

Workplace Relations Commission

Work Programme 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Work Programme Requirement.....	1
Functions of the WRC.....	1
Staffing of the WRC.....	2
Review of Work Programme 2023.....	3
<i>Key Priorities for 2023</i>	3
<i>Key Achievements</i>	3
Work Programme 2024.....	7
WRC Strategy Statement 2022-2024.....	7
<i>Resilience and Continuity</i>	7
<i>Continuous Improvement</i>	7
<i>Assisting Adaptability</i>	7
Work Programme 2024: Key Goals.....	9
Key Objectives and Outcomes 2024.....	15
<i>Conciliation, Advisory and Mediation Services</i>	15
<i>Adjudication Service</i>	16
<i>Inspection and Enforcement Services</i>	18
<i>Information and Customer Services</i>	19
<i>Legal Affairs</i>	21
<i>Corporate Affairs, Strategic Direction and Digital Services</i>	22

Work Programme 2024

Section One

Work Programme Requirement

The Workplace Relations Act 2015 (the Act) provides that the Board of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) submit to the Minister a plan of the work (Work Programme) the WRC intends to carry out in the year to which the activity relates. While the Work Programme reviews the previous year's Programme, a more detailed breakdown of the WRC activities for any given year is contained in the relevant Annual Report.

Functions of the WRC

The WRC plays a vital role in Irish society in delivering fair and compliant workplaces and the non-discriminatory delivery of services.

The central mission of the WRC relates to the maintenance and improvement of workplace relations generally, assisting parties resolve differences, ensuring adherence to certain statutory employment standards and adjudicating on employment, industrial relations, equality claims and where people feel they have been discriminated against in the delivery of services.

In this regard, the services of the WRC comprise:

- Conciliating collective disputes,
- Mediating and adjudicating individual disputes,
- Providing information on statutory employment rights,
- Furthering compliance with statutory employment rights by way of inspection and, where necessary, pursuit of enforcement, and
- Improving workplace relations generally through information provision, training and company-specific advisory services.

Staffing of the WRC

The WRC is staffed by over 200 permanent employees who are civil servants and part of the staffing complement of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. These staff are supplemented by over 40 Adjudication Officers who are contracted by the Minister to assist the Adjudication Service on a case-by-case basis.

Section Two

Review of Work Programme 2023¹

Key Priorities for 2023

The WRC continued to play a vital role in delivering all core services in a fair and consistent manner throughout 2023. This contribution has been particularly significant in circumstances where a changed work environment emerged post Covid-19 whilst acknowledging that Covid-19 has not been eliminated. Most front facing services returned to face-to-face engagement with the option to provide virtual interactions where required. In general, most services were delivered beyond pre-covid levels. This was welcomed by WRC stakeholders.

Significant progress has been made in achieving the goals set out in the Work Programme for 2023.

Key Achievements

Over the year:

- Call volumes managed by staff of the WRC information line exceeded 60,000 – a rise of 6% on 2022, website visits increased by 39%, and some 5,200 complaints were received comprising almost 11,500 specific complaints.
- The Adjudication Service has increased the volume of hearings both scheduled and held during the year by approximately 20% with 4,067 hearings held in 2023 to end October 2023 compared with 3,401 held for the same period in 2022.
- The total number of postponement requests to the end of October 2023 are 2,448 of which 1,539 (62%) were approved, 891 (36%) declined and 58 (2%) have no decision made yet due to ongoing party communication. We saw an increase in applications being submitted under Postponement Process 1 in October at 20%. Postponement Process 1 refers to Early applications made with the Consent of Both Parties. Applications received by the WRC within 5 working days from the date of the hearing notification letter, accompanied by the written consent of the other party, are automatically granted. The WRC are encouraging parties and

¹ Data based on end-October outputs

representatives to make more active and advanced use of Postponement Process 1.

