad Session                                       |

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<td><strong>Tuesday 08 September</strong></td>
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| Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 4.30 p.m.  
AGENDA: Private Meeting |
| **Wednesday 09 September**                              |
| Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 9.30 a.m.  
AGENDA: Witnesses before the Banking Inquiry  
Session A: 9.30 a.m.  
[Mr. Dennis O’Connor, Partner - Advisory Services, PWC and Mr. Aidan Walsh, Partner - Advisory Services, PWC];  
Session B: 11.30 a.m.  
[Mr. Alan Ahearne, former Special Advisor to the late Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Lenihan T.D.];  
Session C: 2.30 p.m.  
[Mr. Alan Gray, former board member, Central Bank of Ireland]; and  
Session D: 4.30 p.m.  
[Mr. Tom Browne, former Director, Anglo Irish Bank] |
| **Thursday 10 September**                               |
| Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint) CR1, LH 2000 9 a.m.  
AGENDA: Witnesses before the Banking Inquiry  
Session A: 9 a.m.  
[Mr. Ajai Chopra, former Deputy Director, IMF];  
Session B: 11.45 a.m.  
[Mr. Marco Buti, European Commission]; and  
Session C: 2.30 p.m.  
[Mr. Michael Noonan T.D., Minister for Finance] |
Public Affairs Ireland

Annual Public Procurement Conference

“Smart” Public Procurement

Wednesday, September 30th, 2015
9am to 1pm
Westin Hotel, Dublin 2

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