PMDS overhaul

PMDS, the performance management system employed by the civil service, underwent review and overhaul in 2013. Now, it has been proposed that it should be revamped once again. This comes with the publication of figures that showed that no more than 1% of civil servants were deemed to have not met their requirements and thus would not be awarded pay increments.

In 2014, 148 workers (of over 30,000) did not make the grade, according to the Sunday Business Post. Salary increment increases are offered to those achieve three or more marks out of five, as judged by their managers. These increments are withheld where workers do not meet the requirements.

Several sources have stated that the system may be too complicated, or is ineffective as it stands. As of this year, a worker’s performance will either be classified as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”. Those in the latter category will face pay being withheld.

This proposed change was confirmed by a spokesperson for Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin TD.

Refugee reception sites announced

The 26 locations that will play host to 4,000 incoming refugees have been confirmed by Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald TD.

Out of 90 potential sites, 26 have been chosen in the following areas: Arklow, Ballina, Carlow, Carrickmacross, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar, Cavan, Cork, four local authority areas of Dublin, Ennis, Kilkenny, Killarney, Limerick, Monaghan, Mullingar, Naas, Portlaoise, Roscommon, Sligo, Thurles, Tralee, Tullamore, and Waterford. On these sites, initial reception centres will be established. Refugees will stay here for up to 10 weeks. From there, they will move on to more permanent housing.

Thus far, 129 refugees have come into the country from Jordan and Lebanon. A further 62 were due in from Syria in the past few weeks. The reception centre for the first of our refugees has already been established at the Hazel Hotel in Kildare.

The Minister assured that all of Ireland’s refugee set-ups will be to a certain standard, in comparison to the “tented villages” and “school gymnasiums” being employed in other countries.
Policing Authority established

The Garda Authority has been officially established and is set to become operational. Anne Ferris TD made a statement upon the establishment. She ensured that “The Policing Authority will ensure an independent and transparent process of oversight and governance of policing in Ireland.”

The new policing authority will: oversee policing services, be involved in key appointments within the Gardaí, prepare and present a three-year National Policing Plan, approve the annual Policing Implementation Plan that is submitted by the commissioner, and draft a Code of Ethics for An Garda Síochána.

Ferris has said that this authority will have “a high level of political independence”.

The legislation that provided for the establishment of the Policing Authority was published in May 2015 – the Garda Síochána (Policing Authority and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015.

Ms Josephine Feehily was nominated, at that time, as the first Chairperson-designate for the Policing Authority.

Budget 2016’s wage adjustments come into effect

The new Minimum Wage rate of €9.15/h has now come into effect. This rate increased from €8.65/h last year, and was raised in Budget 2016 in accordance with a recommendation made by the Low Pay Commission. It is estimated that 124,000 workers will benefit from this increase.

Speaking about the increase last Friday, January 1, Minister for Business and Employment, Ged Nash TD noted, “Alongside USC and PRSI cuts announced in the budget a single person working full-time on the minimum wage will see an annual boost to their income of €708 per annum or €14 a week. While a married couple with a single income will be €911 better off per year, or have €18 euro a week extra in their pockets.”

To counteract this change, employer PRSI will also be adjusted to ensure the increased PRSI burden doesn’t fall on the employers paying minimum wage. Those on salaries will also notice a difference in their wage packets, as the adjustments made to tax credits and USC will also impact them.

The news that 97% of employers are planning to raise employee pay in 2016, as reported in the Salary Movement Report undertaken by Mercer, adds to the good news for workers.
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This week’s Committee Meetings

Parliamentary Committees Adjourned until January 2016