

National Workplace Strategy

Working to our Advantage A National Workplace Strategy

Executive Summary

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Taoiseach's Foreword



An Taoiseach
Mr. Bertie Ahern, T.D.

At the outset of this process, when I launched the initial Consultation Paper on the Workplace of the Future, I reminded those present of the ambitious social and economic vision that we have set ourselves as a country. At the heart of this vision is a dynamic, inclusive and knowledge-based economy, capable of sustaining competitiveness and maintaining social cohesion.

At the time, we agreed that transforming our public and private sector workplaces in order to achieve this goal would make for a formidable agenda. However, the most successful organisations would be those who could find ways to respond creatively and innovatively to the pressure for change, and effectively turn change to their advantage.

This Report, which represents the collective efforts of Government, the social partners, State agencies, employers and employees, as well as national and international experts, identifies nine key attributes of a successful workplace of the future. Regardless of whether they are in the public or private sector, these workplaces will be: agile; customer-centred; knowledge intensive; responsive to employee needs; networked; highly productive; involved and participatory; continually learning; and proactively diverse.

As well as outlining this vision of the workplace of the future, the Report also identifies five broad areas for action. Within these areas, the Report makes 42 separate recommendations which form the basis for a National Workplace Strategy.

The work of the Forum has shown that, currently, our most adaptive employments are those where “bundles” of complementary work practices are deployed – team working, information sharing, consultation and meaningful involvement, training and learning, performance management, employee financial involvement and work/life balance arrangements. Many of these approaches can be described as participatory or “high involvement” and there is a high correlation between these practices and job satisfaction, low staff turnover rates, high productivity and the successful adoption of new technology and innovation.

The implementation of the Strategy set out in this Report aims to create a climate at national and organisational level which is supportive of change and new forms of work organisation, which in turn will promote better quality of work, higher productivity and improved work\life balance.

Action by Government, the social partners, employees and enterprises will be required to achieve these goals, not least in the areas of lifelong learning and childcare. Of course, these are issues of concern to society beyond their workplace implications.

To make an accelerated in-road in both the skills and childcare areas, the working out of a new balance between individual, employer and public provision will be necessary. In these and other areas, we should seek to gain early mover advantage from a broader mix of policies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPP) who constituted the Forum and the staff of the NCPP who supported them. And I would like to extend special thanks, in particular, to all those who made submissions, both in writing and in person and to everyone who participated in the various panels, surveys, conferences and sessions of the Forum.

The value of this Report is clear from the novel and rich data it has provided on the current status and diversity of the Irish workplace. It also provides new insights as to how we can manage change to our advantage. However, I believe the Report's real value lies in the shared enthusiasm amongst the various stakeholders for early action in terms of its implementation.

In carrying this work forward, I am determined that there will be a central and co-ordinated response to the recommendations set out here.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bertie Ahern', written in a cursive style.

An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, TD.

March 2005

Introduction



Philip Kelly
Chairperson
National Centre
for Partnership
and Performance

The Forum on the Workplace of the Future was established by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance at the request of the Government. Its purpose was to assess how well Ireland's workplaces are equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and to chart a course for their future development. The Forum's activities provided an unprecedented opportunity to address issues and implications of workplace change in a comprehensive, forward-looking way and to develop a guiding vision for Ireland's workplaces.



Lucy Fallon Byrne
Director
National Centre
for Partnership
and Performance

The Forum undertook a wide-ranging evaluation of how the world of work is evolving and the challenges facing organisations and their employees in the emerging knowledge society. Its activities have enabled extensive consultation, debate and research on workplace change. The Forum received written submissions from 43 organisations and individuals.

In addition, through a series of specially convened meetings and six major conferences, the Forum benefited from contributions by employers, employees, the social partners, public agencies, professional bodies and networks, as well as national and international experts. The Forum conducted three major national surveys on the workplace, covering employees, private sector employers and public sector employers.

