

Public service numbers to hit 426,500 in 'full-time' equivalents

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**Forecast numbers of public servants for 2025 are almost 426,500 in full-time equivalent (FTE) terms, the "highest level ever of employment" in the public service, according to the Department of Public Expenditure, NPD and Reform.**

The projection, first referred to in Budget 2025, represents an increase of 19,200 on the estimated 2024 provision, according to the 'Minister's Brief' for new DPER Minister, Jack Chambers. Public Service numbers are managed through overall pay levels set within the budget process.

"Delegated sanction" for the management of staff numbers has been the policy in place for the management of public service staff numbers since 2015, with the "overarching condition of delegated sanction" being that the full cost of each post is met from within the approved pay ceiling.

The brief says the policy provides Offices and Departments "with flexibility to meet identified business needs subject to remaining within overall pay ceilings and the relevant legislation, circulars and other policies".

It further notes that "delegated sanction" was revised in 2024 to extend to grades at Principal Officer higher level and equivalent grades, and Assistant Secretary level from October 1, 2024, to fill vacancies in existing posts.

New posts above Principal Officer level and changes to the job specification and/or terms and conditions of previously sanctioned posts, it says, "continue to require the prior, explicit consent of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform".

The brief adds that new and existing CEO/Heads of Office positions, which are graded above PO standard level continue to require prior sanction from DPER.