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# INOUE Submission to Department of Public Expenditure and Reform: Public Services 2020 Consultation

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on their consultation on *Public Services 2020*.

*“The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and Trade Unions. The INOU represents and defends the rights and interests of those who want decent employment and cannot obtain it. We promote and campaign for policies to achieve full employment for all. We also campaign for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependents. The INOU is an anti-sectarian, anti-racist, non-party political organisation which promotes equality of opportunity within society.”*  
(INOUE Mission Statement)

The organisation has over 215 affiliated organisations and 2,600 individual members. We work at the local and national level on issues affecting unemployed people through the provision of training and welfare rights information services; analysis of Government policies and related advocacy work; and working with a wide range of other organisations on issues of common concern.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES 2020 CONSULTATION**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform’s Public Services 2020 Consultation identified three overall headings and within each of these headings up to twenty questions. The INOU has used these questions to form the basis of our submission and has sought to respond to each one. The input into this submission is informed by the organisation’s project work exploring the impact of Ireland’s reconfigured employment services on unemployed people; the issues that arise in the course of the work of the organisation’s Training Unit and Welfare to Work Section; engagement with our individual members and affiliated organisations; and our work with colleagues in the community and voluntary sector on a range of socio-economic, social inclusion and equality issues.

1. Delivering for our Public: Questions 1-7
2. Innovating for our future: Questions 8-12
3. Developing our People and Organisations: Questions 13-20

No.	DPER Consultation Document Headings	DPER Consultation Document Questions	INOUE Submission
1	Drive efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you have any views on how we could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Public Services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be person centred.</li> <li>▪ Be pro-active and supportive.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the full &amp; pro-active provision of information.</li> <li>▪ Ensure flexibility in the system to facilitate participation.</li> <li>▪ Deliver good support services.</li> <li>▪ Ensure integrated provision within and across relevant Departments, Agencies, and organisations on the ground.</li> <li>▪ Identify clear pathways from where the person is now to where ultimately they wish to go.</li> <li>▪ Commit to and deliver on an inclusive service and identify how the requirements of 'public sector duty' will be met.</li> <li>▪ Provide the proper resources to deliver on such services.</li> </ul>
2	Accelerate digital delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is your experience of our online Public Services?</li> <li>▪ Do you have ideas about how we could improve our online services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feedback to the organisation is mixed, some people find it very useful, but find the requirement for some services of two email addresses unnecessary and disabling requirement.</li> <li>▪ Others have found the potential development useful, but its actual roll-out less than helpful and ultimately problematic.</li> <li>▪ Others do not have access to the internet, or are not comfortable using such facilities and feel services are becoming less friendly and relevant for them.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the IT does work properly, that accessing it is as user friendly as possible, that</li> </ul>