Four expert panels, whose membership was drawn from a wide variety of sources, were convened to support the Forum's work. The panels, whose members have given generously of their time and expertise, enabled the Forum to benefit from the experience and advice of stakeholders and experts. The panel reports were a key input to the Forum's deliberations.

A Taskforce consisting of the NCPP Council has provided strategic direction for the Forum. Membership includes representatives of employers, unions, the Government and a number of independent experts. As the first Chairperson of the NCPP, Mr Peter Cassells was instrumental in establishing the Forum and laying the foundation for its success.

The Forum's report and recommendations

The Forum has developed an ambitious vision for Ireland's workplaces and an integrated set of 42 recommendations, which together constitute a new National Workplace Strategy. This Strategy sets a challenging agenda for workplace change, which will provide the basis for competitive enterprise, high quality public services, broad access to employment opportunities and a good quality working life for all employees.

Achievement of the goals set out in the National Workplace Strategy will require a substantial and sustained commitment to workplace change and innovation on the part of employers, employees, unions, Government and all stakeholders.

Indeed, the same energy that was invested in Ireland's economic transformation over the last two decades of the twentieth century will need to be applied to the transformation of our workplaces in the twenty-first century.



Lucy Fallon-Byrne

Director
NCP



Philip Kelly

Chairperson
NCP (April 2004–Oct 2005)

Executive Summary

Why our workplaces need to change

Workplace change and innovation will be critical to Ireland's future as a dynamic, inclusive, knowledge-based economy and society. The choices that we, as a society, make with regard to workplace development in the coming years will have a lasting impact on individuals, families, enterprises and the ongoing success of our economy.

In the constantly evolving world of business and public services, the most successful organisations are those that anticipate and adapt so as to turn change to their advantage. What is particularly challenging now is the scale and rapid pace of the changes affecting Irish workplaces. The combined forces of competition and technology, the transition to the knowledge society, the changing needs of people and the demand to improve the delivery of public services, point to the need for radically new workplace models.

The search for innovation

Innovation in our workplaces is a critical part of the overall search for innovation at national level.

Developing our innovation and technology base depends as much on improving the ability of workplaces to change and innovate as it does on research and development. However, Ireland faces particular challenges in this regard. While we have been very successful over several decades in attracting foreign owned knowledge-intensive industries, the domestic innovation base remains weak. Much of the technology that is fuelling the Irish economy is generated overseas and Ireland has in the past been described as a 'technology taker' rather than a 'technology maker'. To address this imbalance, investment in R&D and in university linkages in the areas of science and technology must be matched by innovation in the workplace.

Early-mover advantage

Although some of the most dynamic and competitive countries in the world have long recognised the importance of workplace innovation as a key to meeting their competitive challenges, few have developed a co-ordinated and focused national workplace strategy. Building from its successful experience of social partnership, the Forum believes that Ireland can gain a significant international competitive advantage in this area.

Transition to a knowledge economy

The growth of knowledge-intensive work will be one of the most important influences shaping work and workplaces in the coming years. Ireland, in common with other advanced economies is rapidly becoming a knowledge society, as illustrated by the following trends:

- The growth rate of employment in knowledge-intensive services in Ireland far outstripped the EU average in the period 1997—2002
- Ireland has the largest share of trade in highly R&D intensive industries among OECD countries
- Ireland had one of the most rapid rates of change in the structure of employment in the EU, with a significant shift occurring from low-skill employment into more highly skilled work between 1995 and 2002.

Success in the coming decades will create added pressure as the skill content in virtually all work is increasing. Efforts to improve and upgrade knowledge, skills and competencies throughout the workforce, in both the private and the public sectors, must address a number of different challenges:

- An additional 300,000 employees with third-level qualifications will be required in the period up to 2010

- By 2015, one in four people will be employed in knowledge-intensive professions
- Skilled and semi-skilled work in manual, clerical and service occupations will still account for half of all jobs in Ireland in 2010
- 80 per cent of the predicted workforce in 2015 is currently employed

In meeting these challenges, and if Ireland is to develop as one of the leaders in the international knowledge economy, then lifelong learning will have to be improved. This is an area in which significant gains may accrue if real progress is achieved.

