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*Number 1 of 2000*

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**COMHAIRLE ACT 2000**

**REVISED**

**Updated to 1 February 2019**

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This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the *Comhairle Act 2000*. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the *Law Reform Commission Act 1975 (3/1975)* to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law.

All Acts up to and including *Local Government Act 2019 (1/2019)*, enacted 25 January 2019, and all statutory instruments up to and including *Brown Crab (Conservation Of Stocks) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 26 of 2019)*, made 1 February 2019, were considered in the preparation of this Revised Act.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of this Revised Act, the Law Reform Commission can assume no responsibility for and give no guarantees, undertakings or warranties concerning the accuracy, completeness or up to date nature of the information provided and does not accept any liability whatsoever arising from any errors or omissions. Please notify any errors, omissions and comments by email to [revisedacts@lawreform.ie](mailto:revisedacts@lawreform.ie).





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**Introduction**

This Revised Act presents the text of the Act as it has been amended since enactment, and preserves the format in which it was passed.

**Related legislation**

***Citizens Information Acts 2000 to 2011***: this Act is one of a group of Acts included in this collective citation, to be construed together as one (*Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011* (9/2011), s. 1(2)(b)). The Acts in this group are:

- *Comhairle Act 2000* (1/2000)
- *Citizens Information Act 2007* (2/2007)
- *Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008* (22/2008), Part 4
- *Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011* (9/2011), s. 21

**Annotations**

This Revised Act is not annotated and only shows textual amendments. An annotated version of this revision is also available which shows textual and non-textual amendments and their sources. It also shows editorial notes including statutory instruments made pursuant to the Act and previous affecting provisions.

**Material not updated in this revision**

Where other legislation is amended by this Act, those amendments may have been superseded by other amendments in other legislation, or the amended legislation may have been repealed or revoked. This information is not represented in this revision but will be reflected in a revision of the amended legislation if one is available. A list of legislative changes to any Act, and to statutory instruments from 1974, may be found linked from the page of the Act or statutory instrument at [www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie).





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Health (Eastern Regional Health Authority) Act, 1999	1999, No. 13
National Disability Authority Act, 1999	1999, No. 14
National Social Service Board Act, 1984	1984, No. 2



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**COMHAIRLE ACT 2000**

**REVISED**

**Updated to 1 February 2019**

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AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW BODY TO BE KNOWN AS COMHAIRLE AND TO DEFINE ITS FUNCTIONS, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF THE NATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE BOARD ACT, 1984, AND TO PROVIDE FOR CONNECTED MATTERS. [*2nd March, 2000*]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

**PART I**

**PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL**

Short title.           **1.**— This Act may be cited as the Comhairle Act, 2000.

Interpretation.       **2.**—(1) In this Act, except where the context otherwise requires—

“advocacy services” includes services in which the interests of a person seeking a social service are represented in order to assist such person in securing entitlements to such service but does not include legal representation.

[‘Board’ has the meaning assigned to it by *section 6*, as amended by *section 3* of the *Citizens Information Act 2007*;]

[‘deciding officer’ has the meaning it has in *section 2(1)* of the *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005*;

‘the Director’ has the meaning assigned to it by *section 7A*;

‘disability’, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment;]

“establishment day” means the day appointed under *section 3* to be the establishment day for the purposes of this Act;

“former Board” means the National Social Service Board;

“functions” includes powers and duties, and references to the performance of functions include, as respects powers and duties, references to the exercise of the powers and the carrying out of the duties;

“health board” means—

- (a) a health board established under the Health Act, 1970,
- (b) the Eastern Regional Health Authority, or
- (c) an Area Health Board established under the Health (Eastern Regional Health Authority) Act, 1999;

“Minister” means the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs;

[‘Personal Advocacy Service’ has the meaning assigned to it by *section 7A*;

‘personal advocates’ has the meaning assigned to it by *section 7A*;

‘qualifying person’ has the meaning assigned to it by *section 7A*;

‘social service’ means any service provided by a statutory body or voluntary body that is available or accessible to the public generally or a section of the public pursuant to statute or otherwise and includes, but is not limited to, a service in relation to any of the following, namely, health, social welfare, education, family support, housing, taxation, citizenship, consumer matters, [advice on personal debt and money management,] employment and training, equality, asylum and immigration;]

“statutory body” means—

- (a) a Department of State,
- (b) a health board,
- (c) a local authority,
- (d) the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland,
- (e) a board or other body (but not a company) established by or under statute,
- (f) a company in which all the shares are held by, or on behalf of, or by directors appointed by, a Minister of the Government, or
- (g) a company in which all the shares are held by a board, company or other body referred to in paragraph (e) or (f) of this definition;

