

PUBLIC SECTOR TRENDS

2023

29

STATE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE SERIES

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DECEMBER 2023

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FOREWORD

This report examines trends in public sector development and is the fourteenth in our annual series. The intention is to help inform the debate on Ireland's public sector and public administration, and its role in Irish society.

Here we try to bring some evidence to bear on the important debate on the future shape, size and direction of the public sector. Using data gathered from a number of sources, information on the size and cost of the public sector, the quality of public administration, efficiency and performance, and levels of trust and confidence is presented in a simple but rigorous manner.

In the State of the Public Service research series, we seek to provide evidence-informed research and commentary on key aspects of contemporary Irish public administration. The authors of these reports bring their considerable expertise and practical knowledge to the topics selected to provide evidence, insights and recommendations to support future development. Our aim is that these reports will not only inform, but also challenge current thinking about how the Irish public service performs. We intend that these short research reports will be of relevance and use not only to public servants, but also to policy makers and the wider public.

Helen Brophy
Director General
Institute of Public Administration

SELECTED FINDINGS

The size, cost and inputs of the public sector

- Average government spending per person was €21,240 per head in 2022. This is up significantly from 2019, reflecting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but slightly down on the 2021 figure.
- Ireland remains a very centralised state, with almost 80 per cent of expenditure undertaken by central government. In Denmark, by contrast, almost two-thirds of general government expenditure is the responsibility of local government.
- Public service employment as a percentage of total employment is falling. For 2023 the figure fell to 14.4 per cent from 15.6 per cent in 2021. This change brings it back more in line with the situation pre pandemic.
- Spending on public service pay and pensions has increased each year since 2014. Spending stands at approximately €26.6bn in 2023.
- Ireland is below average for Europe with regard to gender equality in senior management positions in national administrations. Women fill around one-third of senior management positions.

The quality and efficiency of public administration

- Executives see the quality of Irish public administration as significantly above the European average.
- The public rate the provision of public services in Ireland less well than in many European countries. In 2023, 55 per cent of all people surveyed said that the provision of public services in Ireland was good, compared to 82 per cent in the Netherlands.
- People in Ireland have a high expectation compared to other European countries that applications for government benefits or services will be treated fairly.
- Ireland ranks highest amongst European countries surveyed with regard to people feeling they can easily find information about administrative procedures.
- People in Ireland are less likely than others to believe that public services would improve if people complained.
- E-government in Ireland is ranked close to the European average.
- Ireland scores below the European average on an indicator concerning the delivery of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- Ireland is below the European average regarding using regulatory impact assessment for developing primary laws.

Sectoral performance

Education

- Irish students score well in reading with socio-economic background being less of an influence than in many European countries.
- Ireland's executives perceive the primary and secondary education system relatively highly in terms of it meeting the needs of the economy.

Health

- Ireland performs well compared to most European countries with regard to life expectancy at birth (82.4 years) and healthy life expectancy at birth (67.2 years).
- Ireland shows a low level of length of stay in hospitals (5.8 days in 2021), suggestive of a relatively high level of efficiency.

Environment

- The proportion of Irish people that see climate change as the most serious problem facing the world is high by European terms but has declined since 2021.
- A global environmental index indicates that Ireland's performance in the areas of climate change policy and ecosystem vitality policy is below the EU average.

Trust, satisfaction and confidence in public administration

- Trust in public institutions in Ireland is comparatively high compared to other European countries.
- Trust in local authorities has risen above the European average in recent years.
- While citizen satisfaction with the education system is above the European average, satisfaction with healthcare is below the European average.
- Citizen satisfaction with administrative services is towards the lower end of European countries surveyed. Satisfaction is particularly low amongst the 18-29 age group.
- Ombudsman offices received 9,029 complaints in 2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are no clear or agreed definitions for comparative ranking of public administrations. However, there is widespread agreement that a number of elements should be included in any assessment:

- *The size, cost and inputs of the public sector.* While size of the public sector, its cost and its inputs are not the sole or even main determinants of good public administration, nevertheless in terms of value for money in the delivery of public services, keeping check on the size, cost and other inputs of the public sector and public service is an important consideration.
- *The quality and efficiency of public administration.* Public administration includes policy-making, policy legislation and management of the public sector. Such dimensions of public administration are frequently measured by subjective indicators of quality, which give a sense of how good the public administration is. There is also an onus on public administration to deliver services efficiently.
- *Sectoral performance.* The delivery of social, economic and environmental outcomes in an efficient manner is central to an effective public administration.
- *Trust, satisfaction and confidence in public administration.* The public ultimately must have trust, satisfaction and confidence in the public administration of a country if it is to be effective.

In this study, we examine indicators for each of these four elements of public administration. Where possible and appropriate, data is included for other European countries, in order to enable comparisons. In addition, where data are available, we have provided trend data going back over the last decade. The intention is to provide a snapshot of trends in public administration performance in Ireland, to highlight where we are doing well, what challenges are present, and where improvements can be made.

In a number of charts, as well as showing Ireland's rating relative to the European Union (EU) plus the UK averages, the top ranked and bottom ranked country as at the time of the most recent data gathering are included for comparative purposes.

In its style and content, the format for the report, which has remained largely unchanged since 2010, drew on a number of efforts to benchmark and compare public sector efficiency and performance. These

include a European Central Bank (ECB) international comparison of public sector efficiency¹, a study by the Netherlands Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) of comparative public sector performance², the World Bank governance indicators project³, the OECD Government at a Glance project⁴, and an IPA study comparing public administrations⁵.

Climate change and environmental degradation represent significant existential threats to how we all live. The European Green Deal sets out to address these challenges, and how we tackle these challenges here in Ireland will also have a significant bearing on how successful we are in delivering social and economic outcomes which are both effective and sustainable. From 2022 we have therefore included some indicators to try and assess performance across climate and the broader environment.

A word of caution about data limitations

The data presented here should be interpreted with great care. First, there is the issue of whether the indicators used to represent public administration provision and quality really captures what public service is about. Indicators, by their nature, only give a partial picture. Second, much of the international comparative data in this report is qualitative data derived from opinion surveys. Some of this survey data comprises small-scale samples of opinion from academics, managers and experts in the business community. The survey data is thus limited in terms of both its overall reliability and the fact that some surveys represent the views of limited sections of the community. Third, the point scores arrived at on some indicators (for example, on a scale from 1–10 for the IMD data and between –2.5 and +2.5 for the World Bank governance indicators) should not be interpreted too strictly, as there are margins of error associated with these estimates. Fourth, changes over short periods should be viewed cautiously. Many of the indicators assessed represent 'snapshots' at one particular point in time. Small shifts in annual ranking are not particularly meaningful.

In all, when interpreting the findings set out in this paper, these limitations should be borne in mind. In particular, small variations in scores should be interpreted cautiously. These may be no more than random variations to be expected given the data being used. What is of interest is to identify broad patterns and trends emerging from the data.

1 Afonso et al (2003)

2 Social Cultural and Planning Office (2004)

3 See <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>

4 See <http://www.oecd.org/governance/govtaglance.htm>

5 Boyle (2007)

2. THE SIZE, COST AND INPUTS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

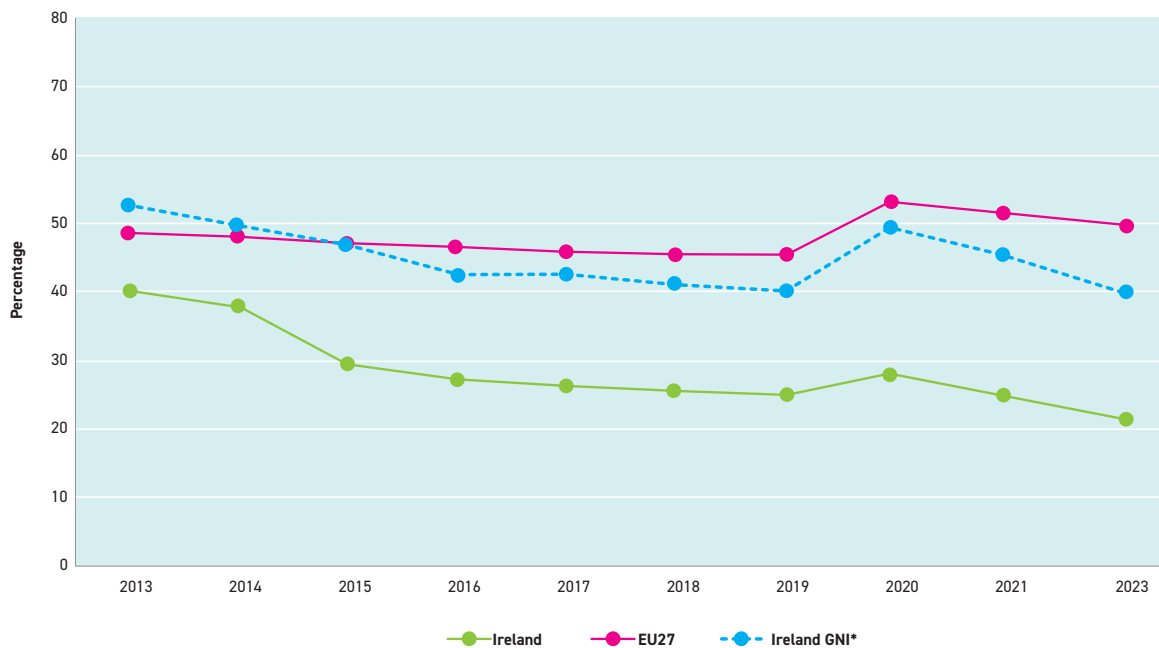
Here we present a range of indicators that show the size, cost and other inputs of the public sector and public service⁶.

⁶ In this study, the public service is defined as the public sector minus the commercial state-sponsored bodies.

Government expenditure as a share of the economy in Ireland is below the EU average and is currently decreasing

FIGURE 1 GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AS SHARE OF GDP/GNI*

Sources: Eurostat and Central Statistics Office.



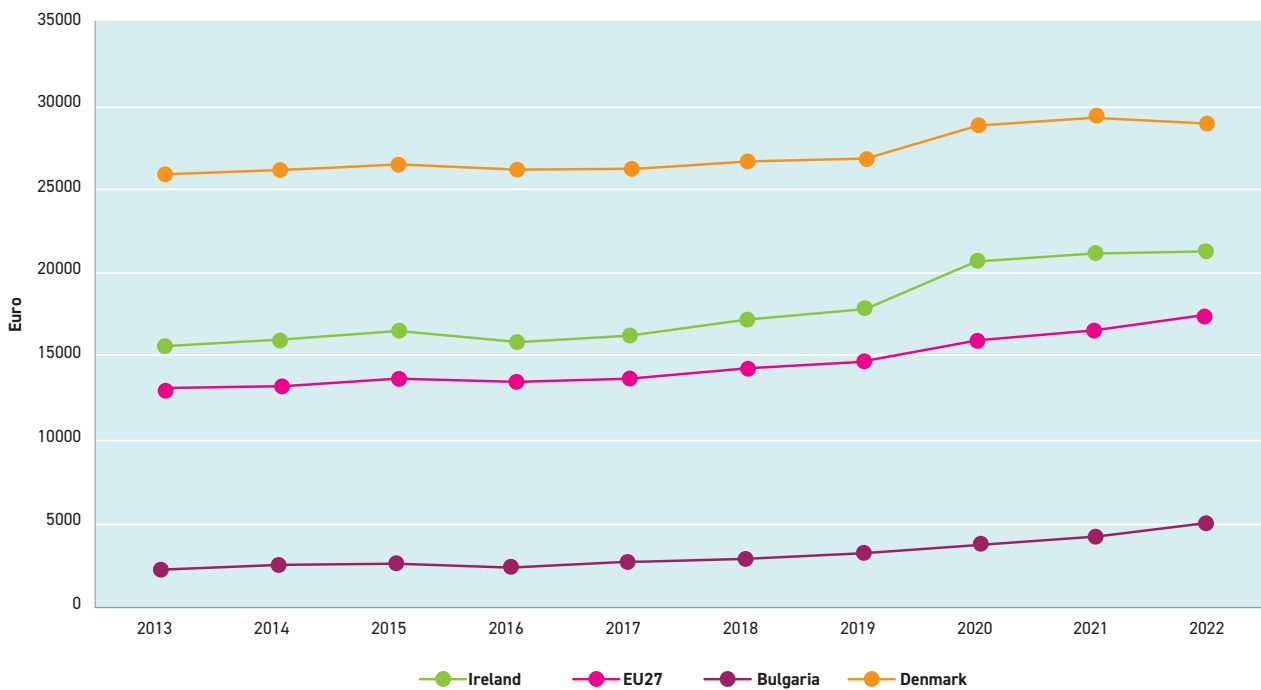
- Internationally, a commonly used indicator of public spending in the economy is government expenditure as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product).
- From 2011, as spending reductions introduced by the government came into effect, and the economy recovered from the effects of the global financial crisis, expenditure as a percentage of GDP has fallen considerably below the European average.
- In recent years, the reliability of GDP data for Ireland for comparative purposes is open to question, due to the effects of the large scale of multinational company activity in Ireland⁷. In 2017, the Central Statistics Office developed a new indicator, GNI*, or modified GNI (gross national income). Using this indicator, general government expenditure as a share of the economy is still below the European average.
- The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on government spending and the economy is evident in the figures for 2020. Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP/GNI* increased both in Ireland and across Europe. However, for 2021 and 2022, government expenditure as a percentage of GDP/GNI* has fallen in Ireland and across the EU.