Ireland's workplace and a changing Ireland

Ireland's workforce is becoming more diverse and working patterns are becoming more varied. The demographics of the Irish workforce are changing rapidly and are demonstrated in the following:

- The number of young people entering the workforce is falling as lower birth rates feed through into the working age population
- The workforce is ageing. About 40 per cent of workers will be over the age of 45 by 2015
- Women now make up 42 per cent of the total, and are expected to account for 45 per cent by 2015
- Within the 25—34 age group, 43 per cent of women hold a third-level qualification compared to 36 per cent of men
- Women's patterns of employment and participation still differ significantly from those of men. Over 30 per cent of female employees work part-time, and account for over three quarters of all part-time workers
- Non-national workers make up a small but growing proportion of the workforce.

A critical issue is the ability to increase the labour supply by encouraging people to stay longer in the workforce, by increasing the number of women working outside the home and attracting labour from outside Ireland:

- Up to 420,000 additional workers must be attracted into the Irish economy in the period up to 2010
- An additional 30,000 workers per annum from outside the State are needed to meet labour market demands for both skilled and unskilled occupations
- Female participation in Ireland currently stands at 50 per cent — 10 per cent below its target for 2010 — and is over 20 per cent below that of men
- A significant pay gap between men and women remains and women are still very much under-represented in senior management positions
- Relative to most of the EU 25 countries Irish workers retire at an older age.

The above highlights the need to develop a more targeted focus on initiatives that will encourage participation by particular groups that are still under-represented in the workforce.

In addressing these challenges the Forum on the Workplace of the Future has brought into focus the workplace characteristics that are needed for sustained competitiveness, high quality public services and social inclusion.

The workplace of the future: A vision

To shape the development of Irish workplaces, the Forum, in conjunction with its expert panels, set out a vision of the workplace of the future. The vision has nine inter-locking characteristics summarised in the table opposite. The vision and the strategic action areas that flow from it are the result of intensive research and consultation with Government departments, trade union representatives, managers, employers' representatives and academics.

Vision of the workplace of the future		
Characteristics		Practices
All parts of the organisation and all employees are committed to the need for change and new ideas. Change is embraced willingly and all employees are constantly alert to opportunities for improvement and innovation.	Agile	Constant innovation in areas such as customer focus, learning, work organisation and management. Communication and dialogue with employees and investment in training to enable employees to absorb workplace change.
All decisions are informed primarily by a customer, client or citizen viewpoint, and all employees understand the impact of their work on the end-user of their organisation's product or service.	Customer centred	Positive approaches in areas such as fairness, equality, training, family-friendly practices and information and consultation have a significant impact on employee satisfaction and on employees' commitment to customer satisfaction.
The organisation and its people recognise that the knowledge content of all jobs is important to the organisation's performance and that the knowledge required for all jobs will change and adapt regardless of the nature of the work.	Knowledge intensive	Increasing scope for employee involvement, autonomy and input into decision-making. Internal relationships, formal and informal processes, and knowledge management systems which encourage employees to innovate and to share knowledge.
The organisation is alert to the needs and concerns of employees, and understands the importance of quality of working life for employees as individuals as well as for the overall well-being of the organisation.	Responsive to employee needs	Support for learning, access to opportunity and autonomy, work/life balance, health and safety and good quality employment opportunities.
The organisation and its people appreciate the need for external collaboration with business partners and suppliers, customers and research and educational institutions. The organisation is constantly alert to the possibilities associated with collaboration, networking and clustering of activities.	Networked	Cross-functional ways of working which establish opportunities for both formal and informal networking. Examples include shared service activities and public sector inter-agency working.
The organisation is structured around a high-performance ethos. High performance is actively encouraged and rewarded at all levels. There is a constant focus on opportunities for improvement and a bias towards implementation.	Highly productive	'Bundles' of practices which reinforce one another and which are customised to the particular requirements of the organisation. Practices include team-working, collaborative problem-solving, communication and sharing information, training and development, appraisal and feedback, and rewarding employees' contributions.
The organisation values and actively seeks involvement and participation by all employees. The culture, management systems and work processes are all designed to enable employees to become deeply involved in the search for sources of higher performance and innovation.	Involved and participatory	Culture of openness and employee involvement which encourages experimentation and innovation and builds employee satisfaction. New approaches to leadership and management and new management competencies to support forms of employee involvement and to build workplace partnerships, informal or formal.
Learning and experimentation are encouraged and there is an ongoing focus on training, skills and learning to increase the skill content in all work.	Continually learning	Informal and formal systematic processes of skills upgrading and continual learning centred on training plans, needs assessment, employee support and funding mechanisms.
The organisation understands the value of diversity in terms of business benefits and employee well-being. Diversity is approached as an integral part of the organisation's culture and management.	Proactively diverse	Equality and diversity linked to both the quality of employees' working life, and organisational performance in areas such as productivity, reduction in employee turnover, attracting and retaining high quality staff and organisational reputation.

