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We are pleased to welcome you to issue 6 of the ETB/SOLAS Project Management Office (PMO) newsletter. For this issue we will focus on some key areas where important developments have taken place or are planned for the Autumn.

As always if you would like to give feedback please email  
[etbsolas\\_pmo@education.gov.ie](mailto:etbsolas_pmo@education.gov.ie).

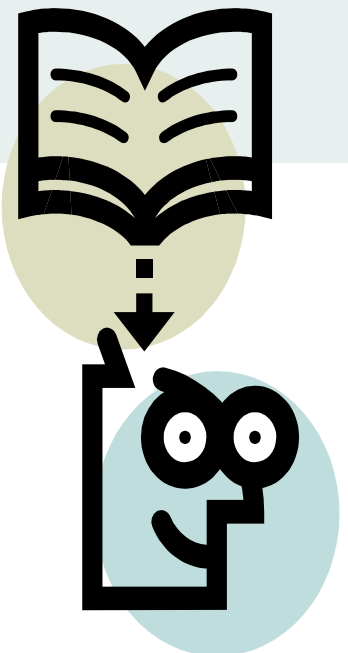
### People

Responsibility for over 800 SOLAS staff working in Training Centres rests with ETBs since the 1st July 2014. As previously mentioned, as a result of engagement with the staff representatives of SOLAS staff a position paper was agreed in April 2014.

The position paper outlined additional separate processes to be progressed and concluded. Meetings took place on the application of the PCW agreement and the access to promotional posts in the ETB sector over the summer months. The access to promotional posts document was agreed and issued to all parties on the 1st October, 2014. Following a number of meetings the Management side put forward a proposal to ensure that the method for the application of the PCW agreement would continue to apply in a fair and consistent manner to the transferred SOLAS staff. This proposal is currently being considered by the staff side.



The review of HR Policies has now commenced. The first meeting with all stake holders is scheduled for the 23rd October. Some preliminary work will be conducted in advance of this meeting identifying the current SOLAS policies and comparing them to policies that exist in the ETB sector. The first meeting will be used to go through all categories and agree a mechanism to review those policies that require further discussion.



# PMO PROJECTS UPDATE

## ETB CORE STABILISATION PROJECT

The Core stabilisation project involving 5 ETBs (Cork, Donegal, Dublin Dun Laoghaire, Limerick Clare and Waterford Wexford) continued to make progress over the summer months. Some challenges to timeframes and deadlines due to systems issues had to be overcome in partnership with the supplier. Cork ETB completed User acceptance testing in September, and parallel payroll runs in early October and have gone live on the new infrastructure and system since October 9th. User training and test preparatory work is to commence in Dublin Dun Laoghaire and Waterford Wexford ETBs shortly with a view to continued roll out to the remaining ETBs in Donegal, Limerick Clare ETBs for project completion in early 2015.

## ETB Finance Shared Services Project

This project involves the preparation of an ETB Finance baseline report, the identification of possible viable shared service options, and a business case for a recommended solution.

A request for tender for external assistance for the business case has taken place and the successful tenderer has been chosen. A Project steering group will be formed and the project team to oversee this project is being established. Expressions of interest are currently sought from the ETB sector for a process lead and candidates will be interviewed for the Project Manager post in November.

## ICT Connectivity

ICT inter office connectivity and high speed broadband has been long awaited in the ETB sector. The benefit of such connections between head offices and sub offices will enhance the sharing of work and overall connectedness in ETBs. Full connections are expected in Cavan Monaghan and Waterford Wexford before the end of October with Donegal connected by mid November.

Kerry and Limerick Clare ETBs are progressing through local access issues.



## Transfer of SOLAS training centres

The remainder of SOLAS training centres successfully transferred on the 1st of July. The success of the transfer was significantly influenced by the work of the Transfer Implementation Group chaired by Mr. Shaun Purcell, CE Donegal ETB and supports provided by SOLAS and ETBs in getting this complex piece of work achieved.

### **Transitional supports**

On going engagement is taking place with SOLAS and ETB management in relation to the planning of future management and delivery of transitional supports. The PMO met with representatives of SOLAS and ETBs in July and a subgroup will be established to explore the models of support. The first meeting of this group is expected to take place in late October when all nominations to the group have been received.