⁷ John Fitzgerald (2016), Problems with the Irish National Accounts and Possible Solutions, Dublin: Central Statistics Office.

Growth in government expenditure per head of population has slowed down

FIGURE 2 GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE PER HEAD OF POPULATION

Source: Eurostat



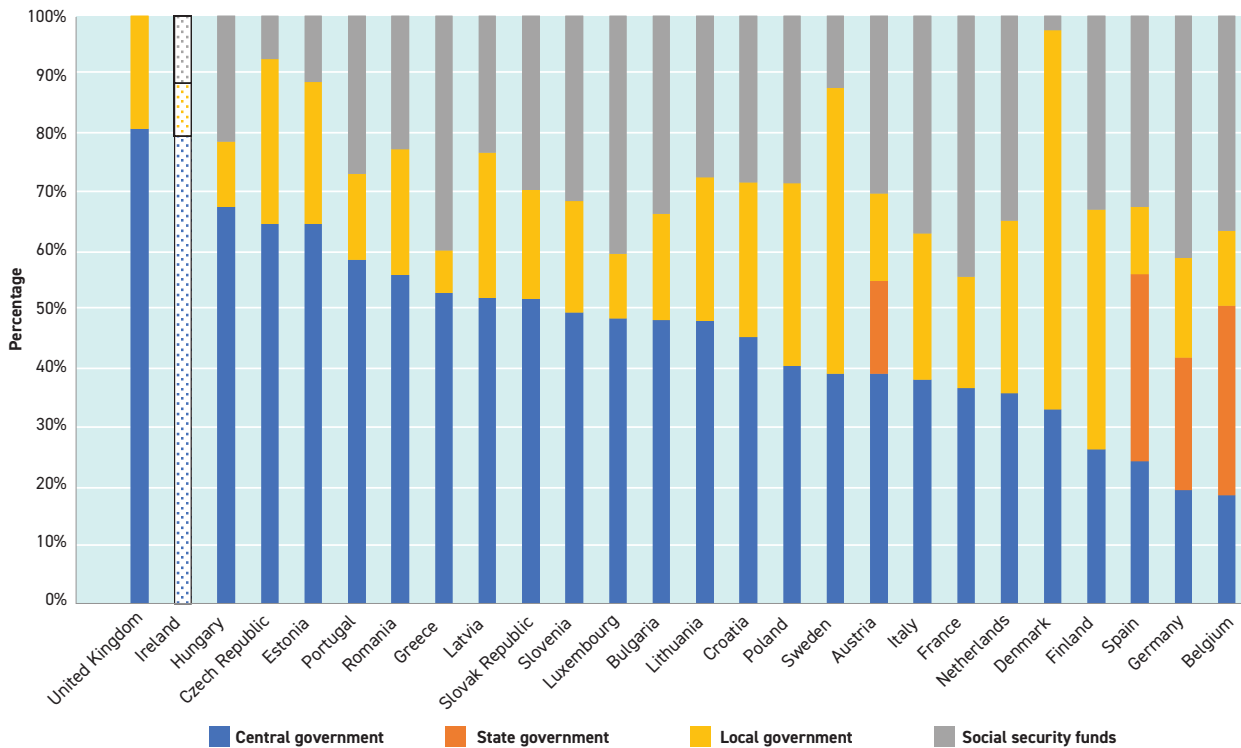
- Expenditure per head of population grew faster in Ireland than the EU average up to 2010 and then fell back somewhat.
- From 2013 to 2017 government expenditure per head remained relatively constant. It has been increasing gradually in recent years. Between 2019 and 2020 there was an increase of 18 per cent in government spending per person; the largest yearly increase in recent years. This notable increase in spending per person primarily shows the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then growth in spending has been much slower, especially compared to the EU average.
- The expenditure per person in 2022 was €21,240.
- Denmark, shown on the chart, is one of the highest spenders on this indicator, while Bulgaria has the lowest level of government expenditure per head of population in the EU⁸.

⁸ Luxembourg has by far the highest level of general government expenditure per head of population, at €52,413 in 2022, but is atypical. Denmark is more representative of countries that have a high level of government spending per head of population.

Irish government expenditure is one of the most centralised in Europe

FIGURE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ACROSS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT 2022

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

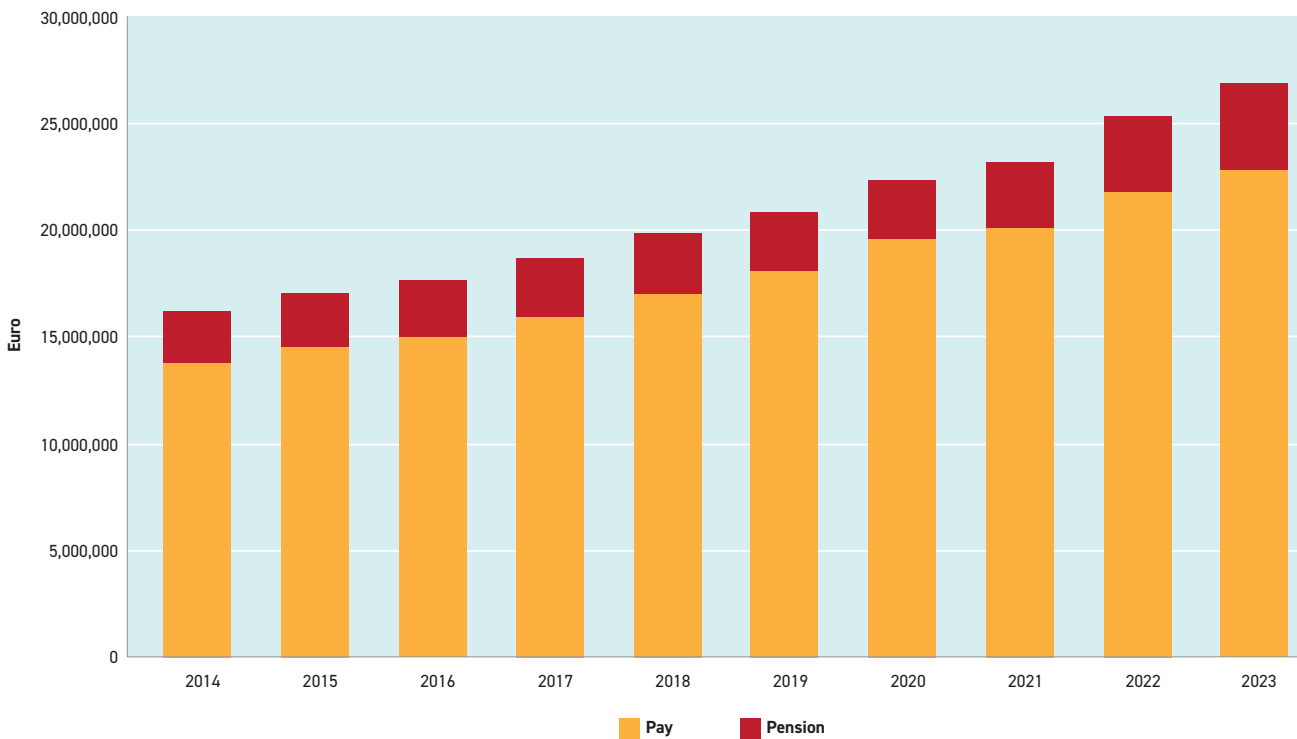


- The tasks of government are shared between different levels of government. The nature of this share-out varies markedly between countries.
- Ireland has a very high share of general government expenditure allocated at national level in the OECD in 2022, with almost 80 per cent of expenditure undertaken by central government.
- In Denmark almost two-thirds of general government expenditure is the responsibility of local government.

Expenditure on public service pay and pensions continues to grow

FIGURE 4 PUBLIC SERVICE PAY AND PENSIONS

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Databank.

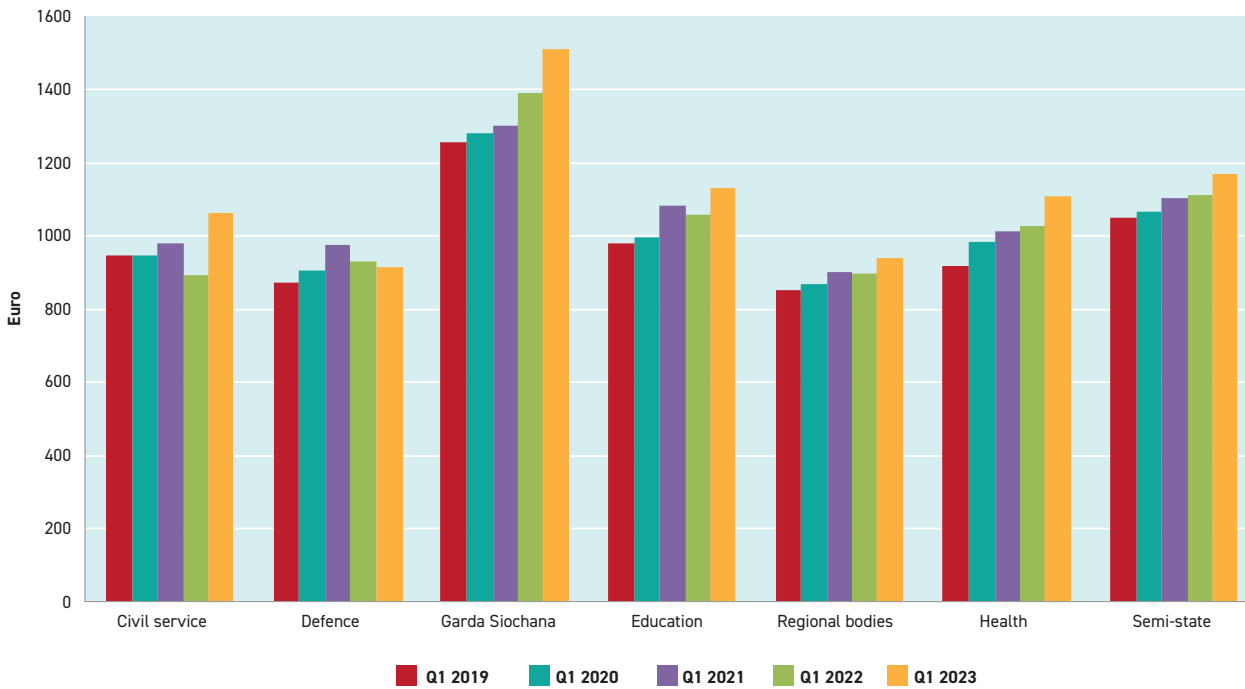


- The public service pay and pension bill reached €18.7bn in 2008. From 2008 to 2014, as cutbacks in numbers and pay introduced by the Government took effect, expenditure on public service pay and pensions decreased to €16.2bn in 2014.
- Spending on public service pay and pensions has increased each year since 2014. Spending stands at almost €26.6bn in 2023, its highest ever total.
- Pensions account for just over €3.4bn (13 per cent) of the total pay and pension bill in 2023.

Average weekly earnings in the public sector rose for most sub sectors in 2023

FIGURE 5 PUBLIC SECTOR AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

Source: CSO. Figures are for Q1 each year.