Irish workplaces: An assessment

The vision agreed by the Forum provides a benchmark for what needs to be achieved in Ireland's workplaces in the years ahead. A critical challenge is how to make this vision a reality. Chapter 4 of the main report provides a detailed assessment of Irish workplaces. It shows that there is an evident appreciation of the need for workplace innovation and change among employers, unions and employees and evidence that some significant changes are already occurring. However, it also highlights a number of areas in which practices can be improved and these are summarised below.

- The adoption by organisations of comprehensive 'bundles' of work practices which have been shown to be associated with high performance and innovation is quite limited. These practices include employee financial involvement, team working and arrangements for work/life balance. In practice, many public and private sector organisations, in particular smaller companies, are missing out on the benefits associated with systematic workplace change.
- In the public service, areas of weakness noted by the OECD include knowledge management and performance management. The OECD view is that flexibility is inhibited by overly centralised human resource management and financial management systems.
- There is under-utilisation of the workforce due to insufficient employee involvement and participation in the workplace, and uneven investment in workplace training and lifelong learning.
- Many workplaces are missing out on opportunities to improve their capacity for change by failure to communicate and consult effectively with employees, and because of insufficient employee involvement.

Rapid action is needed to close current gaps in skills and to build the skills sets, both regionally and nationally, which will anticipate changing trends in technology and business conditions.

- The Forum identified basic skills gaps in literacy, numeracy and foreign languages but also in management and leadership, and provision of training, particularly in smaller organisations.
- A key challenge is the level of participation in life-long learning as Ireland currently ranks eighth out of the EU 15 and well behind the leading countries.
- The Forum's survey of employees suggests that a significant proportion of employees are not receiving regular training and that there is uneven access to workplace training, particularly for women, less skilled workers and older workers.

Despite progress in many areas, there is a persistent 'opportunities divide' in the Irish workplace. Workers who have higher levels of educational attainment and who hold more senior positions in the organisation are afforded greater opportunities. More specifically:

- There is a serious under-utilisation of women's high standards of education and skills. Workforce participation rates for women with third-level education lag well behind those for men
- Women are still experiencing barriers to taking full advantage of opportunities and their situation remains unequal in key areas such as pay and employment in managerial roles
- The Forum found that childcare is critical in this regard. However, in spite of ongoing efforts to improve childcare, Ireland continues to rank poorly by comparative standards. At the same time the cost to parents of childcare is the highest in Europe. Irish parents pay on average 20 per cent of their annual income towards childcare, which is almost twice the EU average of 12 per cent

- The Forum identified lack of access to family-friendly working arrangements and low educational attainment as key barriers facing lone parents.
- The Forum also found that people with disabilities, older workers, non-national workers and those in lower socio-economic groups face particular challenges in participating in the workforce.