- A trend that was identified in the 2022 WRC Annual Report was a significant increase in the number of “multiples” being submitted for adjudication. “Multiples” are groups of complaints where the same respondent has been cited. Indeed, such is their prevalence that they currently account for approximately 45% - 50% of current live complaint applications. To progress these complaints in an orderly and efficient fashion, the WRC, working with the parties, checks if mediation is an option and if not, often identifies “test cases”, the outcome of which may be appealed to the Labour Court, or could be applied to all other relevant complaints received. At present, a significant number of these “test cases” are with appellate bodies/higher courts, in terms of appeals and/or points of law, and as such these cases and their associated “multiple complaints” cannot be progressed further by the WRC at this stage.
- Conciliation returned to in-person meetings/engagement as the default method of delivery with any virtual meetings being facilitated as an exception and at the request of the parties concerned. To end October 548 conciliation referrals were received and 516 conciliation conferences were held. The resolution rate remained constant at approx. 85%.
- The move to more in-person mediation in June 2022 to include Unfair Dismissal complaints saw an increase in participation in mediation with that increase continuing into 2023. Figures as of end of October 2023 (801) indicate that there is already an increase of 22% in parties participating in mediations compared with the end of year figure for 2022 (658). This trend is also reflected in cases resolved with 381 resolved to end of October this year - a 22% increase on the end of year figure of 313 in 2022.
- A number of Codes of Practice were reviewed in terms of updating the terminology. However, as a new Statutory Instrument is required for any changes to a Code, the WRC is proposing that more in-depth reviews of certain Codes are undertaken in 2024 for example the Code of Practice on Victimisation.
- In addition to the commitments under Work Programme 2023, the WRC was requested by the Minister for Business, Employment and Retail during the year to draft a Code of Practice on the Right to Request Remote Working and/or Flexible

Working. Work on this Code is ongoing and it is anticipated that it will be finalised by the end of 2023.

- At end October 2023, the Inspection Division concluded 3,815 inspection cases, an increase on 23% on the same period in 2022. These inspections encompassed over 106,000 employees during this period and resulted in €1,444,842 of unpaid wages recovered. The Service continued the process of focusing on higher “risk” employments with 50% of inspections focused on high-risk employers and areas of interest – this resulted in an increase in recorded breach rates and necessitated more in-depth inspections during 2023.
- The WRC continued with its Digital First strategy and made improvements to the automated business process for complaint processing that was implemented in late 2022. The first phase of the eComplaint Form/Portal project was developed during 2023 and will be implemented in early 2024. Scoping work on a Cloud Migration Project planned for 2024 was also carried out. This will be a significant project during 2024 and 2025.
- In addition, the WRC published a number of informative animations/videos in seven languages for use on social media and its website in relation to WRC services and employment rights. These included:
 - How to make a complaint to the WRC and what you can expect at an Adjudication Hearing
 - Pre-Adjudication Mediation Information
 - WRC Advisory Service Explained
 - Promoting Dignity in the Workplace

These new animations/videos complement the animations rolled-out in 2022:

- Employment Equality Acts – Employers
 - Employment Equality Acts and Equal Status Acts – Employees and General Public
 - Equal Status Acts – Service Providers
- The Legal Division of the WRC worked closely with the relevant Departments in terms of identifying and preparing for potential demand on WRC services arising from legislative changes and ensured that the WRC was kept abreast of those changes and their impact on the organisation and on the WRC Complaint Form. Legal Division advised on the amendments to the WRC Complaint Form and training was provided to the Adjudication Officers on legislative changes.

- The Legal Division compiled and provided an authorities list of 150 most commonly cited decisions on the WRC website which parties had to previously copy into adjudication when submitting a case. This will hugely assist in reducing the volume of paperwork involved in cases, if parties cite relevant case law.
- Outreach has been provided to inform stakeholders nationally and related bodies internationally, and target groups (particularly vulnerable groups such as young persons, migrant workers and other vulnerable cohorts) of the supports and services available from the WRC. This outreach informs and assists WRC service users, the public, employers and employees of the rights and obligations provided under employment law.

Section Three

Work Programme 2024 – WRC Strategy Statement 2022-2024

In late 2021, the Board submitted a Strategy Statement to the Minister *Meeting Stakeholder Expectations in a Changing World*.

The Strategy references certain key external factors that have impacted or will impact the WRC; the changing nature of work post-Covid 19, “Brexit”, technological innovation, the Supreme Court judgment in “Zalewski”, measures to combat climate change, global economic factors but states that “this changing and challenging operational environment notwithstanding, the WRC’s core purpose and the broader statutory framework within which it functions.....remain(s) largely unchanged”.