[‘voluntary body’ means—

- (a) a body corporate, or
- (b) an unincorporated body of persons,

other than a statutory body, and includes a body commonly known as [a money advice and budgeting service,] a Citizen Information Service or a Citizen Information Centre;]

(2) In this Act—

- (a) a reference to a section is a reference to a section of this Act, unless it is indicated that a reference to some other provision is intended,
- (b) a reference to a subsection, paragraph or subparagraph is a reference to the subsection, paragraph or subparagraph of the provision in which the reference occurs unless it is indicated that a reference to some other provision is intended.



(3) A reference to another enactment is to that enactment as amended or modified at any time by any enactment.

Establishment of day. **3.**— The Minister shall by order appoint a day to be the establishment day for the purposes of this Act.

Expenses. **4.**— The expenses incurred by the Minister in the administration of this Act shall, to such extent as may be sanctioned by the Minister for Finance, be paid out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas.

Repeal. **5.**— The National Social Service Board Act, 1984, is, with effect from the establishment day, hereby repealed.

## PART II

### COMHAIRLE

Establishment of Comhairle. **6.**— (1) There shall stand established, on the establishment day, a body to be known as Comhairle (in this Act referred to as the “Board”), which shall perform the functions conferred on it by or under this Act.

(2) The Board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a seal and with power—

- (a) to sue and be sued in its corporate name,
- (b) to acquire, hold and dispose of land or an interest in land, with the consent of the Minister, and
- (c) to acquire, hold and dispose of any other property.

Functions of Board. **7.**— (1) The functions of the Board shall be—

(a) to support the provision of or, where the Board considers it appropriate, to provide directly, independent information, advice and advocacy services so as to ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services and are referred to the relevant services,

[(b) to support the provision of or, where the Board considers it appropriate, to provide directly, advocacy services to individuals, in particular those with a disability, that would assist them in identifying and understanding their needs and options and in securing their entitlements to social services,]

[(c) to support, promote and develop—

- (i) greater accessibility, co-ordination and public awareness of social services, and
- (ii) the provision and dissemination of integrated information in relation to such services by statutory bodies and voluntary bodies,]

[(ca) to support the provision of a service to be known, in the English language, as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service or, in the Irish language, as An tSeirbhís Buiséadaithe agus Comhairle Airgid, to provide advice to individuals for the purpose of the management, avoidance, reduction and discharge of personal debt and in relation to money management,

- (cb) to promote and develop the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and to provide information in respect of such provision,
  - (cc) to provide, subject to the consent of the Minister, and in accordance with *subsection (1A)*, financial assistance to a voluntary body in respect of any matter related to the functions referred to in *paragraphs (ca), (cb), (cd), (ce), (cf) and (cg)*,
  - (cd) to promote and develop education in respect of money management,
  - (ce) to compile and publish data relating to the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service,
  - (cf) to promote and disseminate awareness and information to the public relating to the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service,
  - (cg) to undertake, or commission, research relating to the functions referred to in *paragraphs (ca), (cb) and (cd)* and on any matter, as the Minister may, from time to time, request, in relation to the functions referred to in *paragraphs (ca), (cb) and (cd) to (cf)*,
  - (ch) to provide advice, information and assistance to the Minister in respect of the functions referred to in *paragraphs (ca) to (cg)* and such advice, information and assistance in relation to those functions as the Minister may, from time to time, request,]
  - (d) to support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services,
  - (e) to promote and support the development of voluntary bodies providing social services including, where the Board considers it appropriate, the provision of financial or other resources such as integrated information, training and development services,
  - (f) to furnish advice, information and assistance to the Minister in relation to the development of any aspect of social services,
  - (g) whenever the Minister so requests, to design schemes relating to social services to address needs identified by the Minister concerning such services, and, where the Board considers it appropriate to do so, to provide such services directly,
  - (h) to promote, develop, encourage and assist, through the provision of financial or other resources, the work in relation to social services of such bodies as the Minister may specify,
  - (i) to prepare strategic plans in accordance with *section 8*, and
  - (j) to perform any additional functions assigned to the Board under *subsection (2)*.
- [(1A) The Board shall, subject to the approval of the Minister, determine the terms on which and the conditions subject to which it may—
- (a) support the provision of information, advice or advocacy services under *[subsection (1),]*
  - [(aa) support the provision, promotion and development of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service under *subsections (1)(ca) and (1)(cb)* and the functions referred to in *subsections (1)(cd) to (1)(cg),]*
  - (b) provide financial or other resources to a voluntary body under *subsection (1)(e)* or to a body specified by the Minister under *[subsection (1)(h), and]*

[(ba) provide financial assistance to a voluntary body under *subsection (1)(cc)*,]

and different terms and conditions [may apply under *paragraphs (a), (aa), (b) and (ba)*] and in relation to different types of bodies.