			<p>requirements are not put in place that ultimately act as a barrier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to ensure that the experience with key platforms like Jobs Ireland website are not repeated.</li> <li>▪ Need to ensure that on-line services are simple to understand and easy to use.</li> <li>▪ Need for additional measures to address digital literacy amongst general population.</li> </ul>
3	Optimise the use of data to provide services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can we use data better to deliver more effective Public Services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrate that the better use of data actually leads to better services, and that it is not being used, nor will it be used, to limit or control access.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate that feedback from the ground, from groups and individuals working on and living with particular issues, is not only heard but acted upon to improve public services.</li> </ul>
4	Professionalise customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have you experienced positive and professional customer service from Public Services?</li> <li>▪ What was it about your experience that was positive?</li> <li>▪ Or, was your experience less than positive?</li> <li>▪ How can we improve?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Employment Service has developed expertise in supporting people who are longer-term unemployed.</li> <li>▪ LES ethos of treating the individual with empathy and respect seen as positive aspect.</li> <li>▪ Lack of choice about whether or not the unemployed person referred to the service can engage with it or not.</li> <li>▪ Informed choice and supported self-referral must be at the heart of the Employment Service model, whereby unemployed people are supported to achieve their preferred future work options.</li> <li>▪ Good inter-agency working is an important component in ensuring the delivery of an effective public employment service.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure unemployed people have access to the widest range of relevant local services links should be further developed.</li> <li>▪ Employment Services should be available to all people of working age regardless of their social welfare payment or employment status.</li> <li>▪ Ensure provision of on-going customer service training particularly for front-line customer facing roles.</li> </ul>
5	Make services more accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you think we can make our Public Services more accessible to all?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commit to and deliver on an inclusive service and identify how the requirements of 'public sector duty' will be met.</li> <li>▪ Be person centred.</li> <li>▪ Be pro-active and supportive.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the full &amp; pro-active provision of information.</li> <li>▪ Ensure flexibility in the system to facilitate participation.</li> <li>▪ Deliver good support services.</li> <li>▪ Build such an approach into the design and delivery of services.</li> </ul>
6	Engage more with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What ideas do you have for greater engagement between Public Services organisations and citizens?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current consultation is a good example.</li> <li>▪ Focus groups on particular issues would also be helpful, but it would be essential that such spaces are used to facilitate people to debate the issues constructively.</li> <li>▪ On-going consultative mechanisms, such as ideas boxes on the Department's website.</li> <li>▪ Competitions amongst, for example, schools and youth groups, which would provide young people with an opportunity to learn about, debate and influence public policy and service delivery.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide people with good information so that they can engage properly.</li> <li>▪ Respond to public engagements so people can see the impact or otherwise their engagement had, and explain to people why certain courses of action were and were not taken.</li> </ul>
7	Significantly improve communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you have suggestions about how we can communicate better?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All communication to individuals should be clear and unambiguous as to what is expected of and on offer to the recipient.</li> <li>▪ Must be communicated in a constructive and non-threatening manner.</li> <li>▪ Where a 'contract' is being signed e.g. DSP's 'Record of Mutual Commitments', there must be: clarity as to range of supports on offer; signed by both parties; and copy given to unemployed person.</li> <li>▪ Significant need for greater information and signposting when people become, for example, unemployed and when they start to use / referred to employment services.</li> <li>▪ 'Letters of invitation' should promote positive benefits of engaging with a particular service and provide clear information on what it is exactly and what is available.</li> <li>▪ Letters / correspondence should always be signed, dated and include contact details for a person to respond to or raise queries; include all relevant information.</li> <li>▪ By ensuring that all communications are easy to understand and available in different formats.</li> <li>▪ By ensuring that key information on welfare to work transitions are communicated in a consistent and timely manner to jobseekers.</li> </ul>

8	Establish a Public Service Innovation Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What Public Services innovations are you aware of in Ireland or elsewhere?</li> <li>▪ Do you have examples of innovation in your organisation or your community?</li> <li>▪ Do you have ideas on particular systems or services that could be done better?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The INOU is aware of project work that has made inroads into addressing challenges facing communities experience long-term unemployment.</li> <li>▪ Amongst the key learning from these projects were the following important aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ A clear focus and vision.</li> <li>♦ Setting of and meeting of targets.</li> <li>♦ Using a positive and supportive client-centred approach.</li> <li>♦ Good quality career advice – ongoing.</li> <li>♦ Quality offers and wrap around support</li> <li>♦ Local, innovative, flexible responses and a willingness to take a risk.</li> <li>♦ An interagency / partnership approach – with a lead organisation driving the process.</li> <li>♦ The active involvement of a key employer; and local community organisations and programmes.</li> <li>♦ Local involvement including surveying and analysing local people’s training needs and working preferences.</li> <li>♦ Employer Engagement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
9	Strengthen whole-of-Government collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What improvements do you think we could make to coordinate and collaborate more across the Public Service?</li> <li>▪ Do you have ideas about how we could improve our online services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistency across policy making and implementation.</li> <li>▪ A clear focus and vision.</li> <li>▪ Setting of and meeting of targets.</li> <li>▪ Using a positive and supportive client-centred approach.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that broadband provision is adequate to support on-line services; assist people through practical supports to be able to use their resources; support public frontline facing</li> </ul>