Over the course of this Strategy, underpinned by the WRC Core values of:

- Trust, Independence, Impartiality, and Innovation

the WRC will seek to achieve its mission through three strategic aims and associated actions to be delivered over the period:

- **Resilience and Continuity** - Meet demand for timely, consistent, judicially robust, independent services in accordance with the WRC statutory functions and vision.
- **Continuous Improvement** - Improve the WRC’s people, systems, and procedures to, in turn, improve the quality of service.
- **Assisting Adaptability** - Assist stakeholders in dealing with economic and social change and challenge.

The key delivery elements of the Strategy centre around:

Resilience and Continuity through our People and Structure – Ensure the WRC is resourced and structured as appropriate, and internally agile to meet the demand fluctuations across all its services. Provide a supportive working environment for staff. Ensure Succession planning, recruitment and learning and development is fully targeted to meet current and future business needs.

Continuous Improvement – Provide the appropriate mix of remote/hybrid/in-person services that balances or takes into account the needs of users, stakeholders, and the requirement for robust decision making, independent and effective dispute resolution, compliance with employment rights and the maintenance and improvement of workplace relations generally.

Maximising the use of Technologies – Devise and implement an ICT Strategy that is informed by the changing demand and technological support environment including the development of self-service and automation that provides the best remote-user experience possible and that provides real-time targeted management analytics to enhance service delivery.

Assisting Adaptability through Communications and Engagement - Communicate key messages to stakeholders around remit and services via website, social media and webinars. Develop Codes of Practices as required. Work with stakeholders and parties to develop and implement best practice generally. Contribute to the development of knowledge and debate on the changing world of work by way of occasional papers, in-depth research and associated seminars and biennial conferences.

This Strategy and the delivery elements have provided the template and broad objectives for the WRC Work Programmes over the period.

During 2024, as required by Section 21(2) of the Workplace Relations Act 2015, the Board will submit to the Minister a new Statement of Strategy to cover the period 2025-2027.

Work Programme 2024: Key Goals

The WRC's annual Work Programmes are constructed within the framework of the Strategy Statement and the key objectives and associated outcomes identified for 2024 are set out in tabular form in Section Four.

Mindful of the WRC's statutory functions and the Strategy Statement, the key focus of the WRC in 2024, as it is in all Programmes, is to meet the needs of stakeholders and users in terms of robust, high quality and independent services.

As such, much of the body of core WRC Work Programmes is replicated from year to year. For example:

- Provide timely, effective, and efficient conciliation and facilitation services and ensure demand is met
- Improve site-specific workplace relations and workplace relations in general
- Process complaints requiring adjudication speedily and to a judicial standard
- Promote and enforce compliance with employment law
- Issue employment agency licences and licences with regard to the employment of young persons
- Provide non-directive information on WRC activities generally, employment legislation and redress mechanisms through a variety of delivery formats
- Maintain a robust corporate governance framework
- Optimise the use of new technology and
- Ensure all activities carried out within the legislative and constitutional framework which the WRC operates.

However, some key goals particular to 2024 are identified:

Manage Changing Work and Delivery Models

Over the last four years there has been a significant shift in how particular services can be delivered and, for many, how work can be done. The WRC has adapted and demonstrated that conciliations, adjudications and mediations can be done virtually where required. For example, currently some 30% of adjudications take place virtually. It does not suit every engagement, however, and the WRC will continue to work with stakeholders in identifying where and how non-traditional delivery of services can be delivered.

Similarly, through Blended Working and Remote Working many employees are in a position to perform work from sites other than the office or business premises. The WRC, in ensuring that staff can avail of these opportunities, continually monitors its output in terms of quantity and quality to identify the work patterns that suits best its service delivery obligations. Other than field staff who work away from the office much of the time, WRC staff attend the office a minimum of three days a week and in many instances four and five days. The attendance pattern is required to support the strategic and operational needs of the WRC and to ensure that new staff are quickly provided with the skills required and connect on a personal level with their colleagues.