### **Non-Training Centre ETBs**

On foot of engagement between all ETBs currently providing training services with those not providing training in their areas and SOLAS, a proposal has been drafted for consideration by the PMO. This proposal was discussed at the ETB/SOLAS Programme Board meeting on the 7th October and was approved. The PMO will be writing to ETBI shortly in relation to this.

# ETB/SOLAS Payroll Shared Services project

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 2014 a project was undertaken by the ETB sector and the Department of Education & Skills working together to evaluate the potential for a *New Payroll Shared Services Centre*. Payroll was selected as the first function to be assessed for shared services compatibility based on the needs of the sector to have a uniform, stable, fit for purpose and future proofed payroll service. The aim of this project is to assess the feasibility of consolidating ETB payroll functions into a shared services environment under a single governance structure. Payroll shared services in the ETB sector would involve using a common set of standards, policies and procedures on a single technology platform employing a continuous improvement approach to leverage payroll expertise and reduce cost to the taxpayer. Shared Services differs from centralised services as it is customer focused with an emphasis on continuous improvement by constant measurement and reporting.

## THE STEERING GROUP

A project steering group was established in February 2014 and was responsible for the overall management, monitoring and delivery of a Business Case report for payroll shared services, with responsibility for making strategic decisions to ensure the delivery of the project to acceptable standards.

What is a shared services centre?



Shared services relates to the consolidation of administrative functions such as Payroll, HR, Finance and ICT. Shared Services refers to the provision of a service by one part of the sector, where that service had previously been found in more than one part of the sector. The funding and resourcing of the service is then “shared” and the single centre effectively becomes an internal service provider.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Project Steering Group		
Member	Position	Organisation
Seán Ashe ( <i>Chair</i> )	Chief Executive	Kildare and Wicklow ETB
Ruth Carmody	Assistant Secretary General	Department of Education & Skills
Martin O’Brien	Chief Executive	Cavan and Monaghan ETB
Martin Clohessy	Head of Finance	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB
Tina McCarthy	Human Resources	City of Dublin ETB
Marion Edwards	Shared Services Advisor	Department of Education & Skills
Shane Mohan	Consulting Partner	Deloitte Consulting

## THE PROJECT TEAM

A full time payroll shared services project team made up of 3 staff members from the ETB sector was created. The project was initially managed by a Principal Officer in the Department of Education and Skills and later by external expert assistance.



### THE 4 OPERATING MODELS OPTIONS EVALUATED IN THE BUSINESS CASE WERE:

**Option 1 – ‘As-Is’ Payroll Model**, which is a continuation of the existing decentralised and devolved model of payroll.

**Option 2 – DES Athlone Payroll Centre**, which would involve the ETB payroll operations moving to the existing payroll centre operated by the DES in Athlone.

**Option 3 – Develop a new Shared Services Centre**, which involves establishment of a single Shared Services Centre with a single governance structure where each ETB is aligned to one single payroll system in a single location.

**Option 4 – Outsource Provider**, which would involve the transition of payroll processes to an external outsourcing provider.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

The business case recommended a **New Payroll Shared Services Centre** (Option 3) be established, operating from a single location in the south/west Dublin region, with a single governance structure, common standard design and service level agreements with each client ETB. Payroll shared services will be underpinned by improved standardised processes, a performance driven culture and the potential for on-going service improvements. The Business Case also concluded that a multifunctional Shared Service Centre was preferable and that this will be explored further as part of the Finance Shared Service project.



### What is a business case?

A business case aims to capture the reasoning for initiating a project. It illustrates the potential results and consequences of taking a course of action. It evaluates these options in terms of costs, benefits and risks. In essence, the business case is a tool to help make better decisions.



The business case is currently progressing through Government approval procedures. Approval will result in funding being made available for project implementation. The implementation phase is expected to be completed within a 3 year period with a successful implementation seeing all 16 ETBs sharing a payroll shared services centre.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The project team will embark on an inclusive approach to communicating the project implementation progress over the duration of the project. A programme of active engagement with ETBs will take place to connect with your ETB via newsletters, CEO updates and briefings.