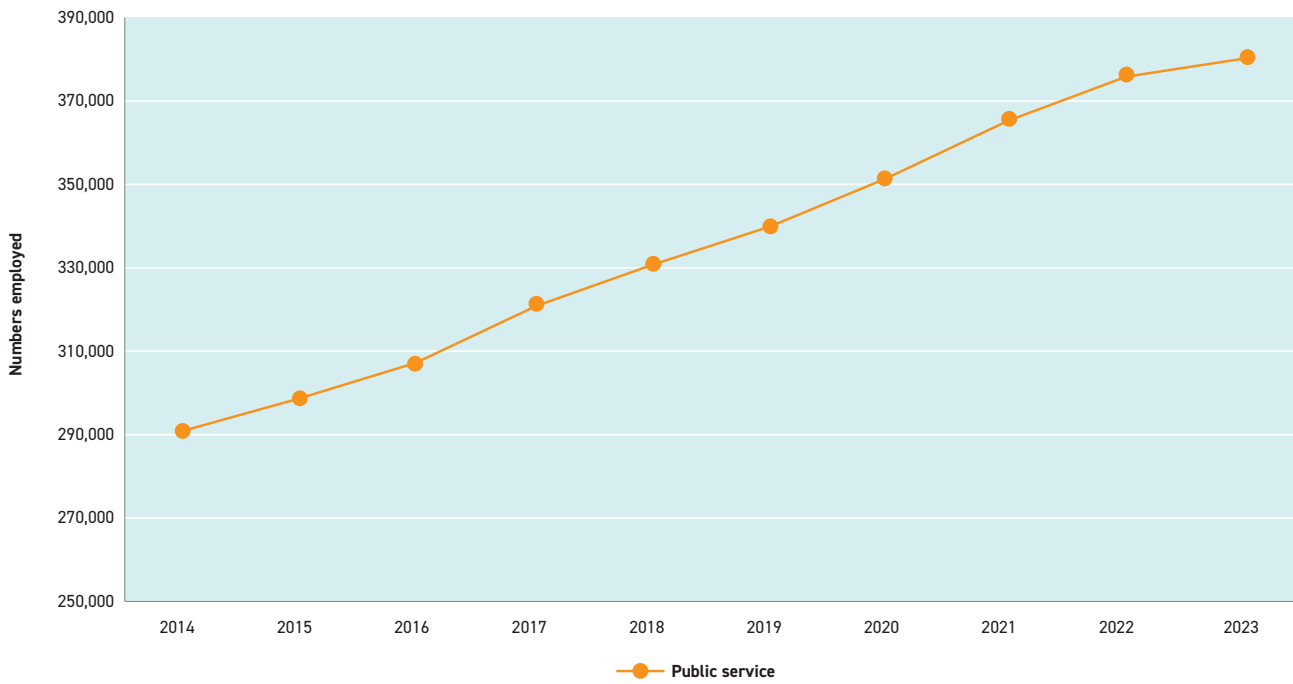


- These are gross earnings figures before deductions for PRSI, tax and other levies. The CSO note that this is particularly relevant to the public sector since March 2009 when the pension levy was introduced.
- Average weekly earnings rose in most subsectors (excluding defence) for 2023, after a fall in 2022 probably largely reflecting the impact of Covid-19.

There is a continuing trend of growth in the numbers employed in the public service

FIGURE 6 NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Databank⁹



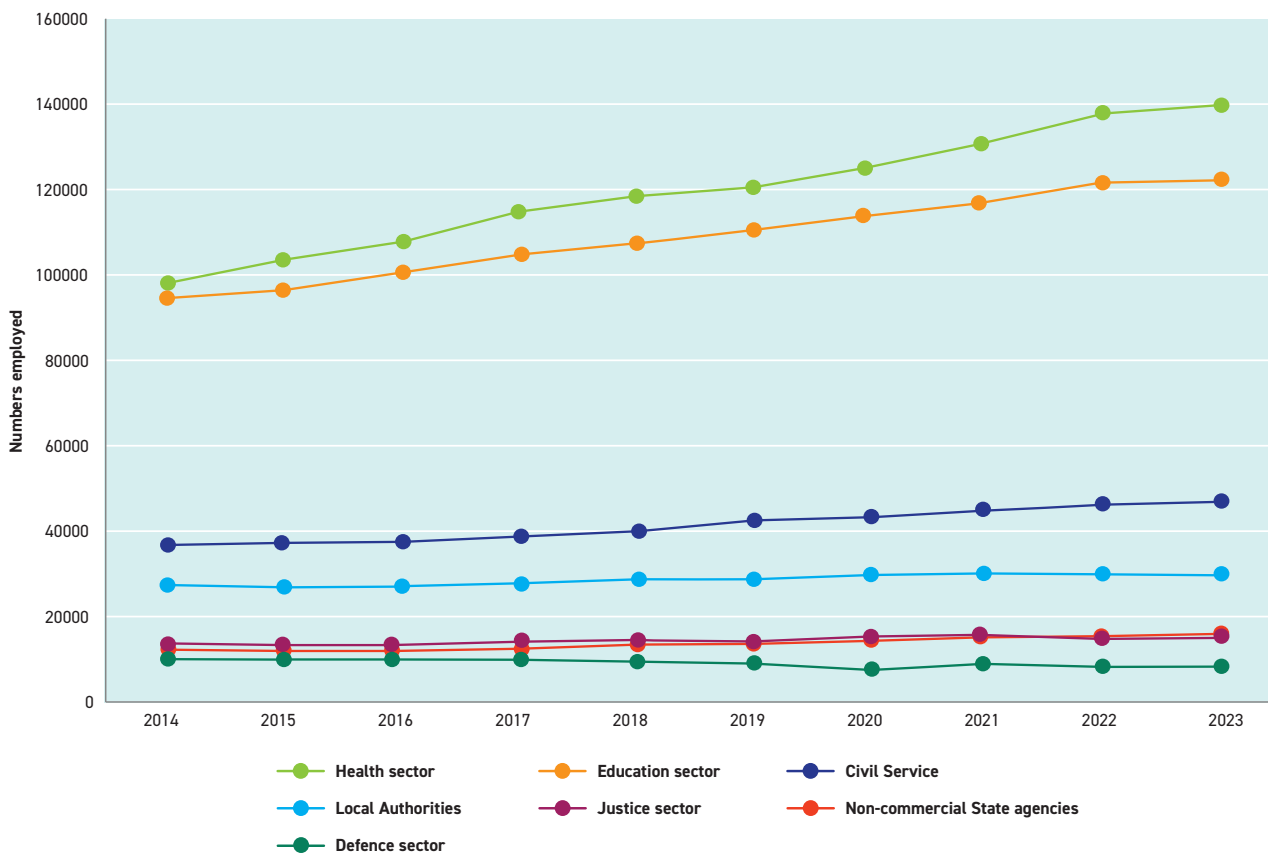
- From its then peak in 2008, the total number of people employed in the public service dropped from 320,000 to 288,000 in 2013, a drop of 10 per cent.
- The number of people employed in the public service has risen steadily since 2013.
- In 2023, the numbers employed in the public service stood at 380,000.

⁹ Figures are for end of year, apart from 2023, which is for Q1. Figures are for full-time equivalents rather than actual numbers of people.

The health and education sectors account for the vast majority of public service jobs

FIGURE 7 PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Databank¹⁰



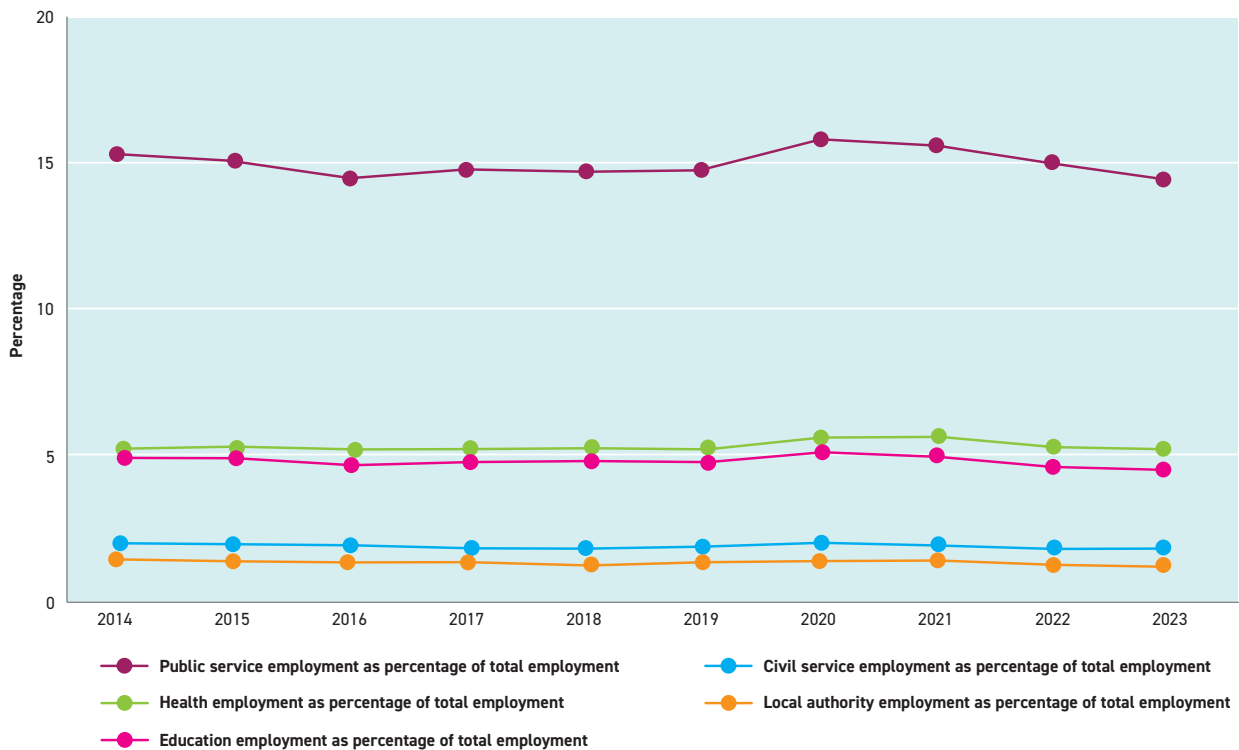
- 69 per cent of people employed in the public service work in either health or education. This is up from 66 per cent in 2013
- In 2023, there were approximately 140,000 people employed in the health sector and 122,000 people employed in the education sector.
- The defence and local authority sectors are the only sectors where employment remains lower than in was back in 2008, before the cutbacks arising from the global financial crisis. Defence is the only sector where employment is lower than it was in 2014.

¹⁰ Figures are for end of year, apart from 2023 which is for Q1, the most recent available.

While numbers employed in the public service have increased over the last decade, as a proportion of the total workforce public service employment has remained relatively constant

FIGURE 8 PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Databank¹¹, CSO



- Over the past decade, public service employment has generally remained around 15 per cent of total employment¹². However, for 2023 the figure fell to 14.4 per cent from 15.6 per cent in 2021. This change probably reflects the strong employment growth in the private sector and brings it back more in line with the situation pre pandemic.
- For 2023, 5.3 per cent of all those in employment are employed in the health sector, and 4.6 per cent in education. 1.8 per cent of those in employment are civil servants, and 1.2 per cent are in local authorities.