New Legislation

The WRC has been impacted during 2023 by enacted or forthcoming legislation which facilitates complaints to be submitted for adjudication. These include the following, all of which contain provisions for parties to submit matters to the WRC for its attention:

- Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act, 2022
- Sick Leave Act, 2022
- Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021
- Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations, 2022
- European Union (Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions) Regulations, 2022
- Childcare Employment Regulation Order 2022
- The Payment of Wages (Amendment) (Tips and Gratuities) Act, 2022
- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2023
- Right to Request Remote Working
- Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees Act, 1996.
- European Worker Council
- Collective Redundancies and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill
- Protection of Employees (Employers Insolvency) Amendment Bill

The WRC has worked closely with the relevant Departments in terms of identifying and preparing for potential demand on WRC services arising from the legislative process and ensuring that the WRC will adjust its procedures/policies as necessary and provide information to potential users as to how best to progress to the WRC relevant matters of concern.

It is likely that the demand arising will impact to a greater or lesser extent on the WRC and its ability to process complaints submitted for its attention. This will be monitored closely in conjunction with the relevant officials of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Review of Employment Equality legislation

In July 2023, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth published a report which summarised the issues raised by the submissions to the public consultation on the Review of the Equality Acts.

Submissions were received on a wide variety of subjects including all the equality grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community, and housing assistance ground.

The WRC understands that the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth intend that legislative proposals arising from the review will be brought forward in 2024. It is likely that any new legislation will impact on the work of adjudication and the WRC awaits the outcome of any such legislation, before it can assess its impact.

Expand Mediation Demand and Output

The benefits to stakeholders and parties of mediation are well-recognised: they are significantly less costly in terms of opportunity costs than adjudication and, as parties reach their own agreement the employment relationship is undamaged in many instances.

From a WRC perspective, increased mediation levels also bring benefits: a reduction in numbers required to advance to adjudication process and a reduction in postponement of adjudication hearings.

The WRC has invested significantly in resourcing its mediation capacity by specialised training for all staff providing mediation and as part of this the WRC introduced a Late Request Mediation (LRM) Service on a pilot basis in September 2022. The purpose of this LRM Service was to ensure access to/availability of mediation at short notice to parties where an adjudication hearing date had already been scheduled and by default reduce the number of requests for postponements. However, requests for LRM to date has been considerably less than anticipated with a low enough resolution rate of 25%. The pilot has

therefore been extended to allow for the gathering of further data which will inform the WRC's review of the LRM Service at the end of 2023 and its extension into 2024.

Codes of Practice

During 2023, the Minister for Business, Employment and Retail requested the WRC to carry out a full review of the Code of Practice on Access to Part-time Work and Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 in consultation with stakeholders. Initial work on the review commenced in late 2023 and the review is included in the Work Programme for 2024.

Arising from the Report of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) High Level Working Group, the WRC was also requested to facilitate engagement on a Best Practice Code for Collective Bargaining which will form part of its body of work into 2024.

Adjudication Procedures

Since establishment the WRC has published non-statutory procedures and guidelines in relation to requests for postponements of hearings and timely submissions in relation to adjudication complaints. These have met with limited success: by end October-2023 some 2,448 postponement requests were received – this represents a request for the postponement of approximately one-third of all hearings offered. Similarly, many submissions still are received within five days of a hearing, often on the day itself. This places the other party at a disadvantage, does not allow the Adjudication Officer sufficient time to become familiar with the argumentation and in many instances results in the adjournment of the hearing with its attendant costs to the parties and the WRC.

With these issues in mind, the WRC will carry out an analysis of the volume, reasoning behind and the timing of postponement requests prior to a hearing.

The WRC completed in 2023 a review of submission patterns and the timing of the lodgement of same with Adjudication Officers. Following on from this, the WRC will continue to liaise with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the overall effects of late submissions and how these impact on the cost-efficient disposal of cases by the WRC. Any proposals arising will be a policy matter for consideration by the Department.

ICT Strategy

The WRC will continue to roll-out the WRC ICT Strategy 2022-2024 which identifies a requirement for the WRC to accelerate its use of digital technology in the delivery of its services and the customer interface.

Specifically, the WRC in 2024 will promote and monitor the new eComplaint Form that was launched in late 2023 and provides greater accessibility and functionality for users.

