

Department of Finance – Decentralisation Discussion Paper
Proposals on Professional and Technical Promotion

3 February 2006

Introduction

1. During the implementation phase of the Decentralisation Programme, Civil Service promotion arrangements must ensure that decentralising Departments, offices and business units have built up sufficient trained staff able to work in the new locations, with minimum disruption to service levels and in a way that allows Departmental managements discharge their core functions. In the absence of interdepartmental competitions and interdepartmental mobility for professional and technical grades, it is recognised that different arrangements will have to apply for such grades. In order to apply these principles in a manner which is consistent with arrangements for general service grades, the Department of Finance proposes the following arrangements for professional and technical grades.

2. Every effort will be made by Departments/Offices to expedite the transfer of staff to decentralising functions in the first instance. Where staff who do not wish to relocate cannot be accommodated in their current Department/Office, every effort will be made by that Department/Office to ensure that they are given the option to transfer to a Dublin based post in another Department/Office, insofar as is practicable, not later than 52 weeks in advance of the scheduled relocation. It is understood that in such cases while formal transfer will take place on an officer exercising the option to transfer, actual transfer may be deferred on an agreed basis between the Departments/Offices concerned.

Proposed Arrangements

3. (i) Consistent with similar arrangements for general service grades, with effect from the date of this agreement, 40% of promotion posts, rising to 50% with effect from 1 January 2007, in a Department/Office which is decentralising will be made on the basis of the appointee making a commitment in writing to move to relocate with that Department/Office.

(ii) Consistent with similar arrangements for general service grades, in a Department/Office which is decentralising in part, from 52 weeks before a decentralisation move is due to take place, 70% of all promotions in the Department concerned, rising to 75% with effect from 1 January 2007, will be made on the basis of a written commitment by promotees to relocate with that Department;

(iii) Consistent with similar arrangements for general service grades, in a Department/Office which is decentralising in its entirety, from 52 weeks before decentralisation is due to take place, all promotions in the Department/Office concerned will be made on the basis of a written commitment by promotees to relocate with that Department/Office.

(iv) The first promotion in the promotion sequence in each Department / Office will fall within the 40% of promotions which carry a commitment to relocate with that Department/Office.

(v) Where Departments/Offices are due to decentralise in phases it is envisaged that the above arrangements at (i) to (iii) will apply. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to consider specific arrangements in the light of the pace of Decentralisation and the local needs of individual Departments. Any such arrangements will be discussed with the Staff Side. These discussions will examine whether the timing or proportions set out in the above arrangements require any adjustment in the light of the scale of business units relocating and the scheduling of the particular phases.

4. Where an officer is promoted into a higher grade and the promotion in question is one where a commitment to relocate is not required, it is accepted that the officer will be flexible in his/her working arrangements to ensure that the business needs of the organisation and the supervisory obligations to other team members are fully satisfied in the context of that organisation's move to a decentralised location. Any such arrangements will be a matter for agreement between local management in each Department/Office and the officers concerned in advance of the finalisation of the promotion.

5. Any further promotion which an officer covered by paragraph 4 may be offered will be on the basis of the appointee making a commitment to relocate.

6. The date for triggering the above 52 week periods will be agreed centrally at the General Council Sub-Committee on Decentralisation on foot of information from OPW on the progress of the building programme for each location.

Arrangements for Interdepartmental and Cross Stream Promotions

7. In accordance with the terms of *Sustaining Progress*, it is intended to bring forward proposals for the filling of Principal and equivalent level posts in the administrative, professional and technical grades on an interdepartmental cross stream reciprocal basis (para. 22.17(iii)) and for interdepartmental competition(s) for like professional and technical grades (para. 22.17(iv)). These arrangements will be reviewed in light of any agreements reached on these issues.

Recruitment

8. As with general service grades, all recruitment to posts that are decentralising will be on the basis of the successful candidate giving a written commitment to relocate with the Department/Office concerned.

Monitoring and Review

9. All of the above arrangements will be subject to a regular ongoing review – from the commencement of these arrangements - to ensure that sufficient progress is being made towards the early implementation of the Decentralisation programme. This agreement will be formally reviewed before 1 March 2007 with a view to determining arrangements for the next phase of Decentralisation. A review of these arrangements can be undertaken before this date to deal with issues which may arise for particular grades in particular locations. In particular, if agreements are reached on cross stream and interdepartmental promotions in the context of commitments under *Sustaining Progress* or any successor agreement these arrangements will be re-examined.