(1B) The Board shall, in determining the terms and conditions under *subsection (1A)*, have regard to the objective of it promoting the provision of an integrated, reliable and comprehensive information service of the highest quality.

(1C) The Board may, for the purpose of providing the support referred to in [*paragraphs (a) and (aa) of subsection (1A)*] or the financial or other resources referred to in [*paragraphs (b) and (ba) of that subsection*], request the body or person concerned to furnish it with information in such form and at such times as it may require.

(1D) The Board may refuse to provide the support referred to in [*paragraphs (a) and (aa) of subsection (1A)*], or the financial or other resources referred to in [*paragraphs (b) and (ba) of that subsection*], if the body or person concerned does not comply with the terms and conditions determined under that subsection or if it fails or refuses to furnish the Board with any information requested of the body or person concerned under *subsection (1C)*.

(1E) The Board, in performing the functions conferred on it by or under this section, shall have regard to the need for it to co-operate with statutory bodies and voluntary bodies.]

[(1F) The Board, in performing the functions conferred on it under *subsections (1)(ca) to (1)(ch)*, shall have regard to—

- (a) the provision, in particular, of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service to persons on low income who are, or are at risk of becoming, over indebted, and
- (b) Government policy, in particular social inclusion policy.]

(2) The Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, by order-

- (a) confer on the Board such additional functions relating to social services and connected with the functions conferred on the Board by *subsection (1)* or an order made under this subsection, as the Minister considers appropriate,
- (b) make such provision as he or she considers necessary or expedient in relation to matters ancillary to or arising out of the conferral on the Board of functions so conferred.

(3) The Minister may by order amend or revoke an order under this section, including an order under this subsection.

(4) Every order made by the Minister under this section shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after it is made and, if a resolution annulling the order is passed by either such House within the next 21 days on which the House has sat after the order is laid before it, the order shall be annulled accordingly, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder.

[Personal Advocacy Service. **7A.— ...**]

[Application for assignment of personal advocate. **7B.— ...**]

[Appeals. **7C.— ...]**

[Functions of personal advocate. **7D.— ...]**

[Liability for offences by bodies corporate. **7E.— ...]**

[Arrangement to provide services of personal advocates. **7F.— ...]**

Strategic plans. **8.—** (1) As soon as practicable after the establishment day, and thereafter within 6 months before each third anniversary of the establishment day, the Board shall prepare and submit to the Minister, for approval with or without amendment by the Minister, a strategic plan for the ensuing 3 year period.

(2) A strategic plan shall-

- (a) comprise the key objectives, outputs and related strategies, including the use of resources, of the Board,
- (b) be prepared in a form and manner in accordance with any directions issued from time to time by the Minister, and
- (c) have regard to the need to ensure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of the resources of the Board.

(3) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after the strategic plan has been approved, cause a copy of the strategic plan to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Membership of Board and term of office of members. **9.—** (1) The Board shall consist of **[15 members]**, who shall be appointed by the Minister and who shall, subject to the other provisions of this section, hold and vacate office as the Minister may determine.

(2) The Minister shall designate one member of the Board as chairperson.

(3) The Minister, when appointing a member of the Board, shall fix such member's period of membership which shall not exceed **[5 years]**.

(4) The ordinary members of the Board shall include—

- (a) one officer of the Minister,
- [(b) 3 members who represent persons with a disability, and]**
- (c) one member of the staff of the Board who shall be elected by secret ballot of the staff of the Board in such manner as the Board, with the agreement of the Minister, may determine.

(5) There may be paid to members of the Board, out of moneys at the disposal of the Board, such remuneration (if any) and allowances for expenses incurred by them as the Minister, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, may determine.

(6) A member of the Board may resign from the Board by letter addressed to the Minister and the resignation shall take effect on receipt of the letter by the Minister.

(7) A member of the Board may at any time be removed from membership of the Board by the Minister if, in the Minister's opinion, the member has become incapable through ill-health of performing his or her functions, or has committed stated misbehaviour, or his or her removal appears to the Minister to be necessary for the effective performance by the Board of its functions.