The WRC will also expand the use of robotic process automation in the processing of complaints submitted. The WRC first introduced robotic process automation into early-stage complaint receipt processing and found it has delivered efficiencies and quicker processing speeds from a WRC perspective. The WRC will build on this in 2024.

In order to improve the WRC IT systems, and in line with Connecting Government 2030- Design principle 1: "Digital by Default and Cloud first" a new CRM platform will be built in the cloud and the existing CRM and its data will be migrated to the new environment. The new modern cloud-based CRM will facilitate future upgrade potential and will replace a current on-premise solution. It will provide the WRC with the ability to leverage the online marketplace for services so that the WRC may offer better services to users. This project will be developed over the period 2024 and 2025.

Research

The WRC Strategic Plan commits the WRC to identifying and conducting research which may inform stakeholders and the WRC with regards to developments in the labour market in general, and workplace relations, in particular.

Having witnessed the global economic and societal changes over last three years, the WRC has initiated a research project to review trends identified in labour markets in that period with a view to formulating a statement of reasonable projections as to how labour markets, work and workplace relations will evolve over the medium-term.

This research will specifically examine contemporary significant developments in the labour market with a view to assessing their impact on three areas: Workplace Relations, Dispute

Resolution, and the work of the WRC. The research is prioritising areas such as climate change, Artificial Intelligence (AI), remote working, recruitment and retention, disabilities, and the issue of inflation.

The research output will contribute to the development of a report that identifies key impacts for the future management of the employment relationship, workplace experience and the likely types of workplace issues which may increasingly lead to cases/disputes coming before the state dispute resolution bodies.

The research output will form the basis for a WRC Stakeholder Conference in 2024.

Section Four

Key Objectives and Outcomes 2024

Conciliation, Advisory and Mediation

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Provide timely, effective and efficient conciliation service and ensure demand is met whilst maintaining delivery of all services	Provide conciliation in an appropriate timeframe to facilitate resolution of industrial relations disputes. Proactively engage with service users to provide assistance in the maintenance of positive industrial and working relations	As and when required by clients throughout 2024	Maintenance of high success rate in the resolution of industrial relations disputes. This is a voluntary demand led service.
Work to expand client usage of relevant mediation services of WRC	Maintain and increase pre-adjudication mediation where required.	Throughout 2024	Increase in cases successfully mediated to bring about a reduction in numbers advancing to adjudication process in rights-based claims.
	Formal rollout of Late Request Mediation (LRM) Service in conjunction with the Adjudication Service post review of 2023 pilot	Q1 2024	Reduction in postponement of adjudication hearings. Increase in volume of mediations Increase in settlements at mediation
Chair and facilitate various industrial relations and statutory fora in both the private and public sector	Facilitate discussions in a timely fashion. Assist parties deal with all issues in accordance with procedures and operations as set out in agreed terms of reference	Throughout 2024	Effective delivery, operation and conclusion of all issues raised in accordance with protocols and procedures with the agreement of all parties
Improve site-specific	Carry out reviews of industrial relations, chair joint working parties, facilitate resolution of	Throughout 2024	Effective, tailored programme delivery, high service user

workplace relations	individual disputes including referrals under the IR Act 2015		satisfaction, improved workplace relations
Initiate a review of some of the established Codes of Practice	Carry out a full review of the Code of Practice on Access to Part-time Work and Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 in consultation with stakeholders. Indepth review of a number of selected existing Codes of Practice, commencing with the Code of Practice on Victimisation.	Q2 2024 and throughout 2024	Codes completed and updated
Provide educational and workplace knowledge sharing programmes	Develop and deliver appropriate information on positive industrial relations principles and working relationships through facilitative workshops for employees and employers.	Throughout 2024	Broader and better understanding of workplace issues and improved workplace relations

Adjudication Service

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Continue to Process all complaints as quickly as possible.	Provide Adjudication Officers with full administrative support and provide relevant caselaw and appellate body and precedential decisions.	Throughout 2024 and onwards	Oversee efficient processing of complaints from registration, through scheduling to issuing of decisions.
	Fully utilise developments in relation to e-complaint platform and ICT portal	End Q4 2024	Incremental rollout of ICT improvements to complaint processing.
	In conjunction with Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, Maintain appropriate administrative resourcing and monitor and review quantity and availability of adjudicators to ensure delivery capacity.	Throughout 2024 and onwards	Fully resourced and utilised
		Throughout 2024	