			<p>organisations and community based ones to be able to increase access to this services through their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The INOU has called for an integrated, inter-agency and inter-departmental response to large scale local and regional job announcements that would include early engagement with the employer on the nature of the jobs being created and the development of an integrated response involving the employment services and education and training providers with a view to ensuring that unemployed people are supported to access the jobs being created.</li> </ul>
10	Embed programme and project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you think programmes are delivered and projects carried out well by the Public Service?</li> <li>▪ Where is it carried out well?</li> <li>▪ Can we learn from best practice?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Varies.</li> <li>▪ Recent consultation with Community Employment scheme sponsors regarding latest changes was carried out well.</li> <li>▪ Good practise of “matching clients to programmes” should also use human resources as well as computer-generated referrals. In the recent Jobs Ireland difficulties Intreo, LES and CE / other project supervisors worked together to match clients onto and off projects providing better results for the community, the project and for client progression.</li> <li>▪ More coherent information provided to users/clients about the range of programmes potentially available to them.</li> <li>▪ In terms of employment programmes, there is a need for on-going review and evaluation to ensure that the programmes are designed and are being delivered in ways that optimise positive outcomes for unemployed people.</li> </ul>



11	Prioritise evidence and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can we measure the real impact of services we deliver?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The development of a better understanding across all elements of policy making and delivery of the need for good analysis; the setting of good targets; the importance of collecting good data on service delivery; clear communication on its importance; visible and timely implementation; constructive critique and timely re-design where required.</li> <li>▪ An acknowledgement that this should be a continuous cycle leading to on-going improvements i.e. people must see this as a means to an end, not an end in itself.</li> <li>▪ By conducting more and better impact assessments – directly with service users.</li> <li>▪ By ensuring that the indicators used for measuring impact are relevant and appropriate.</li> </ul>
12	Build strategic planning capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What important long-term challenges do you think the Public Service needs to prepare for?</li> <li>▪ What should our priorities be in relation to strategic planning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-going change in the composition of Irish society – this will necessitate the development and delivery of services in ways that are relevant and appropriate to a culturally diverse country – including ensuring that the composition of the state’s workforce is representative of the community it serves.</li> <li>▪ The capacity to assess Ireland’s economic, social and environmental needs; to respond to these in an inclusive, equitable and sustainable manner; and the ability to communicate this in a manner that people can relate to and engage with, and believe their contribution will be respected.</li> <li>▪ The development of a better understanding across all elements of policy making and delivery of the need for good analysis; the setting of good targets; the importance of collecting good data on service delivery; clear communication on its importance;</li> </ul>