(8) A member of the Board shall cease to be and shall be disqualified from being a member of the Board where such member—

(a) is adjudicated bankrupt,

(b) makes a composition or arrangement with creditors,

(c) on conviction on indictment by a court of competent jurisdiction is sentenced to a term of imprisonment, or

(d) is disqualified or restricted from being a director of any company (within the meaning of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 1999).

(9) If a member of the Board dies, resigns, becomes disqualified or is removed from office or for any other reason other than *subsection (3)* ceases to be a member of the Board, the Minister may appoint a person to be a member of the Board to fill the casual vacancy so occasioned and the person so appointed shall be appointed for the unexpired period of the term of membership of, and in the same manner as, the member of the Board who occasioned the casual vacancy.

(10) A member of the Board whose period of membership expires by the effluxion of time shall be eligible for re-appointment as a member of the Board.

(11) Subject to *section 11(3)*, the Board may act notwithstanding one or more vacancies in its membership.

(12) In making appointments to the Board the Minister shall have regard to the objective of there being not less than [6 members] who are women and not less than [6 members] who are men.

(13) [...]

Chairperson of Board.

**10.—** (1) Where the chairperson of the Board ceases to hold such office, he or she shall also cease to be a member of the Board.

(2) Where the chairperson of the Board ceases to be a member of the Board he or she shall also thereupon cease to be chairperson of the Board.

(3) The chairperson of the Board may resign his or her office as chairperson by letter addressed to the Minister and the resignation shall take effect on receipt of the letter by the Minister.

(4) The chairperson of the Board shall, unless he or she sooner dies or otherwise ceases to be chairperson by virtue of *subsection (2) or (3)*, hold such office until the expiration of his or her period of membership of the Board and, if he or she is re-appointed as a member of the Board, he or she shall be eligible to be designated as chairperson of the Board in accordance with *section 9(2)*.

Meetings of Board.

**11.—** (1) The Board shall hold such and so many meetings as may be necessary for the performance of its functions.

(2) The Minister, in consultation with the chairperson of the Board, shall fix the time of the first meeting of the Board.

[(3) The quorum for a meeting of the Board shall be 8 or such lesser number (being not less than 5) as the Board may from time to time determine.]

(4) The chairperson of the Board shall chair any meetings of the Board except in the case that the chairperson is not present or such office is vacant in which case the members who are present shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

(5) At a meeting of the Board, each member of the Board present, including the chairperson, shall have a vote and any question on which a vote is required in order to establish the Board's view shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Board present when the vote is called and voting on the question and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the chairperson of the meeting shall have a second and casting vote.

(6) Subject to this Act, the Board shall regulate, by standing orders or otherwise, the procedure and business of the Board or any committee established under *section 12*.

Committees of Board.

**12.—** (1) The Board may establish committees to advise it on matters relating to any of its functions and may determine the terms of reference and regulate the procedure of any such committee.

(2) A committee established under this section may include persons who are not members of the Board.

(3) A member of a committee established under this section may be removed at any time by the Board.

(4) The Board may at any time dissolve a committee established under this section.

(5) The Board may appoint a person to be chairperson of a committee established under this section.

(6) There may be paid by the Board to members of a committee established under this section such allowances for expenses incurred by them as the Board may, with the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance, determine.

Chief Executive of Board.

**13.—** (1) There shall be a chief executive officer of the Board who shall be known and is referred to in this Act as the "Chief Executive".

(2) The Chief Executive shall carry on and manage, and control generally, the administration and business of the Board and perform such other functions (if any) as may be determined by the Board.

(3) With the consent of the Minister the Chief Executive shall be appointed and may be removed from office by the Board.

(4) The Chief Executive shall hold office upon and subject to such terms and conditions (including terms and conditions relating to remuneration and allowances for expenses) as may be determined by the Board with the consent of the Minister given with the approval of the Minister for Finance.

(5) The Chief Executive shall not be a member of the Board, but he or she may, in accordance with procedures established by the Board, attend meetings of the Board and shall be entitled to speak to and advise such meetings.

Staff of Board.

**14.—**(1) Subject to any transfer of staff from the National Social Service Board to the Board under *section 29*, or from the National Rehabilitation Board under an order made by the Minister for Health and Children under *section 7(2)* of the Health (Corporate Bodies) Act, 1961, the Board may, subject to the approval of the Minister with the consent of the Minister for Finance, appoint such and so many persons to be staff of the Board, including the appointment of persons transferred from either the former board or the National Rehabilitation Board as it may from time to time think necessary to assist the Board in the performance of its functions.