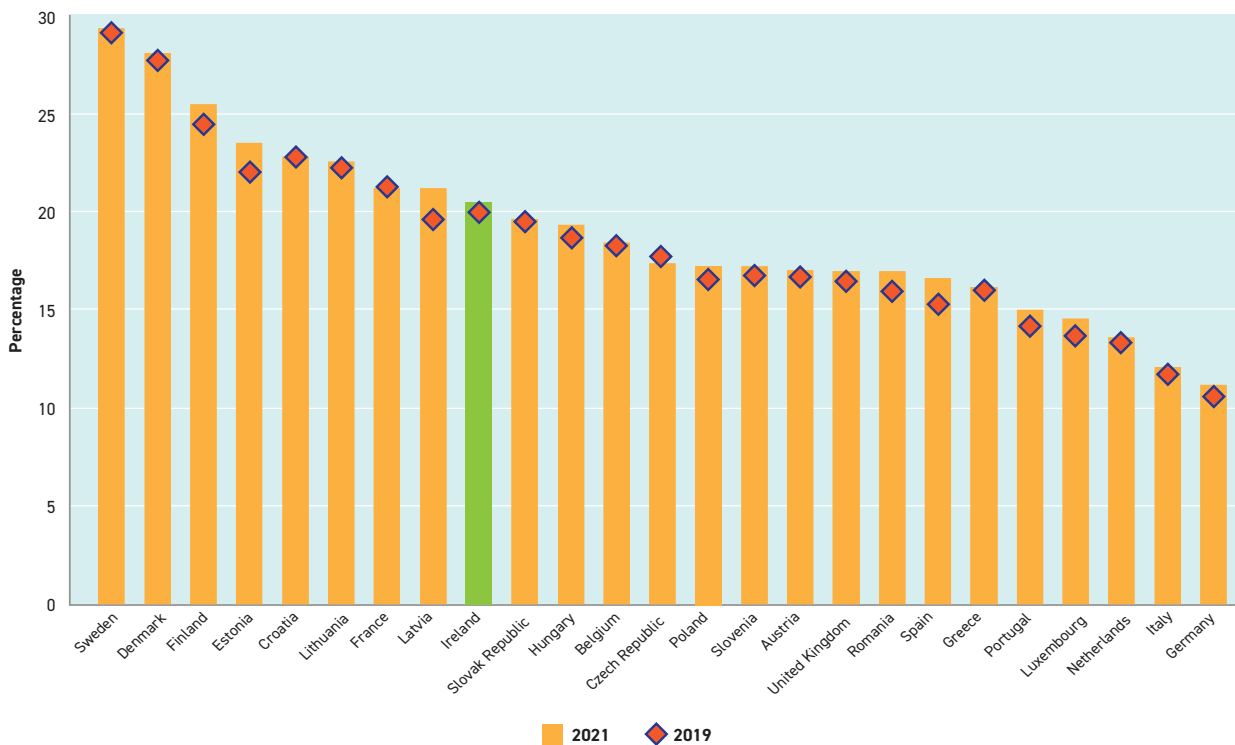
¹¹ Figures are for end of year, apart from 2023 which is for Q1, the most recent available.

¹² Much of the public service data provided refers to full-time equivalents rather than actual numbers of people. So public service employment as a percentage of total employment is in reality larger than that reported. The size of the difference is unknown, though Foley (2009, p.86) estimated it at around 1 per cent in 2007.

Employment in government as a percentage of total employment is close to the European average

FIGURE 9 EMPLOYMENT IN GENERAL GOVERNMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 2019 AND 2021

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

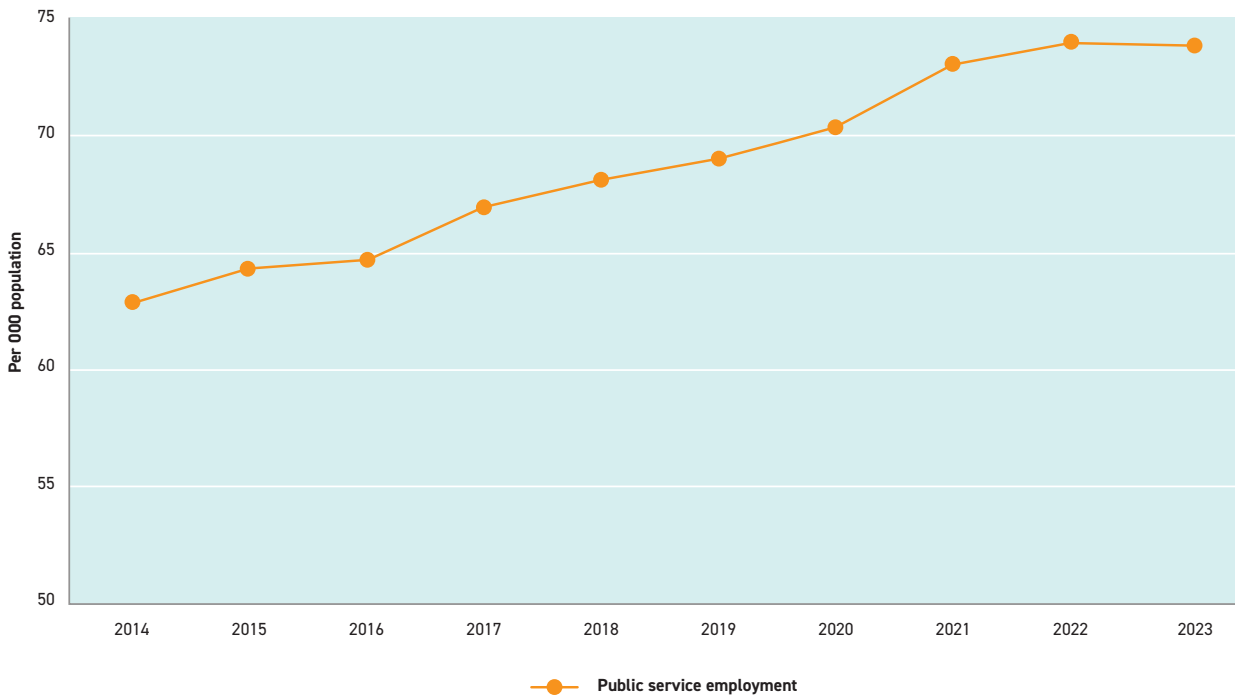


- The size of government employment varies significantly amongst European countries, from 29.3 per cent of the labour force in Sweden to 11.1 per cent in Germany in 2021.
- In Ireland in 2021, employment in general government services accounted for 20.5 per cent of the labour force.

Public service employment relative to the total population has levelled off over the last couple of years after growing for a number of years

FIGURE 10 PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PER 000 POPULATION

Source: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Databank¹³, CSO



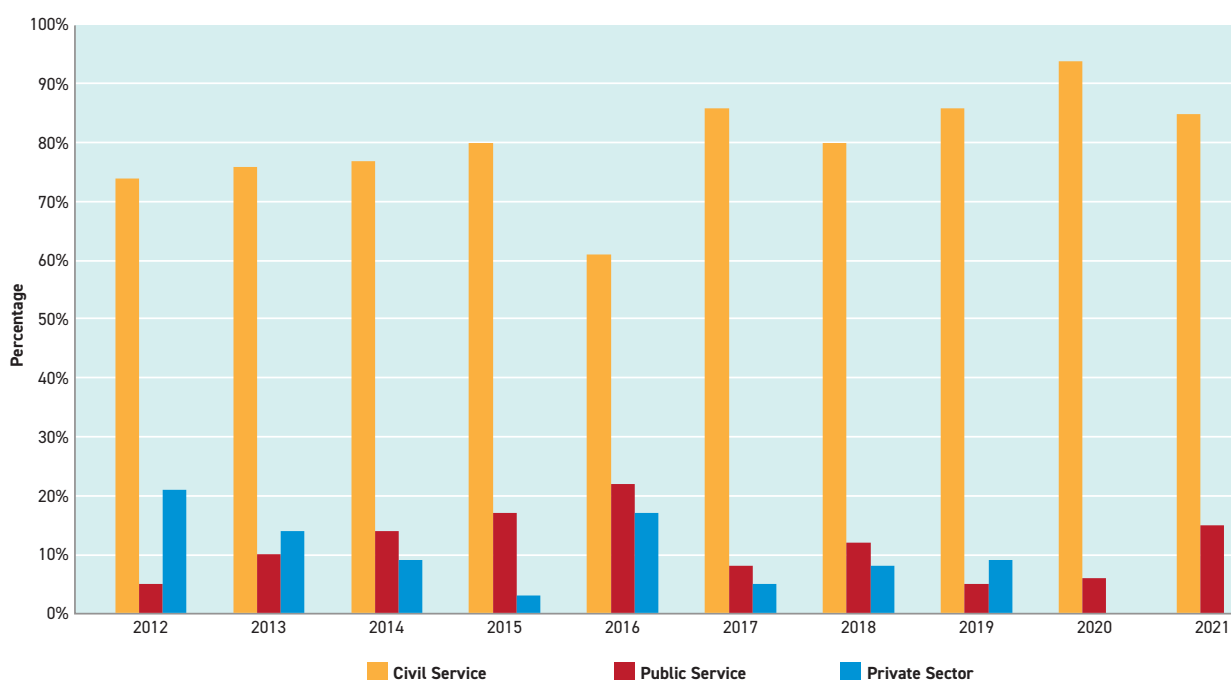
- While public service employment levels have been changing, the population has continued to increase.
- Public service employment relative to the population was relatively stable at between 70 and 73 public service employees per 000 population up to 2008, but dropped rapidly from 2008 until 2013, following the global financial crisis, when it was at 62.8 public service employees per 000 population.
- From 2013 to 2023 the number of public service employees per 000 population has gradually increased, to 73.9 per 000 population. The 2023 figure is a slight reduction on that in 2022.

¹³ Figures are for end of year, apart from 2023 which is for Q1

Applicants from within the civil service continue to fill nearly all top-level civil service posts

FIGURE 11 PERCENTAGE OF SUCCESSFUL TOP LEVEL APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE (TLAC) CANDIDATES RECOMMENDED TO MINISTER/GOVERNMENT BY SECTOR

Source: Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) Tenth Report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021 Developments & Trends



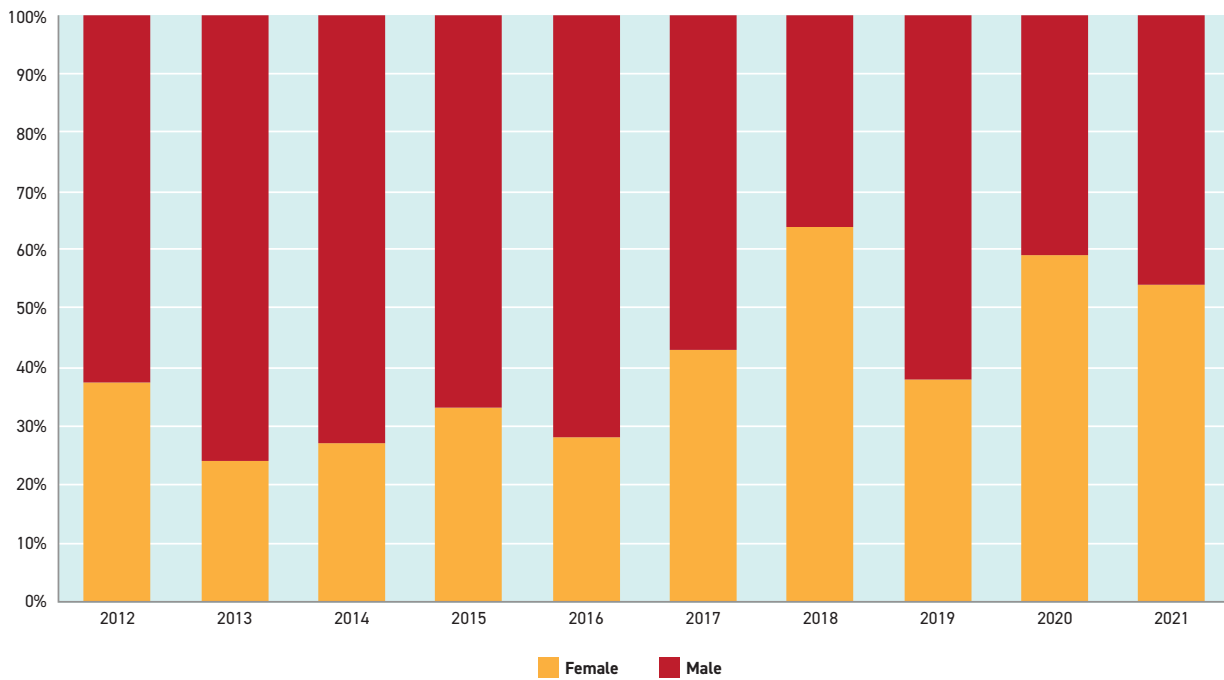
- Over 80 per cent of top-level appointments¹⁴ have been filled by applicants from within the civil service in recent years.
- The proportion of top-level appointments filled by private sector applicants reached a high of 21 per cent in 2012 but has been lower each year since then. There have been no private sector appointments in the last two years.
- The proportion of top-level posts filled from the wider public service rose from 5 per cent in 2012 to 22 per cent in 2016, but has dropped back since then. It increased to 15 per cent in 2021.
- In 2021, 85 per cent of those recommended for employment came from the civil service, 15 per cent from the wider public service, and none from the private sector. This despite just over 50 per cent of all applicants coming from outside the civil service, with 30 per cent coming from the private sector.

¹⁴ Top-level appointments covers the most senior positions in the civil service – at assistant secretary general level and upwards.