13	Embed strategic human resources management in the Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What improvements do you think we can make to ensure strategic HRM is meeting the needs of the Public Service?</li> </ul>	<p>visible and timely implementation; constructive critique and timely re-design where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By developing a dedicated and professional Human Resource Management function within the relevant state bodies and agencies, staffed by specialist Human Resources Management and Development personnel.</li> <li>▪ By creating a dedicated Human Resource Management Career Development pathway within the public service.</li> <li>▪ Seek candidates from private and community sectors in hiring from highest level down.</li> <li>▪ Plan and reward collaboration between departments in the Public Service.</li> <li>▪ Plan and reward collaboration between relevant staff within the department and their counterparts in projects will create more innovation, effectiveness and job satisfaction for public service.</li> </ul>
14	Mainstream strategic workforce planning in the Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What important challenges and opportunities do you think strategic workforce planning could help the Public Service meet?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Such planning will be critical in ensuring that the public service has access to staff who have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the roles that are necessary for the delivery of a modern and efficient public service.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the right staff are in the right job: that people feel their skills and interests are being acknowledged, and they are being given the opportunity to make the most out of their job and improve their career prospects.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that all staff are aware of the public services key values and that they are supported to incorporate them into their work.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It takes time to develop and provide person centred services; it takes resources to ensure public services are pro-active and supportive; and that full accurate information is provided. This time must be taken and staff must feel that they can take the time required to do their jobs well.</li> <li>▪ Greater and appropriate flexibility in the system is required, not only to facilitate participation by service users, but also to support staff to manage their work life balance.</li> <li>▪ An acknowledgement and appreciation of the importance of integrated provision within and across Government Departments and Agencies, community and voluntary sector organisations and other service providers is required.</li> <li>▪ An acknowledgement and appreciation of the importance of targets, but these must be an aid to the work and not undermine it or integrated provision.</li> <li>▪ Incorporating Public Sector Duty into public and civil servants work in a constructive and productive manner.</li> <li>▪ Creating the skills and knowledge to create inclusive policy design &amp; delivery.</li> </ul>
15	Build capability and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What skills do you think should be a priority for the Public Services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical thinking; communication; organisational skills; inter-personal skills, team work; financial management; listening skills; the ability to empathise with people and their circumstances.</li> <li>▪ An ability to collaborate; innovation; and use creative problem solving.</li> </ul>
16	Strengthen performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you think that having performance management will help deliver better quality public services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generally yes – however, there is a need to ensure that the people delivering a service are the most appropriate people to deliver that service.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It would also be important that it is a system that is designed for public services, one that acknowledges the importance of the ethos of good public service provision, and that time and patience required to meet the needs of many citizens' needs.</li> </ul>
17	Promote equality, diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you think the Public Service is sufficiently representative of our population?</li> <li>▪ What improvements could we make?</li> <li>▪ How can we better fulfil our public-sector duty to promote human rights and equality and prevent discrimination both for our customers and our staff?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No - on-going change in the composition of Irish society will necessitate the development and delivery of services in ways that are relevant and appropriate to a culturally diverse country – including ensuring that the composition of the state's workforce is representative of the community it serves. This will necessitate the adoption of positive action policies, procedures and practices which may necessitate a significant overhaul of the criteria that the state currently uses for recruitment to staff positions.</li> <li>▪ Targeted employment drives including developmental supports that create the opportunities for under-represented populations to successfully apply for public service employment.</li> <li>▪ Meeting of the targets set for people with disabilities and for this to be filled, and exceeded, by new recruitment.</li> <li>▪ Incorporate Public Sector Duty into public and civil servants daily work in a constructive and productive manner, so that staff realise its importance and strive to deliver on it to create a better workplace and equitable and inclusive services.</li> </ul>
18	Articulate Public Service vision and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What do you think our Public Service Vision should be?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be person centred.</li> <li>▪ Be pro-active and supportive.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you see as the most important Public Service values?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the full &amp; pro-active provision of information.</li> <li>Ensure flexibility in the system to facilitate participation.</li> <li>Deliver good support services.</li> <li>Ensure integrated provision within and across relevant Departments, Agencies, and organisations on the ground.</li> <li>Identify clear pathways from where the person is now to where ultimately they wish to go.</li> <li>Commit to and deliver on an inclusive service and identify how the requirements of 'public sector duty' will be met.</li> <li>Provide the best possible public services consistent with the financial resources available to the state.</li> <li>Openness, informative, communicative, customer focused, integrity, honesty, equality, inclusion.</li> </ul>
19	Increase employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have ideas about how we could engage more with and listen better to our employees?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff training and development, which encourages promotion both within the public service and beyond the public service, could foster trust that the employer is interested in the employee's career goals.</li> <li>Valuing "saving" resources such as money, time or effort must come second to valuing communication ideas or concern or these ideas or concerns will not be articulated.</li> </ul>
20	Review Public Service culture and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there improvements Public Service organisations can make to improve their organisational culture?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From an unemployed perspective, there is a need for the Department of Social Protection to address perceptions that there is a culture of suspicion and a lack of trust in relation to their engagement with some unemployed people.</li> <li>Overall there is a need to move beyond a culture of containment and control to one that strives to</li> </ul>

enable people reach their full potential and so it actually:

- ♦ Be person centred.
- ♦ Be pro-active and supportive.
- ♦ Ensure the full & pro-active provision of information.
- ♦ Ensure flexibility in the system to facilitate participation.
- ♦ Deliver good support services.
- ♦ Ensure integrated provision within and across relevant Departments, Agencies, and organisations on the ground.
- ♦ Identify clear pathways from where the person is now to where ultimately they wish to go.
- ♦ Commit to and deliver on an inclusive service and identify how the requirements of 'public sector duty' will be met.
- ♦ Provide the proper resources to deliver on such services.

*Thank you for your time and consideration*