(2) Subject to *section 29*, members of staff of the Board shall hold their employment on such terms and conditions, including those relating to remuneration, grading and allowances for expenses as the Board, with the approval of the Minister given, in so far as it relates to remuneration, grading and allowances for expenses, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, may determine from time to time.

(3) The Chief Executive may from time to time assign such duties as he or she considers appropriate to each member of staff and each member of staff shall carry out the duties so assigned.

(4) In making a determination under *subsection (2)*, the Board shall act in accordance with the directions of the Minister and shall have regard to any arrangements in operation for conciliation and arbitration for persons affected by the determination.

Superannuation.

**15.—**(1) The Board, with the approval of the Minister and the consent of the Minister for Finance, shall make a scheme or schemes for the granting of superannuation benefits to or in respect of the members of staff, including the Chief Executive, of the Board.

(2) A scheme under this section shall fix the time and conditions of retirement of all persons to or in respect of whom superannuation benefits are payable under the scheme or schemes and different times and conditions may be fixed in respect of different classes of persons.

(3) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister and the consent of the Minister for Finance, make a scheme amending or revoking a scheme under this section including a scheme under this subsection.

(4) If any dispute arises as to the claim of any person to, or the amount of, any superannuation benefit payable in pursuance of a scheme or schemes under this section, such dispute shall be submitted to the Minister who shall refer it to the Minister for Finance, whose decision shall be final.

(5) No superannuation benefits shall be granted by the Board to or in respect of a person on ceasing to be Chief Executive or a member of the staff of the Board otherwise than—

(a) in accordance with a scheme or schemes under this section, or

(b) with the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance.

(6) A scheme under this section, including an amendment of a scheme, shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after it is made and, if a resolution annulling the scheme is passed by either such House within the next 21 days on which that House has sat after the scheme is laid before it, the scheme shall be annulled accordingly, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder.

(7) A scheme or schemes under *subsection (1)* shall, in so far as it concerns a person who immediately before his or her appointment as Chief Executive or to a position on the staff of the Board was an officer or servant of the former Board or the National Rehabilitation Board, as the case may be, grant superannuation benefits upon and subject to terms and conditions that are not less favourable than the terms and conditions that applied to that person immediately before their appointment as Chief Executive of or a member of the staff of the Board in relation to the grant of such benefits.

(8) In applying *subsection (7)*, superannuation benefits that would have been granted to or in respect of a person during the period between his or her appointment as Chief Executive or to a position on the staff of the Board and the coming into operation of a scheme under this section had he or she continued to be employed by the former Board or the National Rehabilitation Board, as the case may be, shall be granted and paid to or in respect of that person by the Board in accordance with the

scheme or such enactments in relation to superannuation as applied to the person immediately before his or her appointment as Chief Executive or to a position on the staff of the Board and, for that purpose, his or her pensionable service with the Board shall be aggregated with his or her previous pensionable service.

(9) In this section “superannuation benefits” means pensions, gratuities and other allowances payable on ceasing to be a Chief Executive or a member of the staff of the Board.

Disclosure by members of Board of certain interests.

**16.—(1)** Where at a meeting of the Board any of the following matters arise, namely—

- (a) an arrangement to which the Board is a party or a proposed such arrangement, or
- (b) a contract or other agreement with the Board or a proposed such contract or other agreement,

then, any member of the Board present at the meeting who otherwise than in his or her capacity as such a member has an interest in the matter shall—

- (i) at the meeting disclose to the Board the fact of such interest and the nature thereof,
- (ii) neither influence nor seek to influence a decision to be made in relation to the matter,
- (iii) absent himself or herself from the meeting or that part of the meeting during which the matter is discussed,
- (iv) take no part in any deliberation of the Board relating to the matter, and
- (v) not vote on a decision relating to the matter.

(2) Where an interest is disclosed pursuant to this section, the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned and, for so long as the matter to which the disclosure relates is being considered or discussed by the meeting, the member by whom the disclosure is made shall not be counted in the quorum for the meeting.

(3) Where at a meeting of the Board a question arises as to whether or not a course of conduct, if pursued by a member of the Board, would constitute a failure by him or her to comply with the requirements of *subsection (1)*, the question may be determined by the Board, whose decision shall be final, and where such a question is so determined, particulars of the determination shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

(4) Where the Minister is satisfied that a member of the Board has contravened *subsection (1)*, the Minister may, if he or she thinks fit, remove that member from office and, in case a person is removed from office pursuant to this subsection, he or she shall thereafter be disqualified from membership of the Board.