Women have filled the majority of top-level posts in recent years

FIGURE 12 TOP LEVEL APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE (TLAC) SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES BY GENDER

Source: Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) Tenth Report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021 Developments & Trends

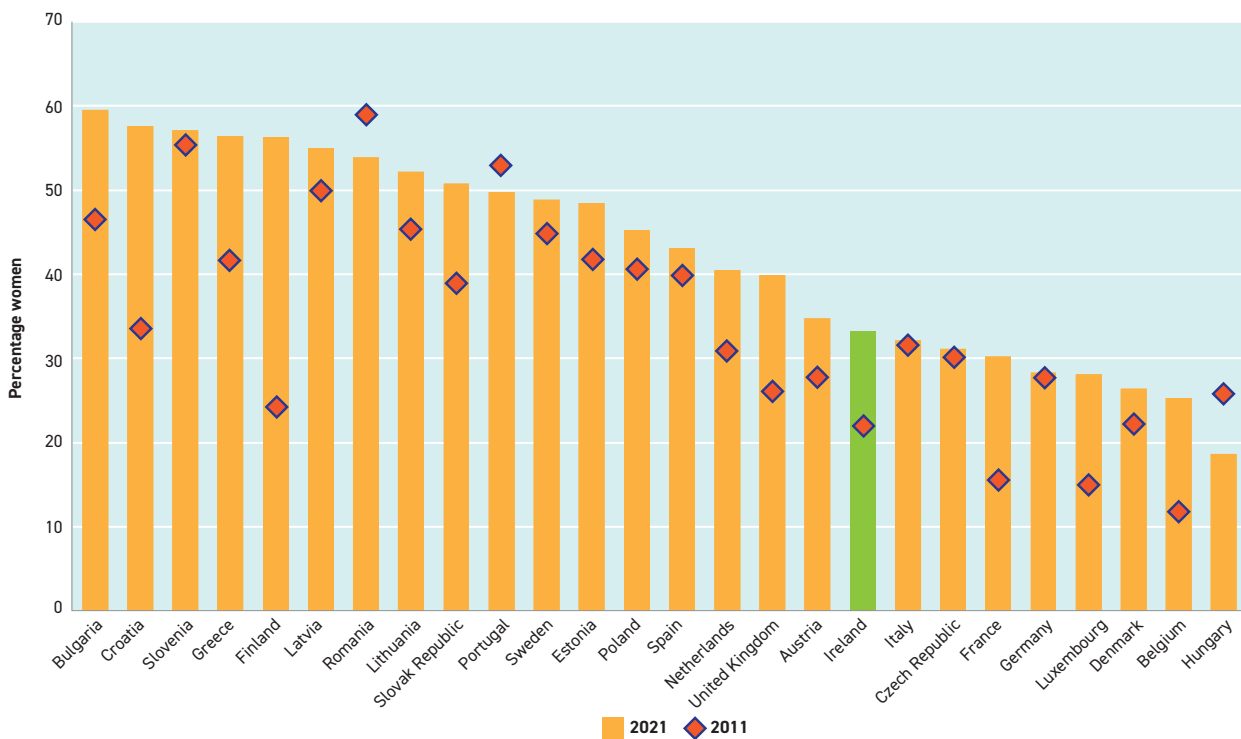


- The proportion of top-level posts filled by women varied between roughly a quarter and a third of all posts up to 2017.
- There has been a notable increase in recent years in the proportion of top-level posts filled by women, for the first time over 50 per cent, at 64 per cent in 2018. After a drop to 38 per cent in 2019, it increased again to 59 per cent in 2020, and 54 per cent in 2021.

Ireland is below average for Europe with regard to gender equality in senior management positions in national administrations

FIGURE 13 GENDER EQUALITY IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN A NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS 2011 AND 2021

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

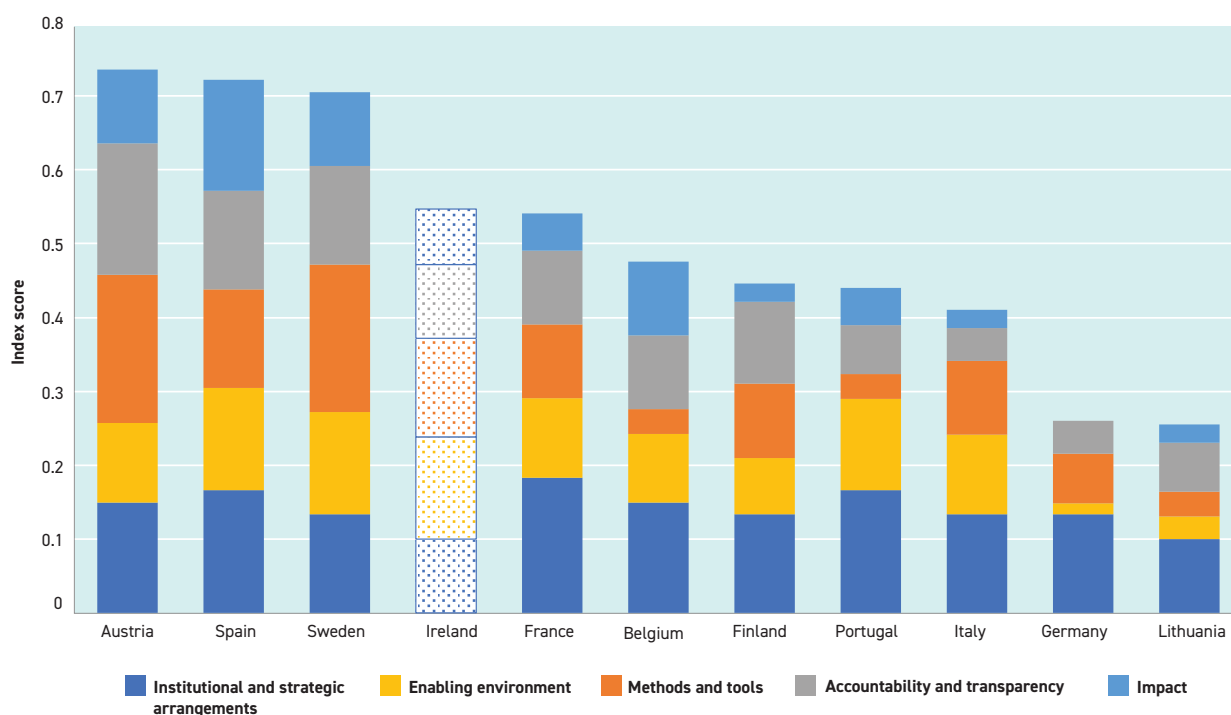


- Equal representation of women and men in the public sector is a key indicator of progress towards gender equality and diversity.
- The share of women in senior positions in central government in Ireland is below the average for Europe. Women fill around one-third of senior management positions.

Ireland is mid-ranking in European terms with regard to its approach to gender budgeting

FIGURE 14 OECD GENDER BUDGETING INDEX 2022

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

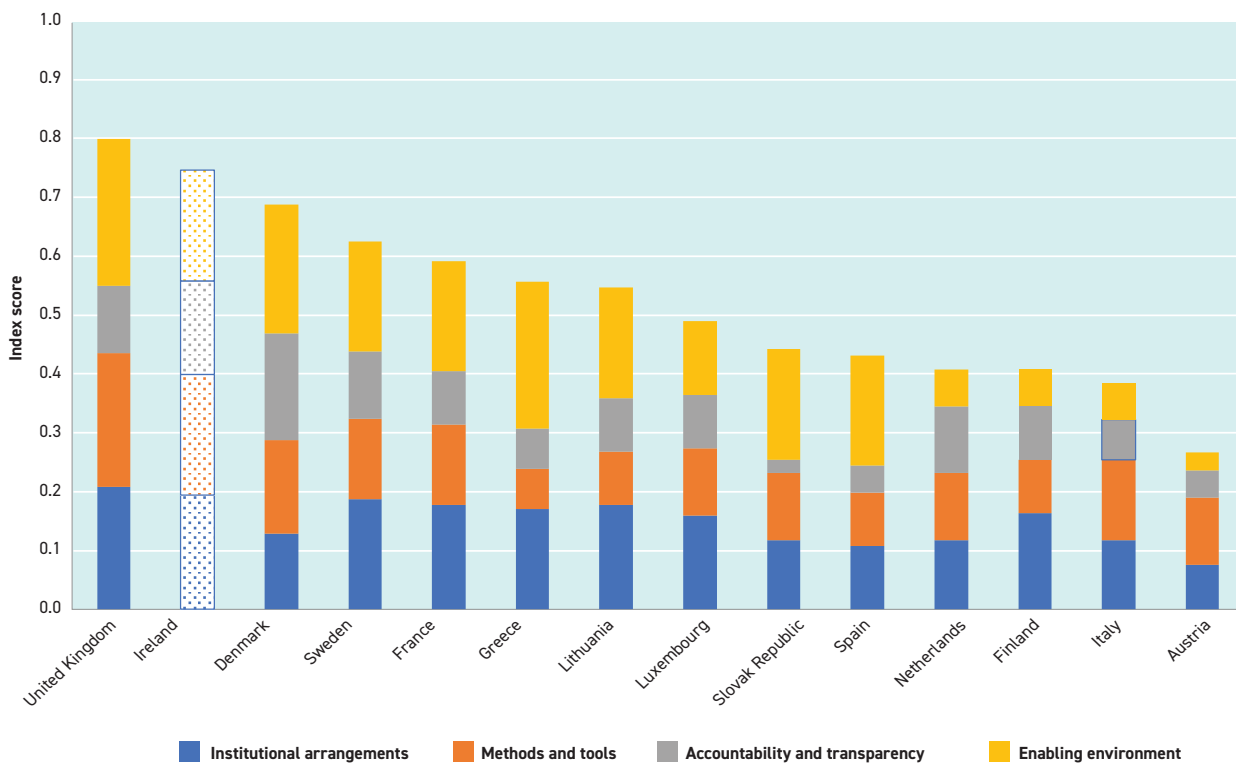


- The OECD's Gender Budgeting Index assesses the implementation of gender budgeting across member countries. In 2022 the Index was designed around the five building blocks of the 2023 OECD Framework for Gender Budgeting: (1) institutional and strategic arrangements; (2) enabling environment; (3) methods and tools; (4) accountability and transparency; and (5) impact.
- Ireland is mid-ranking in European terms on this index, some way below the scores achieved by the three leaders Austria, Spain and Sweden. Ireland scores least well comparatively with regard to institutional and strategic arrangements.

Ireland scores well in European terms regarding its approach to green budgeting

FIGURE 15 OECD GREEN BUDGETING INDEX 2022

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Green budgeting refers to the use of budgetary policy-making tools to progress climate and environmental objectives. The 2022 OECD Green Budgeting Index shows the varying degrees to which OECD countries have adopted green budgeting. It is designed to reflect the adoption of green budgeting practices, based on the four building blocks of the OECD Green Budgeting Framework.
- Ireland ranks second of the European countries surveyed for this index, behind the United Kingdom.

3. THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

An indicator of the quality of public administration, based on work undertaken by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (2004) in the Netherlands and taken further by Boyle (2007) is used to assess the quality of public administration. Eight indicators derived from the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) executive opinion survey are combined to make up an aggregate public administration quality indicator (see Appendix 1 for details). It is complemented by two subsets of this indicator, one of which shows trends in perception about the application of traditional public service values in public administration, the other showing perceptions of the type of competitive and regulatory regime fostered by public administration.

These quality indicators are supplemented by a range of other indicators of aspects of quality and efficiency.