Dispose of “Multiple” referrals	Work with parties and representatives to identify how best to deal with “multiple” referrals in an efficient manner.		“Multiple” cases disposed of.
Timely receipt of concise submissions	Assess review and develop action plan if required with DETE Liaison Unit	Throughout 2024	Decision made regarding any possible statutory instrument.
Produce high quality decisions	The Director of Adjudication and Registrar will continue to circulate and update Adjudication Officers on relevant material and Adjudication Officer meetings will be held during the year to identify learning points, to improve the service provided to customers of the Adjudication Service.	Throughout 2024	High quality decisions issue in a timely manner, subject to available resources Internally and externally recognised and delivered WRC adjudication standard
Legislative amendments	Engage with DETE re potential legislative amendments to Workplace Relations Act	Throughout 2024	Appropriate legislative powers and amendments in place to support functions of WRC.
Assist with Outreach to the public, employers and employees, stakeholder groups, identified sectors and vulnerable groups	Where core work has been addressed and time and resources allow, AP AO s may work with ICS and Communications Unit to provide information on WRC activities generally.	Throughout 2024	Increased understanding of the WRC’s roles and functions across industrial relations, employment equality and equal status matters.
Pre-adjudication Mediation	AP Adjudication Officers will continue to work with CAM Division regarding the provision of pre-adjudication mediation services.	Throughout 2024	Mediation Services delivered in conjunction with CAM Division.

Inspection and Enforcement Services

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Promote and enforce compliance with employment law	Carry out risk and complaint based inspections, with other State bodies where appropriate	Throughout 2024	4500 workplace inspection cases completed
	Institute legal action where compliance with Employment Rights and Employment Permit legislation is not achieved and action is approved by the Legal Proceedings Committee	Throughout 2024	All cases where compliance is not achieved will be considered for legal action
	Issuing and processing of Compliance (as applicable) ² and Fixed Payment notices and defend appeals to Compliance Notices	Throughout 2024	Notices issued appropriately and having effect. Appeals defended.
Focused targeting of non-compliant employers, sectors, regions	Risk selection arrangements for inspection to be used for case selection. These will include risk rating of closed cases, sectoral intelligence and complaints.	Throughout 2024	50% of inspection cases will be focused on high-risk employers and sectors of interest
Enforce awards arising from decisions of Adjudication and Labour Court proceedings	Pursue civil enforcement of decisions and awards arising from decisions of Adjudication Officers and Labour Court in relation to adjudication and inspection activity and escalate to prosecution where appropriate.	Throughout 2024	Decisions and awards pursued in manner that maximises efficiency and effectiveness
Issue licences and enforce legislation in relation to Employment Agencies and the employment of Young Persons	Licenses processed and issued in an efficient and lawful manner	Throughout 2024	Applications processed within 21 days of receipt
Co-operate with other enforcement agencies	Facilitate training, staff exchanges, joint inspections and sharing of appropriate data, review MoUs to ensure they are current, valid and in	Throughout 2024	Successful activities underpinned by legislation and appropriate MoUs. Review and renew, if

² See Labour Court decision (CNN194), Boots Retail (Ireland) Ltd.

Carry out targeted campaigns in the identified sectors	compliance with GDPR requirements Campaigns involving both inspection and ICS carried out effectively and efficiently	Throughout 2024	appropriate, all existing MoUs. Positively impact compliance and create/enhance awareness of relevant rights and duties
Support information and education activities to improve compliance generally	Inspectors will support information and outreach activities carried out by Information and ICS, Communications Unit, and other WRC Divisions	Throughout 2024	Provide staff, briefing/guidance material, and relevant expertise
Cooperate with International agencies on areas of mutual interest	Work with partners such as the International Labour Organisation, the European Labour Authority, the European Platform for Undeclared work, EUROPOL	Throughout 2024	Attend all plenary sessions where designated as Irish member/delegate/expert, provide appropriate assistance to programmes

Information and Customer Services

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Time frame	Key Performance Indicators
Provide non-directive information on WRC activities generally, employment legislation and redress mechanisms through a variety of delivery formats	Provide a high quality accessible, customer-focused and user-friendly response to telephone, email, white mail and other employment rights enquiries	Throughout 2024	90% of queries dealt with at initial query
	Co-ordinate the targeted participation of the WRC at employment law seminars, presentations, exhibitions, roadshows, webinars, etc.	Throughout 2024	Key events identified, targeted message deliver effectively and efficiently
	Utilise social media platforms to raise awareness of employment legislation, relevant decisions,	Throughout 2024	Increased awareness of the WRC services and information.