(5) For the purposes of this section and *section 17* a person shall not be regarded as having an interest in any matter by reason only of an interest of that person, or of any company in which he or she has an interest, which is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence a person in considering, discussing or in voting on, any question relating to the matter, or in performing any function in relation to that matter.

Disclosure by staff of Board of certain interest.

**17.—(1)** Where a member of the staff of the Board has an interest, otherwise than in his or her capacity as a member of staff in any, or any proposed contract, agreement or arrangement, to which the Board is or is proposed to be a party, that person—



- (a) shall disclose to the Board his or her interest and the nature thereof,
- (b) shall take no part in the negotiation of the contract, agreement or arrangement or in any deliberation by members of the Board or members of the staff of the Board in relation thereto,
- (c) shall not influence or seek to influence a decision to be made in the matter, and
- (d) shall not make any recommendation in relation to the contract, agreement or arrangement.

(2) *Subsection (1)* shall not apply to a person as regards a contract or proposed contract of employment of that person as a member of the staff of the Board.

(3) In this section “member of staff” includes the Chief Executive.

Disclosure of information.

**18.**—(1) Save as otherwise provided by law, a person shall not, without the consent of the Board, disclose confidential information obtained by him or her while performing, or as a result of having performed, duties as a member of the Board, a member of staff of the Board, (including the Chief Executive), a member of a committee or a consultant or adviser to the Board.

(2) A person who contravenes *subsection (1)* shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,500.

(3) Nothing in *subsection (1)* shall prohibit the disclosure of information by means of a report made—

- (a) to the Board, or
- (b) by or on behalf of the Board to the Minister.

(4) In this section “confidential information” includes information that is expressed by the Board or a committee of the Board, as the case may be, to be confidential either as regards particular information or as regards information of a particular class or description.

[Exclusion resulting from membership of either House of the Oireachtas, European Parliament or local authorities.

**18A.**— (1) Where a member of the Board—

- (a) is nominated as a candidate for election to either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,
- (b) is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,
- (c) is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann,
- (d) is regarded under Part XIII of the Second Schedule to the European Parliament Elections Act 1997 as having been elected to that Parliament to fill a vacancy, or
- (e) becomes a member of a local authority,

he or she thereupon ceases to hold office.

(2) Where a person who is a member of the staff of the Board—

- (a) is nominated as a candidate for election to either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,
- (b) is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,

(c) is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann,

(d) is regarded under Part XIII of the Second Schedule to the European Parliament Elections Act 1997 as having been elected to that Parliament to fill a vacancy, or

(e) becomes a member of a local authority,

he or she thereupon stands seconded from employment by the Board and shall not be paid by, or be entitled to receive from, the Board any remuneration or allowances in respect of the period commencing on such nomination or election, or when he or she is so regarded as having been elected, or when he or she becomes a member of a local authority, as the case may be, and ending when such person ceases to be a member of either such House or such Parliament, or such local authority, as the case may be.

(3) A person who is for the time being entitled under the Standing Orders of either House of the Oireachtas to sit therein or who is a member of the European Parliament or a local authority shall, while so entitled or such a member, be disqualified from becoming a member of the Board, the chief executive or an employee of the Board.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (2)*, that subsection shall be read as prohibiting, *inter alia*, the reckoning of a period mentioned in that subsection as service with the Board for the purposes of any superannuation benefits.

(5) This section applies to a person who—

(a) is nominated as a candidate for election to either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,

(b) is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament,

(c) is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann,

(d) is regarded under Part XIII of the Second Schedule to the European Parliament Elections Act 1997 as having been elected to that Parliament to fill a vacancy, or

(e) becomes a member of a local authority,

on or after 1 July 2011.]

Gifts.

**19.—**(1) The Board may accept gifts of money, land or other property upon such trusts, terms or conditions, if any, as may be specified by the donor.

(2) The Board shall not accept a gift if the trusts, terms or conditions attached to it would be inconsistent with or prejudice the performance of the functions of the Board.

Advances by Minister to Board.

**20.—** The Minister may, from time to time and with the consent of the Minister for Finance, advance to the Board (out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas) such sums as the Minister may determine for the purposes of expenditure by the Board in the performance of its functions.

Borrowing by Board.

**21.—** The Board may, for the purpose of providing for current or capital expenditure, from time to time, borrow money (whether on the security of the assets of the Board or otherwise), including money in a currency other than the currency of the State, subject to the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance and to such conditions as they may specify.

Accounts and audits.