An increasing proportion of Irish workplaces are developing flexible practices to improve the quality of working life. However, the diffusion of practices remains quite limited. The Forum identified factors which reduced employee stress and increased satisfaction. These included autonomy and giving employees more control over their working lives; consultation and meaningful involvement; training and opportunities for learning; family-friendly policies; and flexible work arrangements.

A National Workplace Strategy: Critical actions

To accelerate the pace of workplace innovation and change, and to address the challenges identified by the Forum, a co-ordinated approach to workplace development is required built around the following five strategic priorities:

- Commitment to workplace innovation
- Capacity for change
- Developing future skills
- Access to opportunities
- Quality of working life.

The Forum sets out 42 detailed recommendations in each of these areas, which taken together constitute a National Workplace Strategy as set out in the table overleaf. A full list of the recommendations is provided in the main report.

Commitment to workplace innovation

Recommendations 1–8

There is potential to substantially increase the rate of workplace innovation in Ireland. The first set of actions identified by the Forum focus on how the workplace characteristics identified in its vision can become more widespread across all sectors of the Irish economy.

The actions identified by the Forum are:

- Enhance the role and recognition of workplace innovation in the overall development of a national system of innovation and improve resources and support accordingly
- Establish a three-year dedicated fund under the aegis of the Council of the NCPP to promote innovation and research in human resource development, organisational change and lifelong learning
- Incorporate workplace innovation more explicitly into existing criteria for public policy and State funding aimed at supporting R&D and organisations
- Improve the workplace data infrastructure to achieve greater co-ordination and quality of information and especially, to implement a regular workplace survey to help assess progress in relation to workplace innovation at national and sectoral level
- Enhance the existing framework of networking with a focus on dissemination of good practice and know-how within and across sectors.

A National Strategy for Workplace Innovation

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

COMMITMENT TO WORKPLACE INNOVATION	CAPACITY FOR CHANGE	DEVELOPING FUTURE SKILLS	ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES	QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE
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CRITICAL ACTION AREAS

Resource and fund workplace innovation across the economy	Improve leadership and management capacity	Increase investment in training	Champion proactive strategies for diversity	Establish employability as a key principle
Make workplace innovation a key requirement in state funding awards	Increase employee involvement and autonomy	Facilitate continuous learning, ongoing upskilling and re-skilling	Improve childcare access, affordability and choice	Support and promotion of quality of working life
Co-ordinate and improve data collection	Enhance the effectiveness of the dispute resolution and avoidance system	Build three way commitment to individual lifelong learning (among Government, employers and employees)	Implement a transparent economic immigration policy	Address the opportunities divide
Develop innovation networks and benchmarking tools	Develop a more proactive role for unions which reflects the changing views of members	Foster an integrated approach to skills development	Encourage greater participation among key groups	Increase employee autonomy, involvement and learning



LEADING TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION
BY THE HIGH LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Capacity for change

Recommendations 9–19

The Forum believes that significant improvements in the capacity for change in the workplace can be secured through improving the ability of managers to lead and manage change through greater levels of engagement with employees and through more effective dispute resolution processes.

The actions identified by the Forum are:

- Improve leadership and management competencies, in particular in relation to change management, networking and people management:
 - Particular attention is required to support and incentivise small, young and indigenous firms who face specific challenges in developing their managers
 - The expansion of arrangements for open recruitment, mobility and knowledge management will also improve leadership and management capacity in the public service.
- Encourage public and private sector organisations to achieve greater HRM capability benchmarked against national and international best practice
- Increase levels of employee involvement and autonomy through improved information flows and consultation arrangements in all workplaces irrespective of size
- Increase the use of employee financial involvement by examining and addressing operational concerns and perceived barriers in different sectors, particularly among smaller companies. The issue of taxation in relation to gainsharing is one of a number of areas that must be examined in this context
- Enhance opportunities for employees to be involved in problem-solving and decision-making by broadening the development and understanding of workplace partnership-style approaches through promotion and dissemination of good practice models