	WRC activities/remit and promote WRC redress mechanisms to the public.		Key events, days, campaigns. research and data identified and effectively publicised on social media. Increase in social media followers
Efficient processing of complaints and applications to the WRC	All complaints processed in a timely and efficient manner and referred to the appropriate redress	Throughout 2024	All complaints received during 2024 processed efficiently with 90% of files created within 10 working days and respondent put on notice
Deliver Outreach and Communications Strategy	Work with Comms Unit to identify WRC activities (including web-based and remote outreach) which can be used to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of WRC generally.	Throughout 2024	Increased awareness and understanding of the WRC, and functions, across industrial relations, employment rights, equality and equal status matters
	Initiate and deliver campaigns focussed on increasing awareness of WRC services and providing information on changes to legislation or new legislative developments to the public, employers and employees, and stakeholder groups as well as identified sectors and vulnerable groups.	Throughout 2024	Greater awareness of WRC services
	Prepare bespoke targeted guides and templates on legislation for employees and employers, particularly relating to legislative change or new legislation.	Throughout 2024	Guides and templates launched and being used and accessed

Legal Affairs

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Provide timely, effective and robust legal advice on legal matters before, and involving, the WRC	Provide advice and representation to DG and all Divisions of the WRC so that they are supported.	Throughout 2024	Robust legal services provided to WRC.
WRC legal service operating cost effectively and efficiently	Legal service to be provided with all internal structures, procedures, and business processes operating efficiently Information flows to and from Legal Division	Throughout 2024	Legal service fully functional.
Provide appropriate legal training to staff and Adjudication Officers	Identify training needs and deliver to AOs and staff. Legal Division staff keep abreast of all new legal developments and comply with professional CPD obligations	Throughout 2024 Throughout 2024	Training delivered and AOs up to date on legal framework and jurisprudence underpinning complaints. Regular meetings between Legal, ICS and Adjudication.
Continue to work with DETE to identify legal issues impacting on delivery of WRC's statutory remit	Identify key legislative priorities and assist progression where possible and liaise with DETE in context of consequences of Supreme Court constitutional challenge and other legislative reforms anticipated in 2024	Throughout 2024	Consulted with DETE re issues identified and progressed as appropriate
Assist DG and Divisions with the implementation of the Protected Disclosures Act.	Provide advice and training to all staff and management.	Throughout 2024	All aware of their obligations under the PDA and familiar with reporting channels and the DG's Role as a Prescribed Person under the PDA

Assist with reforms of website and complaint form	Contribute to improvement of WRC complaint form system and website structure	Throughout 2024	Revised WRC complaint form in place and website rationalised and content updated
Contribute to keeping stakeholders informed of trends in complaints and decisions	Contribute to external analyses and review WRC decisions and emerging trends.	Throughout 2024	Review Completed and Legal contribution to stakeholder awareness externally.
Deepen stakeholder networks domestically, at EU and international level to share best practice	Stakeholder engagement	Throughout 2024	Strong domestic and international networks established to share best practice and stay abreast of emerging legal trends in employment and equality law, and fair procedure for quasi-judicial decision-makers administering justice.
Adjudication Division supported in relation to new service models	Advise WRC in relation to new procedures and policies around new service delivery models.	Throughout 2024	Robust, efficient systems in place to ensure WRC can provide quality continuity of service.