**22.—**(1) The Chief Executive, following the agreement of the Board, shall submit estimates of income and expenditure to the Minister in such form, in respect of such periods and at such times, as may be required by the Minister and shall furnish to the Minister any information which the Minister may require in relation to such estimates, including proposals and future plans relating to the discharge by the Board of its functions over a period of years, as required.

(2) The Chief Executive, under the direction of the Board, shall cause to be kept, on a continuous basis and in either or both a legible and a machine readable form, all proper books and records of account of all income and expenditure of the Board, and of the sources of such income and the subject matter of such expenditure, and of the property, assets and liabilities of the Board and shall keep and shall account to the Board for all such special accounts as the Minister or the Board, with the consent of the Minister, may from time to time direct should be kept.

(3) (a) The Board, the Chief Executive and any relevant member of the staff of the Board shall, whenever so requested by the Minister, permit any person appointed by the Minister to examine the books or other records of account of the Board in respect of any financial year or other period and shall facilitate any such examination, and the Board shall pay such fee therefor as may be fixed by the Minister.

(b) In this subsection “relevant member of the staff of the Board” means a member of the staff of the Board in respect of whom there has been duly assigned duties which relate to the books or other records of account referred to in *paragraph (a)*.

(4) (a) The accounts of the Board for each financial year shall be prepared in such a form and manner as may be specified by the Minister and be prepared by the Chief Executive and approved by the Board as soon as practicable but not later than 3 months after the end of the financial year to which they relate for submission to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

(b) The accounts of the Board in respect of each financial year shall as soon as practicable after having been approved by the Board in accordance with *paragraph (a)* be submitted by the Board to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

(c) A copy of the accounts referred to in *paragraph (a)* and the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon shall be presented to the members of the Board and to the Minister as soon as practicable and the Minister shall cause a copy of these documents to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Accountability of Chief Executive.

**23.—**[(1) The Chief Executive shall, whenever required to do so by the Committee of Dáil Éireann established under the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann to examine and report to Dáil Éireann on the appropriation accounts and reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General, give evidence to that Committee on—

(a) the regularity and propriety of the transactions recorded or required to be recorded in any book or other record of account subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General which the Board or the Chief Executive is required by this Act to prepare,

(b) the economy and efficiency of the Board in the use of its resources,

(c) the systems, procedures and practices employed by the Board for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of its operations, and

(d) any matter affecting the Board referred to in a special report of the Comptroller and Auditor General under section 11(2) of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 or in any other report of the Comptroller

and Auditor General (in so far as it relates to a matter specified in paragraph (a), (b) or (c)) that is laid before Dáil Éireann.]

(2) In the performance of his or her duties or her under this section, the Chief Executive shall not question or express an opinion on the merits of any policy of the Government or a Minister of the Government or on the merits of the objectives of such a policy.

Reports and information to Minister.

**24.**—(1) The Board shall, not later than the 30th day of June in each year, make a report to the Minister (in this section referred to as the “annual report”) in such form as the Minister may approve, on the performance of its functions and activities during the preceding year and the Minister shall cause copies of each annual report to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

(2) Each annual report shall include information in such form and regarding such matters as the Minister may direct.

(3) The Board may from time to time make such other reports to the Minister relating to its functions as it thinks fit.

(4) In addition to information provided by the Board in its annual report and in reports made pursuant to *subsection (3)*, the Board shall supply to the Minister such information as the Minister may from time to time require regarding the performance of its functions.

[Directions to Board.

**24A.**— The Minister may give to the Board such general policy directions (including directions to undertake campaigns to disseminate information relating to a particular social service or services) with regard to the performance of its functions as he or she considers appropriate, and the Board shall comply with any such directions.]

Consultants and advisers.

**25.**— Subject to the prior approval of the Minister, the Board may from time to time engage such consultants or advisers as it may consider necessary for the performance of its functions, and any fees due to a consultant or adviser engaged under this section shall be paid by the Board out of moneys at its disposal.

[Transfer by Minister of certain rights and liabilities.

**25A.**— (1) Where, before the day on which this section comes into operation, the Minister has entered into any contract, agreement or arrangement with any person in respect of the provision by that person of a service commonly known as a money advice and budgeting service, and that contract, agreement or arrangement is in force immediately before the day on which this section comes into operation, the Minister may, as he or she sees fit, under his or her seal, transfer or assign his or her rights or liabilities arising under such contract, agreement or arrangement to the Board.

(2) Every right and liability transferred by *subsection (1)* to the Board may, on or after the day on which this section comes into operation, be sued on, recovered or enforced by or against the Board in its own name.]