Executives see the quality of Irish public administration as above the European average

FIGURE 16 QUALITY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCORE

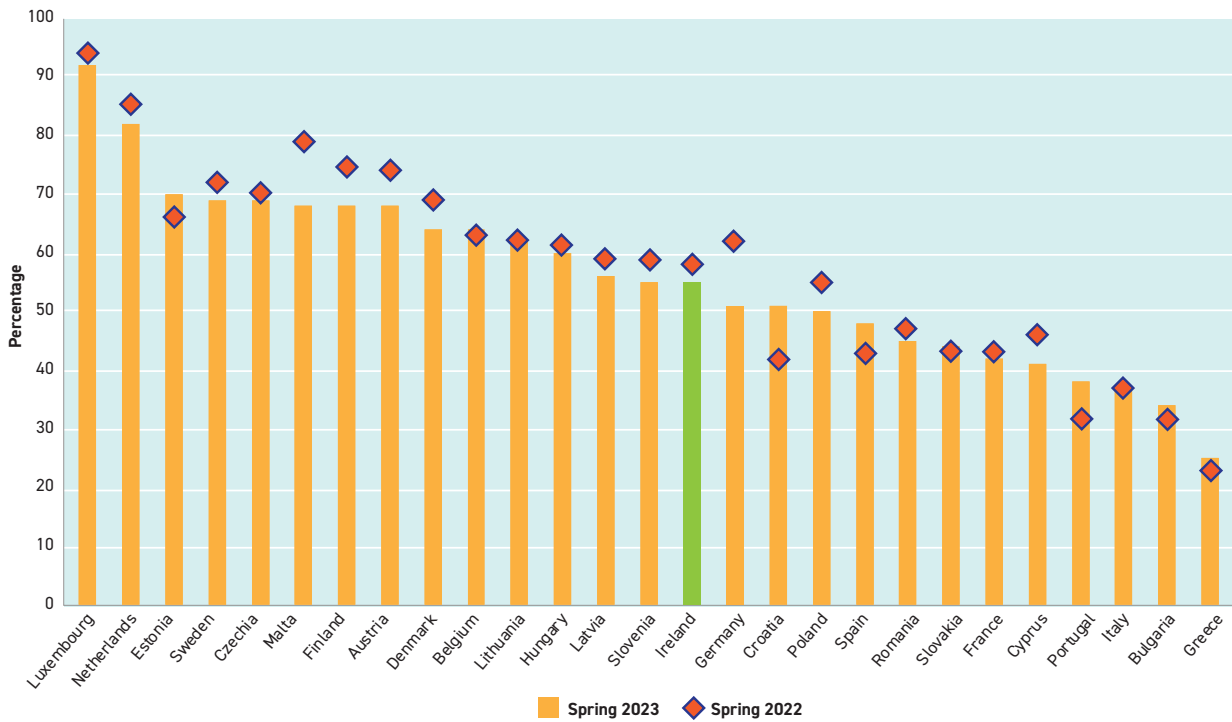
Source: IPA analysis based on IMD World Competitiveness yearbook data



- This quality indicator measures executives' opinions of the quality of public administration as assessed by a range of indicators covering issues such as the existence of bribery and corruption, and transparency of decision making (see Appendix 1 for full list).
- After falling slightly from 2019 to 2021, Ireland's score on the quality of public administration index stabilised in 2022 and increased in 2023. Ireland came fourth of the EU27+UK on this indicator in 2023.

The public rate the provision of public services in Ireland less well than in many European countries

FIGURE 17 TOTAL POSITIVE FEELINGS TOWARDS - PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICE
Source: Eurobarometer



- In spring 2023, 55 per cent of all people surveyed said that the provision of public services in Ireland was good. This was a small decrease since 2022.
- Luxembourg and the Netherlands receive the highest rating, at 92 per cent and 82 per cent respectively rating public service provision as good.

Irish ranking among executives for the maintenance of traditional public service values is well above the European average

FIGURE 18 TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES INDICATOR (TPSVI)

Source: IPA analysis based on IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook data

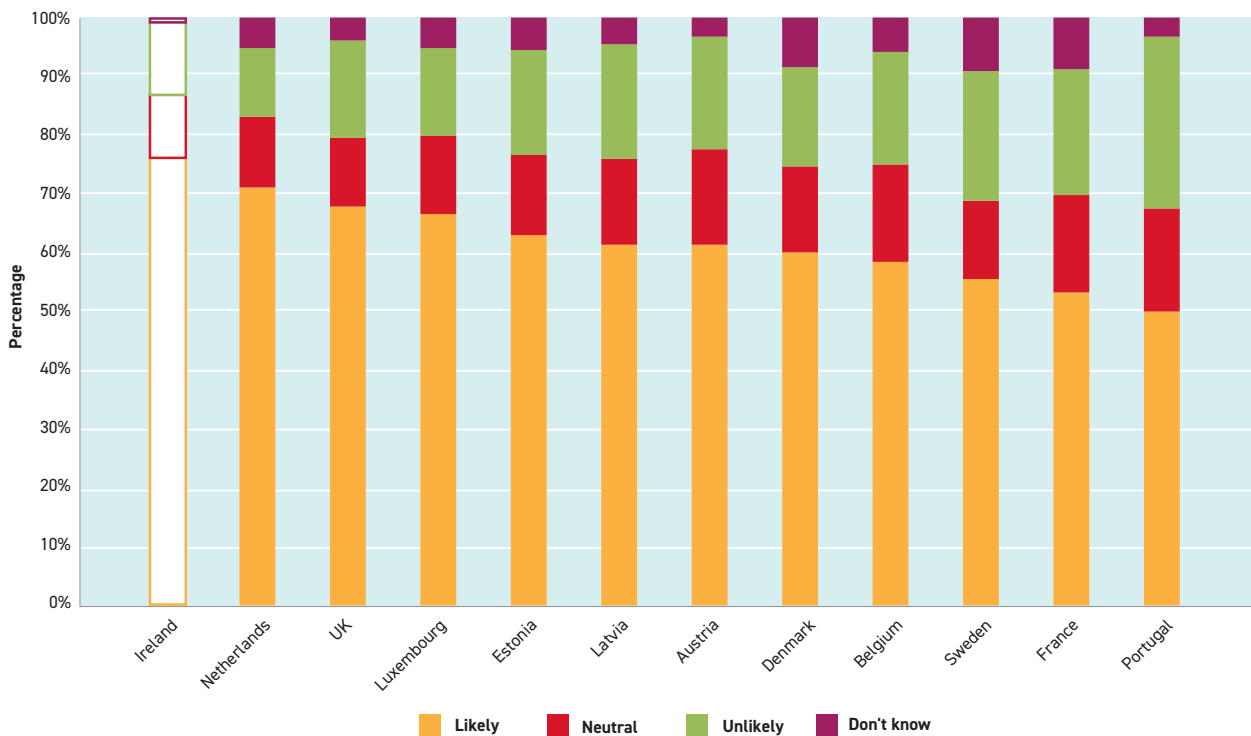


- A sub-set of the quality of public administration indicators can be used to assess what might be termed the 'traditional' public service values such as independence, freedom from bribery and corruption, transparency, reliability and administrative fairness.
- Ireland's ranking on this traditional public service values indicator has generally been well above the EU average. Ireland ranked third of the EU27+UK on this indicator in 2023, up from seventh in 2022.
- Denmark and Finland score highest on this indicator.

People in Ireland have a high expectation that applications for government benefits or services will be treated fairly

FIGURE 19 EXPECTATION THAT APPLICATION FOR GOVERNMENT BENEFIT OR SERVICE WOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

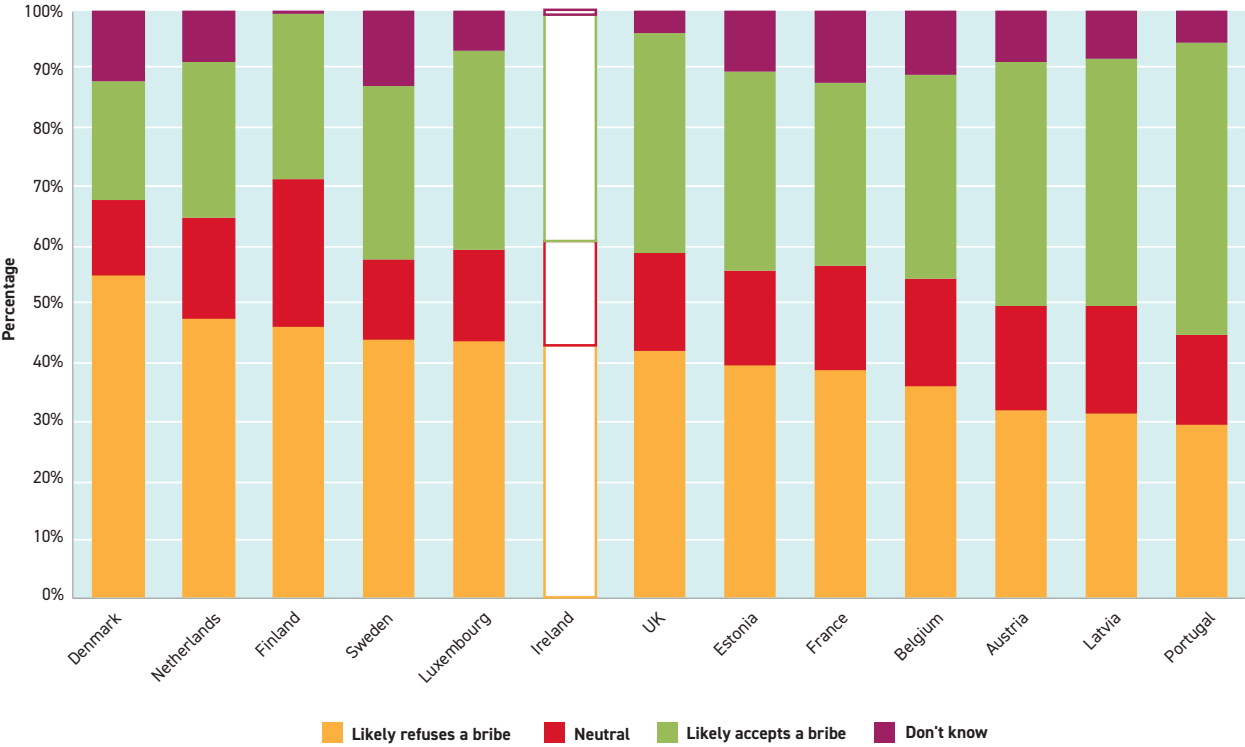


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- Ireland had the highest expectations amongst the European countries surveyed that an application for a government benefit or service would be treated fairly. 76 per cent felt that such an application was likely to be treated fairly.

People in Ireland are relatively likely to think that public employees will accept bribes

FIGURE 20 LIKELIHOOD THAT A PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WOULD ACCEPT A BRIBE

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

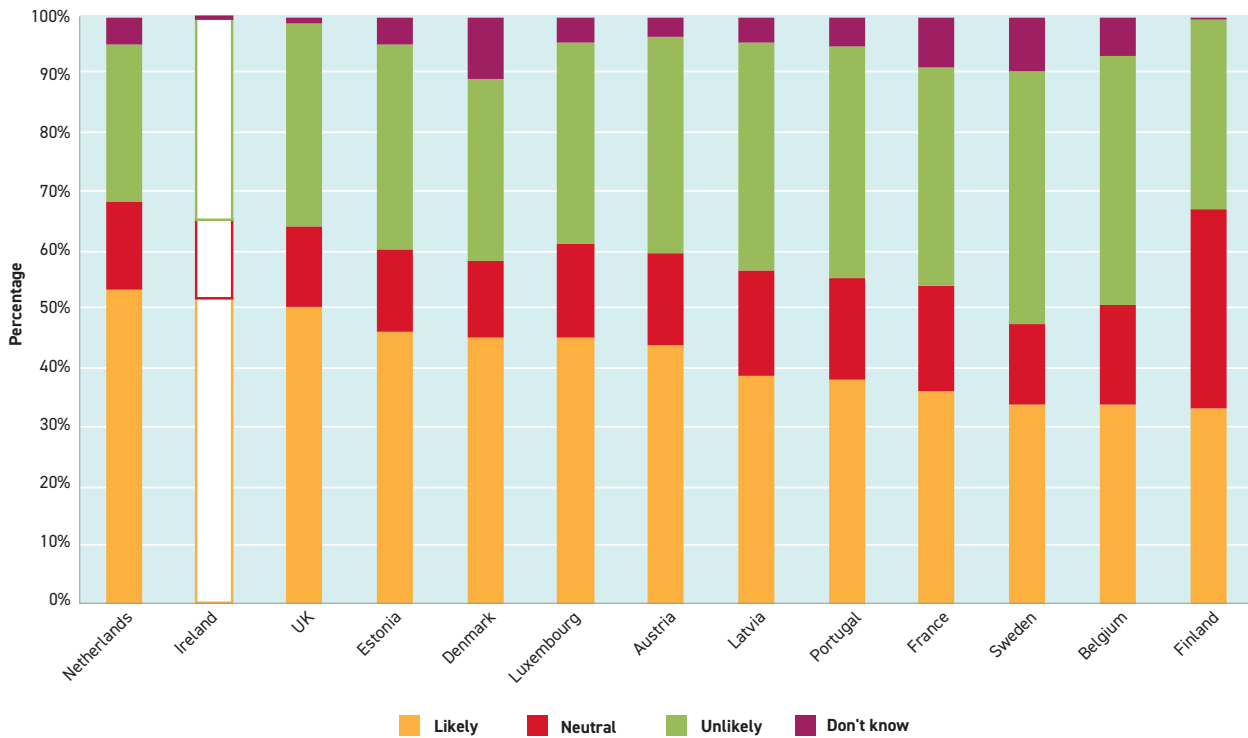


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- 39 per cent of people surveyed felt that a public employee in Ireland was likely to accept a bribe. This was the fourth highest amongst the countries surveyed.