Corporate, Strategy and Digital Services

Work Programme Objectives	Action/Tasks	Delivery Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Maintain robust corporate governance framework in WRC	Oversee and monitor internal standards/policies/procedures	Throughout 2024	Corporate governance in WRC in line with best practice.
Ensure WRC carries out statutory functions within budget	Oversee efficient and effective expenditure, monitor service demand and activity levels and liaise regularly with DETE in this regard	Throughout 2024	Work programme achieved consistent with proper utilisation of budget allocation.
WRC has functional flexibility	Ensure that the WRC can respond quickly to shifting demand and resource patterns across the full range of its activities.	Throughout 2024	WRC able to respond quickly to Divisional demand spikes and shifting resource patterns.

Manage the WRC risk-based strategic, business planning performance culture at all levels of the organisation	Assist in implementation of, Board Strategy and Work Programme and roll out via Corporate, Divisional, Unit and personal business plans, measure and take remedial action against risks and report on progress to MC and Board on a regular basis	Throughout 2024	WRC operating within coherent strategic and business plan framework. Statement of Strategy 2025-2027 submitted to the Minister.
Enhance and inform the policy debate on workplace relations developments	In consultation with other Divisions identify areas of policy concern and input to policy formulation	Throughout 2024	Input provided and understood.
Maintain the WRC offices	Ensure that all WRC offices are maintained and can provide the full range of WRC services	Throughout 2024	Offices fully operational providing the full range of WRC services.
<u>Stakeholder Conference</u>	Hold stakeholder conference themed on the Research Project conducted in 2023.	Q2 2024	Stakeholder Conference held.
<u>Human Resources Resourcing</u>	Work with DETE HR on staff capacity, succession planning, staff training, staff flexibility and the impact of blended working to ensure appropriate WRC staffing levels with the relevant skillset.	Throughout 2024	WRC staffing properly resourced to the sanctioned complement of 214 staff. Business needs and career development needs supported.
Employee Development	Work with DETE HR and other bodies to develop bespoke training for WRC staff, as required.	As required in 2024	New training needs identified and training arrangements in place.
<u>ICT</u> Maximise the use of ICT	Continue the roll-out WRC ICT Strategy 2022-2024	Throughout 2024	Strategy utilised.
	Develop new ICT Strategy 2025-2027 when new Strategy Statement is published.	Q4 2024 and Q1 2025	New Strategy in place In Q1 2025.

Monitor ICT systems to ensure they facilitate the delivery of efficient and effective WRC services	Monitor, maintain, innovate and upgrade systems and software subject to resources as required.	Throughout 2024	Easy to use ICT systems working efficiently and effectively.
Cyber Security	Collaborate with DETE to ensure that the DETE IT systems provide robust ICT security for the WRC and DETE have appropriate policy and procedures	Throughout 2024	Robust Policies and Procedures in place.
Cloud Migration and CRM upgrade	Build a new CRM platform in the cloud and migrate the existing CRM and its data to the new environment	Throughout 2024 and 2025	Project advanced in 2024.
eComplaint Form	Roll-out new eComplaint Form and promote among stakeholders.	Q1 2024	eComplaint Form fully operational.
	Ensure the new eComplaint Form is maintained and up to date.	Throughout 2024	
Maximise technology to improve efficiencies and use of resources	Develop the next phase in the automation of processing complaints submitted and explore further potential uses for automation.	Q2/Q3 2024	RPA Phase 2 complete with the Robot performing another task in the processing of complaints.
Data Analytics: Use of data analytics solutions to better inform management decision making	Develop further dashboards for Adjudication Service. Create more useable information for Management Information Reports. Use more sophisticated analytics to better drive business decisions.	Throughout 2024	Analytics fully utilised in decision making.
Communications	Utilise Communications Strategy to support the business objectives of the WRC	Throughout 2024	Strategy utilized to support the business objectives of Divisions.
	In consultation with the relevant Divisions continue to proactively plan, deliver and	Throughout 2024	WRC content is preplanned, published and measured.

Digital Media	measure WRC Communications content and campaigns.	Throughout 2024	Participate in GIS Communications Network.
	Collaborate with DETE and other Government Communications Units	Throughout 2024	Twitter, LinkedIn and WRC website all regularly and used to support business plans.
	Utilise Social Media Channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X • LinkedIn • WRC.ie <p>Work with stakeholders to ensure website is up to date and amend as necessary.</p>	Throughout 2024	Website current, relevant and used.