Seal of Board.

**26.**—(1) The Board shall, as soon as may be after its establishment, provide itself with a seal.

(2) The seal of the Board shall be authenticated by the signature of—

(a) the chairperson of the Board or another member of the Board authorised by it to act in that behalf, and

(b) the Chief Executive or a member of the staff of the Board authorised by the Board to act in that behalf.

(3) Judicial notice shall be taken of the seal of the Board and every document purporting to be an instrument made by the Board and to be sealed with the seal of

the Board (purporting to be authenticated in accordance with *subsection (2)*) shall be received in evidence and be deemed to be such instrument without proof unless the contrary is shown.

(4) Any contract or instrument which, if entered into or executed by a person not being a body corporate, would not require to be under seal may be entered into or executed on behalf of the Board by any person generally or specially authorised by the Board in that behalf.

### PART III

#### DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE BOARD AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Dissolution of former Board.

**27.**— The National Social Service Board (in this Act referred to as the “former Board”) is with effect from the establishment day hereby dissolved.

References to former Board in enactments.

**28.**— References to the former Board contained, immediately before the establishment day, in any enactment other than this Act shall, in so far as they relate to anything transferred to the Board by this Act, be construed on and after the establishment day as references to the Board.

Transfer to Board of certain staff.

**29.**— The Board with the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance shall accept into its employment on the establishment day, in accordance with the terms of this Act, such persons—

- (a) who immediately before that day were members of the staff of the former Board,
- (b) who immediately before that day were members of the staff of the National Rehabilitation Board and who are, with effect from the establishment day, transferred to the Board under an order made by the Minister for Health and Children under section 7(2) of the Health (Corporate Bodies) Act, 1961, as provided for in section 38 of the National Disability Authority Act, 1999,

on terms and conditions not less favourable than those applicable to such persons immediately before the transfer, for the duration of their contract.

Transfer to Board of assets and liabilities of former Board.

**30.**—(1) With effect from the establishment day the following are hereby transferred to the Board—

- (a) all rights and property (and rights relating to such property) held or enjoyed immediately before that day by the former Board,
- (b) all liabilities incurred before that day by the former Board which had not been discharged before that day,

and, accordingly, without any further conveyance, transfer or assignment—

- (i) the said property, real and personal, shall, on that day, vest in the Board for all the estate, term or interest for which, immediately before that day, it was vested in the former Board, but subject to all trusts and equities affecting the property and capable of being performed,
- (ii) those rights shall, as and from that day, be enjoyed by the Board, and
- (iii) those liabilities shall, as and from that day, be liabilities of the Board.

(2) All moneys, stocks, shares and securities transferred to the Board by this section that, immediately before the establishment day, are standing in the name of the former Board shall, upon the request of the Board, be transferred into its name.

(3) Every right and liability transferred to the Board by this section may, on or after the establishment day, be sued on, recovered or enforced by or against the Board in its own name and it shall not be necessary for the Board to give notice of the transfer to the person whose right or liability is transferred by this section.

(4) The Board shall not, without the consent of the Minister, dispose of any part of any land or any interest therein transferred to or vested in the Board by virtue of this section.

(5) In this section "the former Board" includes any trustee or agent of the former Board acting on behalf of the former Board.

Preservation of certain contracts and adaptation of reference to former Board.

**31.**— Every contract or agreement made between the former Board or any trustee or agent thereof acting on its behalf, and any other person, which is in force immediately before the establishment day shall continue in force on and after that day and shall be construed and have effect as if the Board were substituted therein for the former Board or, as the case may be, its trustee or agent acting on its behalf, and shall be enforceable against the Board.

Pending legal proceedings.

**32.**— Where, immediately before the establishment day, any legal proceedings are pending in any court or tribunal and the former Board or any trustee or agent thereof acting on its behalf, is a party to the proceedings, the name of the Board shall be substituted for that of the former Board or, as the case may be, such trustee or agent thereof, and the proceedings shall not abate by reason of such substitution.

Final accounts of former Board.

**33.**—(1) Final accounts of the former Board shall be drawn up by the Board as soon as may be after the establishment day in such form as may be approved of by the Minister, and in respect of such period or periods as may be specified by the Minister.

(2) Accounts prepared pursuant to this section shall be submitted as soon as may be by the Board to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit, and, immediately after the audit, a copy of the income and expenditure account and of the balance sheet and of such other (if any) of the accounts as the Minister may direct and a copy of the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the accounts shall be presented to the Minister who shall cause copies thereof to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.