People in Ireland feel more likely than most that they have opportunities to voice their views on local government decisions

FIGURE 21 OPPORTUNITY TO VOICE VIEWS ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS AFFECTING THE COMMUNITY

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

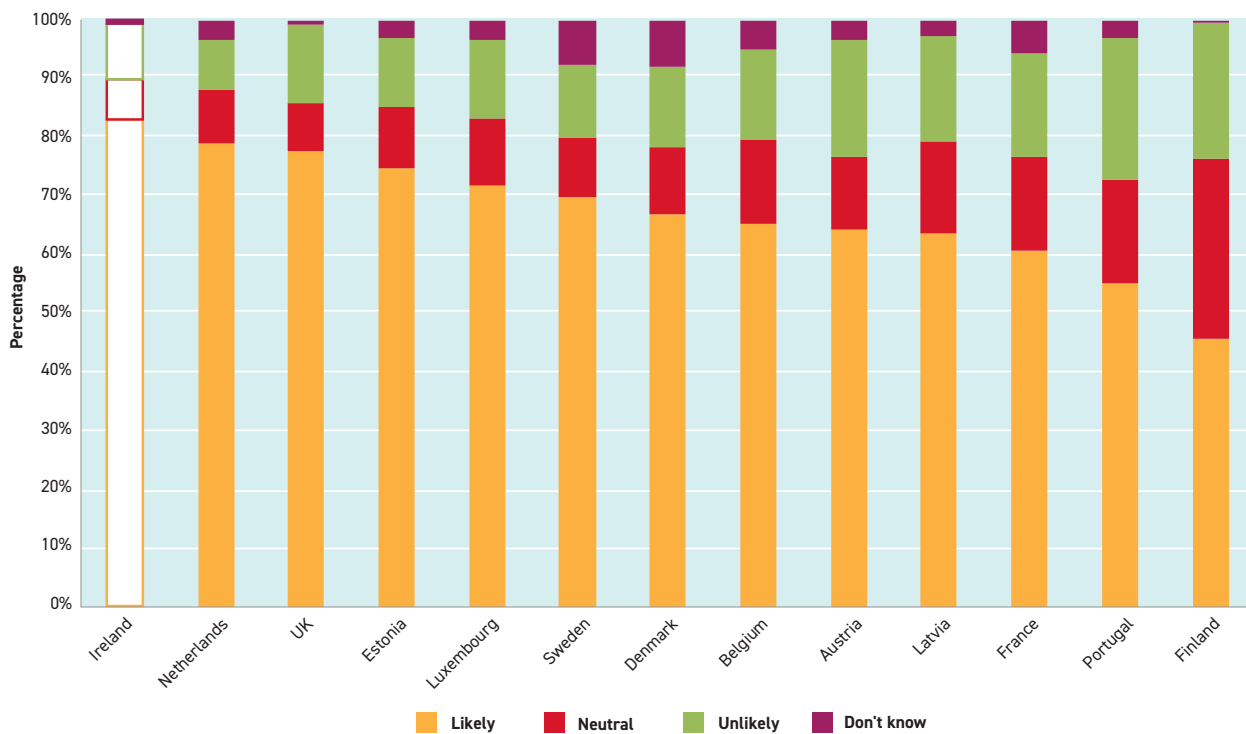


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- With 52 per cent saying it is likely, people in Ireland feel more likely than most countries surveyed that they have opportunities to voice their views on local government decisions affecting their local community.
- Almost a third of those surveyed feel it is unlikely that they would have an opportunity to voice their views.

Ireland ranks highest with regard to people feeling they can easily find information about administrative procedures

FIGURE 22 RESPONDENTS FEELING THEY CAN EASILY FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

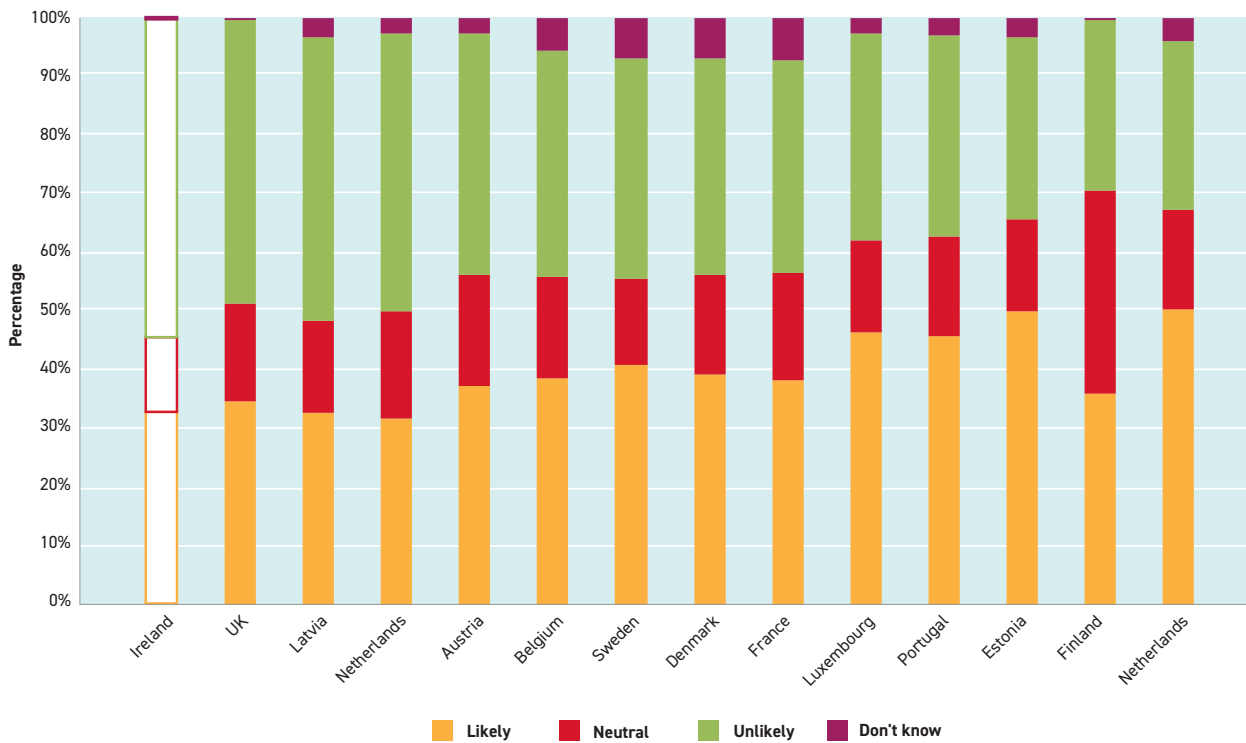


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- People were asked how easily they could find information about administrative procedures. Ireland ranked best on this question of the countries surveyed, with 83 per cent feeling it was likely they could find the information easily.

People in Ireland are less likely than others to believe that public services would improve if people complained

FIGURE 23 RESPONDENTS SAYING LIKELIHOOD OF PUBLIC SERVICE IMPROVING IF PEOPLE COMPLAINED

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

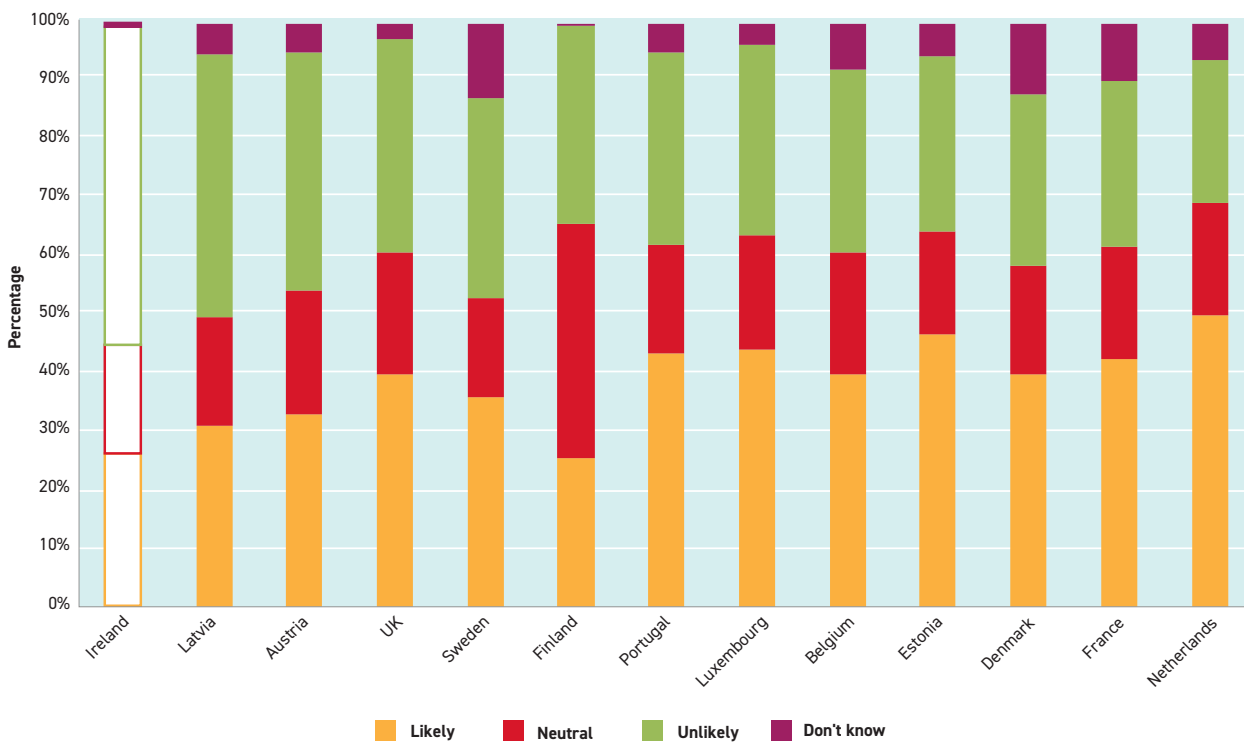


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- Just over half (54 per cent) of those surveyed in Ireland believe it is unlikely that public services would improve if people complained. A third believe it is likely that services would improve.

People in Ireland are less likely than other countries to believe that public agencies adopt innovative ideas

FIGURE 24 RESPONDENTS VIEW OF LIKELIHOOD OF PUBLIC AGENCIES ADOPTING INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

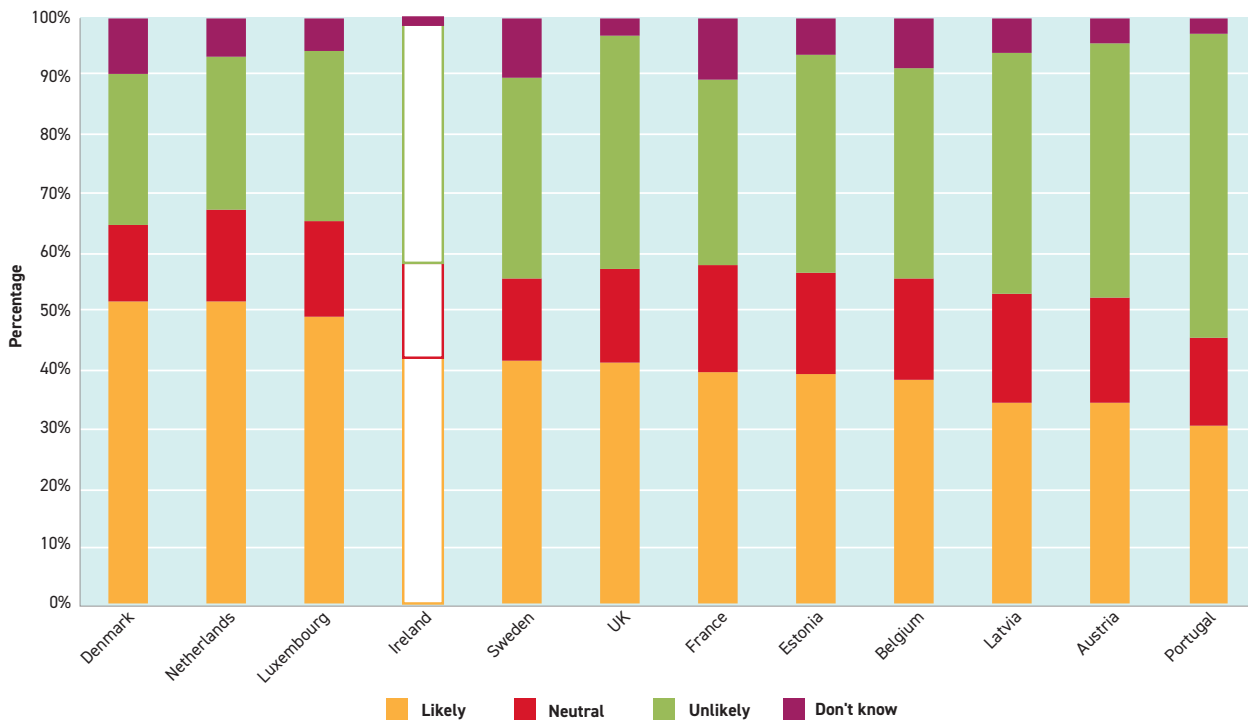


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- 55 per cent of people surveyed in Ireland believe that it is unlikely that public agencies would adopt innovative ideas. This was the highest rate of the countries surveyed.
- Only 26 per cent believe that public agencies are likely to adopt innovative ideas.