- Unions to develop a more proactive role in meeting the changing needs of their members through the enhancement of employee involvement, partnership and dispute resolution
- Increase the emphasis on resolving employment and workplace problems near to their source. This requires that the relevant public agencies proactively assist employers, employees and unions in devising their own customised, in-house approaches to dispute resolution and avoidance.

Developing future skills

Recommendations 20–27

The development of an effective framework that supports individual and organisational participation in lifelong learning will improve Ireland's competitiveness across all sectors. In particular, it will support Ireland's transition to a knowledge economy.

The challenge of developing and maintaining a highly skilled workforce and lifelong learning must be tackled at individual, organisational and national level.

The actions identified by the Forum are:

- Increase public and private investment in training and development of those already in the workforce, in particular those workers in the middle and lower end of the labour market
- Make available additional resources for smaller businesses that experience significant problems in terms of affordability of training and its integration with work scheduling
- Develop and promote materials and resources to support individuals in the workforce in managing their lifelong learning progression:
 - Support ongoing learning through the use of career planning and the development of Personal Learning Plans for employees

International approaches based on a three-way commitment of resources from Government, employers and employees sometimes known as Personal Learning Accounts should be examined with a view to informing policy development in Ireland

- Foster a more integrated approach among Government departments, State agencies and educational establishments responsible for policy development, co-ordination and delivery. In particular, develop closer ties between the workplace and the education sector
- Implement the recommendations of the Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning and broaden the scope of the National Training Fund to support a wider range of workplace training initiatives
- Expand efforts to develop enterprise-led approaches to training and to improve participation in these activities

Access to opportunities in the workplace

Recommendations 28–37

There is a particular need to develop initiatives that will encourage greater participation by groups that are still under-represented in the workforce – especially women, older workers, lone parents, people with disabilities and non-national workers.

The actions identified by the Forum are:

- Develop policies and structures at national and organisational level to support the achievement of inclusive workplaces and a proactive approach to dealing with equality, diversity and flexibility as mainstream business issues:

Proactively manage diversity and flexibility in the workplace to create mutual benefits for employers and employees

Investment is required to address the needs of people with disabilities, both in the education system and the workplace

Implement the recommendations set out in the WorkWay project to improve recruitment rates of people with disabilities by employers in the private sector

The public service, as a major employer, needs to be a leader in equality and diversity

- Enhance measures to support women returning to the workplace
- Develop a multi-faceted, wide ranging policy response and practical solutions for the provision of effective childcare supports and arrangements. New approaches need to be explored based on a three-way commitment of resources by Government, employers and employees
- Bring forward at an early date the Employment Permits Bill which is currently in preparation to support a more responsive and robust economic immigration policy
- Enable older workers to combine work with other life roles through the availability of flexible work arrangements and develop flexible arrangements relating to retirement, pension, taxation and social security.

Quality of working life

Recommendations 38–40

Ensuring a good quality of working life for all workers needs to be a central part of Ireland's economic and social agenda in the coming years. It is important to note that many of the conclusions and associated policy recommendations discussed in other areas will also have an important bearing on the experience of all employees within the workplace.

The actions identified by the Forum are:

- Support a better quality working life through promotion and dissemination of the benefits of employee involvement, autonomy, flexibility, team-working and maintaining high standards of health and safety and better work/life balance arrangements
- Establish employability as a key principle. Security of employment – not always through continuity of tenure with a single particular employer – is a key determinant of the quality of working life. Employability depends on the ability of employees, with the active support of their employers and public agencies, to continuously develop their skills and competencies through lifelong learning and up-skilling
- Prioritise training and participation arrangements and support targeted initiatives at employees who experience the opportunities divide in the workplace
- Unions must continue to represent a broader range of employee concerns in areas such as work/life balance, training, continuous learning and career planning

Delivering the National Workplace Strategy

The Forum highlights Ireland's potential for achieving significant 'early-mover advantage' in relation to workplace change and development. Realising this potential requires all the relevant stakeholders to strongly commit to continuous workplace innovation. The actions and activities recommended by the Forum comprise a National Workplace Strategy and must be progressed in a coordinated and workplace-centred manner.

Ireland currently lacks the structures to ensure that this will actually happen. Public policy tends to address different aspects of the workplace in a discrete way and support for workplace development is not seen as a strategic policy objective. There is no dedicated national programme or strategy to support workplace development and modernisation, comparable to those established in some other countries such as Finland and Australia.

The Forum recommends the establishment of a High Level Implementation Group to develop and oversee the institutional arrangements needed for the successful implementation of the National Workplace Strategy (Recommendations 41-42).

[Editor's note: The HLIG was duly established in June 2005 – see Annex 1 for details.]

Investing in the type of workplace innovation outlined by the Forum will bring significant rewards and competitive advantage. The key question is whether the same energy that was invested in Ireland's economic transformation over the latter decades of the twentieth century can now be brought to bear on transforming Ireland's workplaces for the twenty-first century.

If you would like to receive a full copy of the National Workplace Strategy, please contact the NCPP on:

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or visit www.ncpp.ie/nws

Annex 1

National Workplace Strategy High Level Implementation Group

A High Level Implementation Group was established in June 2005 to oversee implementation of the National Workplace Strategy. The Group operates under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and is chaired by the Minister for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen, TD.

Membership of the Group comprises senior representatives from a range of Government departments and State agencies, as well as from the social partners.

Membership of the High Level Implementation Group (as at January 2007)

Tony Killeen, TD (Chairperson)
Minister for Labour Affairs,
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Catherine Byrne
General Treasurer, ICTU

Ciaran Connolly
Assistant Secretary General,
Department of Finance

Patricia Curtin
Assistant Director General, FÁS

Lucy Fallon-Byrne
Director, National Centre
for Partnership and Performance

Frances Gaynor
Assistant Principal Officer,
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Pat Hayden
Principal Officer,
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Eddie Keenan
Director of
Industrial Relations, CIF

Philip Kelly
Assistant Secretary General,
Department of the Taoiseach

Billie Mathews
Principal Officer,
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Paddy McDonagh
Assistant Secretary General,
Department of Education
and Science

Brendan McGinty
Director of IR and HR, IBEC

Denis Rowan
Director, Services to Business, FÁS

Martin Shanahan
Manager, Forfás

John Walsh
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Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Noel Waters
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National Workplace Strategy

It is widely accepted that the key to Ireland's future economic and social success lies in our ability to move quickly to high value-added and high-skilled activities.

To make this transition, we need workplaces that are innovative, dynamic and capable of adapting to change; workplaces that reflect the creative commitment of employers and employees alike.

Our workplaces must also be capable of creating new opportunities in an increasingly competitive global environment.

To foster in-depth discussion and analysis of how we can best support the development of such workplaces in Ireland, the National

Centre for Partnership and Performance, at the request of the Government, established the Forum on the Workplace of the Future in 2003.

Meeting over a period of almost two years, the Forum helped to build a clearer picture of the changes that will be required in our workplaces, across the public and private sectors, to enable them to operate in a modern knowledge economy.

Through its Final Report, the Forum has developed an ambitious vision for Ireland's workplaces and an integrated set of recommendations to deliver that vision. Together, they constitute the new **National Workplace Strategy**.

Between 2003 and 2005, the Forum assembled a wealth of information and analysis on Irish workplaces and on workplace change generally. This can be accessed through the NCPP's website at www.ncpp.ie. An Irish-language version of this document is also available on the website.