There are mixed views amongst people in Ireland as to whether public employees treat rich and poor people equally

FIGURE 25 RESPONDENTS VIEWS THAT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TREAT RICH AND POOR PEOPLE EQUALLY

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022



- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022.
- 42 per cent of people surveyed in Ireland believe it is likely that public employees treat rich and poor people equally. Conversely, 41 per cent believe it is unlikely. Ireland is mid-ranking amongst the countries surveyed.

Business executives see Irish public services as one of the less bureaucratic in Europe

FIGURE 26 BUREAUCRACY HINDERS BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Source: IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook data

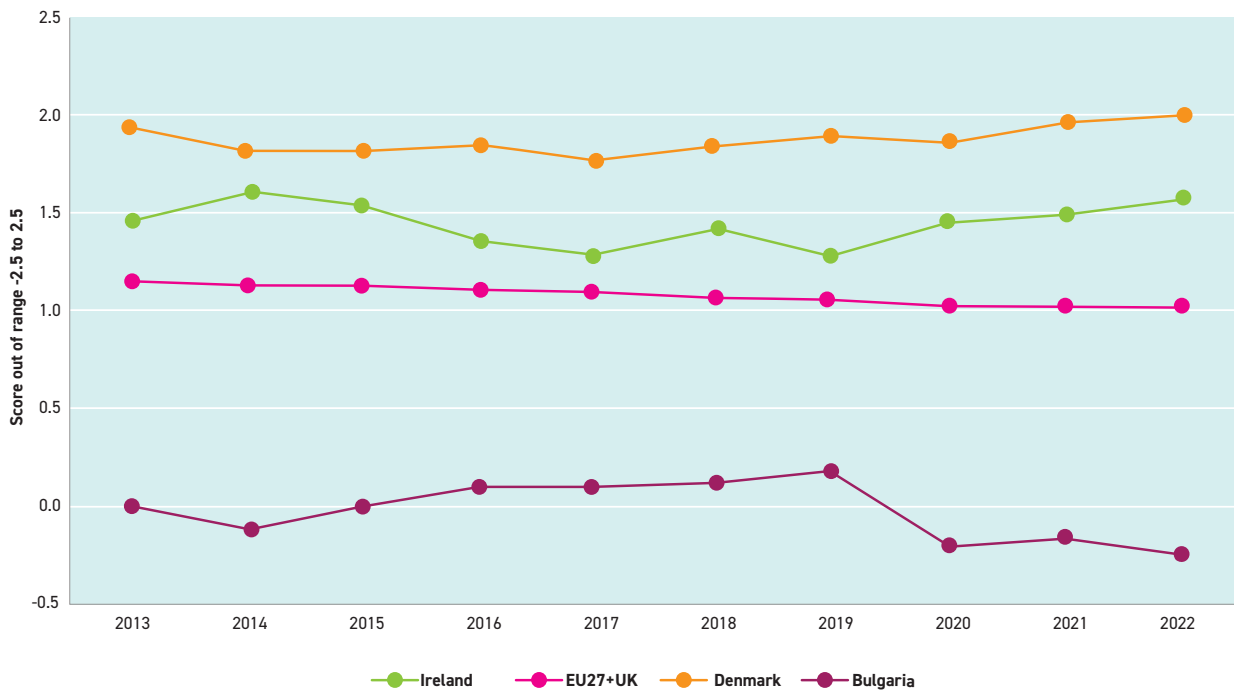


- Respondents to the executive opinion survey carried out by IMD for their World Competitiveness Yearbook indicate that compared to most European countries in the EU, bureaucracy in Ireland is seen as less of a hindrance to business activity. Ireland ranked fifth of the EU27+UK on this indicator in 2023.

In World Bank assessments, Ireland's government effectiveness score remains above the European average and has improved in recent years

FIGURE 27 WORLD BANK GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS INDICATOR

Source: World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators

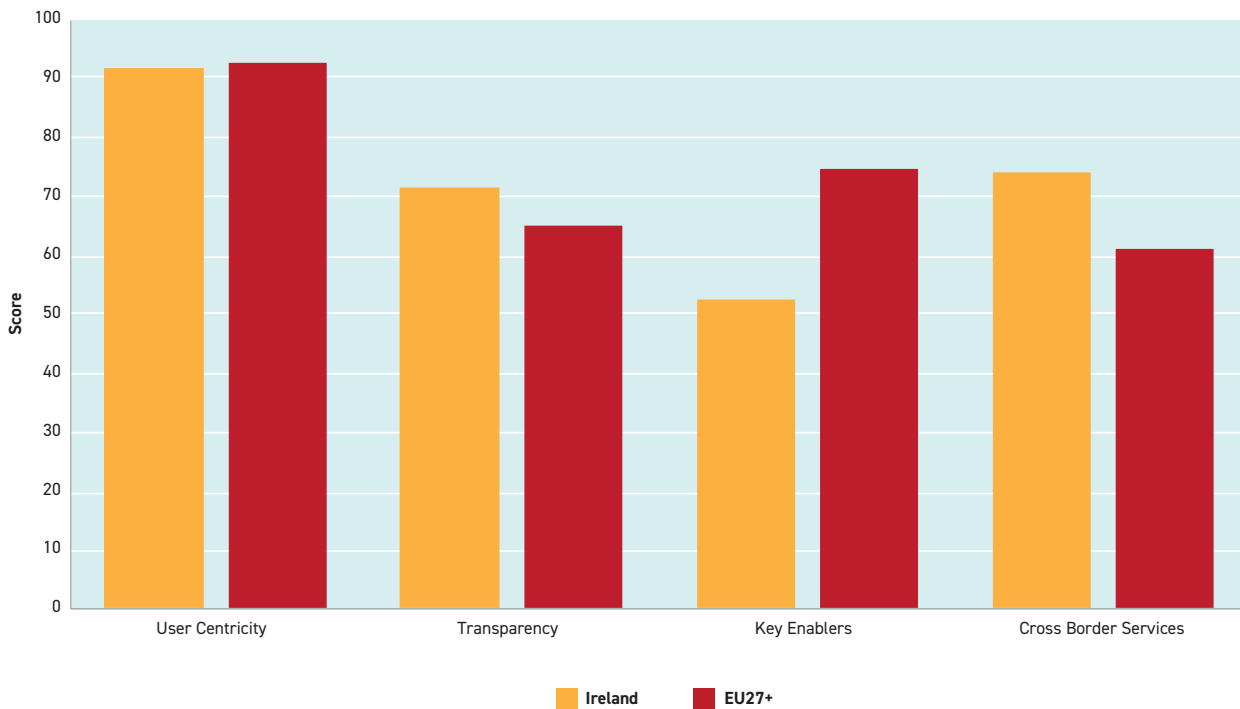


- The World Bank has developed a set of governance indicators as part of its work on promoting good governance. They are based on over 30 individual data sources produced by a variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and private sector firms.
- The Government Effectiveness indicator aims to measure the quality of public services, the capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures, and the quality of policy formulation.
- Ireland's government effectiveness indicator score trended downwards overall from 2014 to 2019, but remained above the European average. Ireland's score has increased from 2020.
- Denmark is the top European scorer on this indicator and Bulgaria the lowest ranked.

Egovernment in Ireland overall performs close to the European average for most indicators

FIGURE 28 EGOVERNMENT BENCHMARKS 2023

Source: EU eGovernment Benchmark 2023

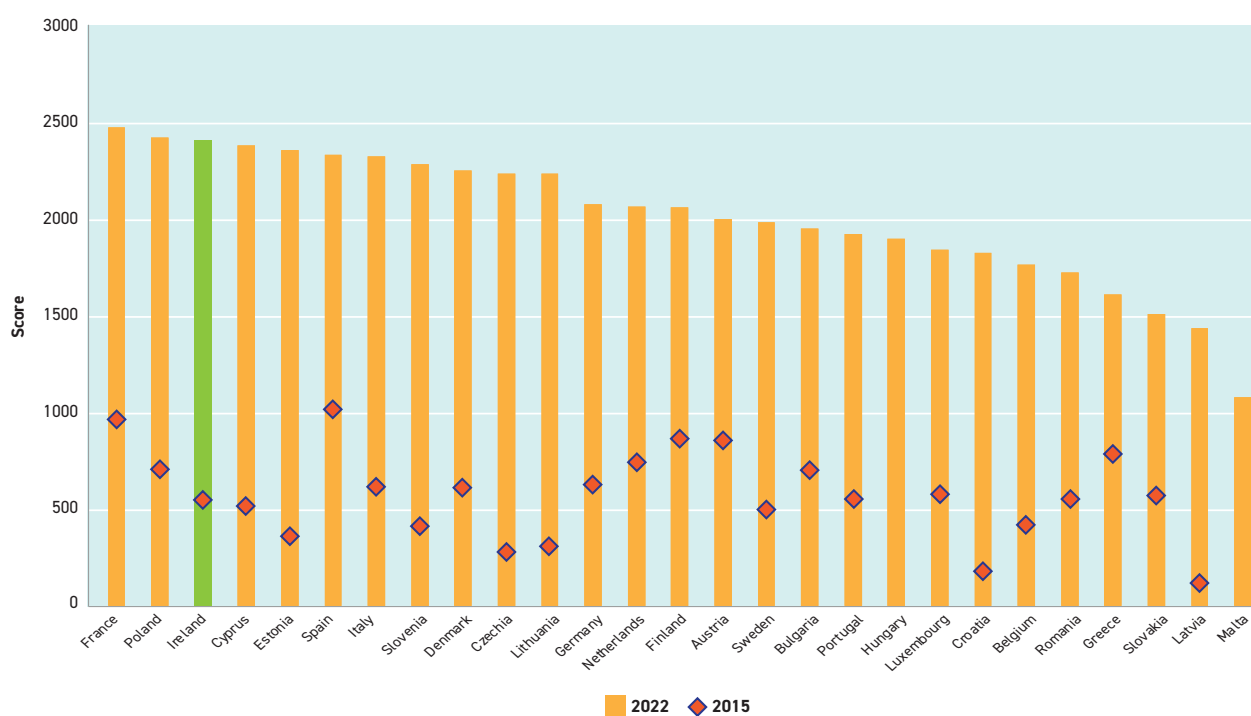


- Ireland ranks above the EU27 average with regard to transparency (to what extent governments are transparent regarding service design, service delivery, and personal data) and cross border services (to what extent EU citizens can use online services in another country).
- Ireland ranks below the European average with regard to user centricity (to what extent information about a service is provided online), and key enablers (indicates the extent to which four technical pre-conditions for eGovernment are available online). Ireland ranked just above the EU27 average for user centricity in the 2022 benchmark report, indicating that other countries have progressed faster than Ireland in this area recently.

Ireland is one of the leaders with regard to open data maturity

FIGURE 29 OPEN DATA MATURITY SCORE

Source: European Data Portal



- Open data maturity is described by a series of indicators selected to cover the level of development of national policies promoting open data, an assessment of the features made available on national data portals, as well as the expected impact of open data.
- Ireland ranked second with regard to open data maturity in 2021, up from fourth in 2020 to third in 2022, and up significantly from 2015, when ranked eighteenth.

Ireland's public administration is viewed by executives as above average in Europe in encouraging competition and providing a supportive regulatory environment

FIGURE 30 COMPETITIVENESS AND REGULATION INDICATOR (CRI)

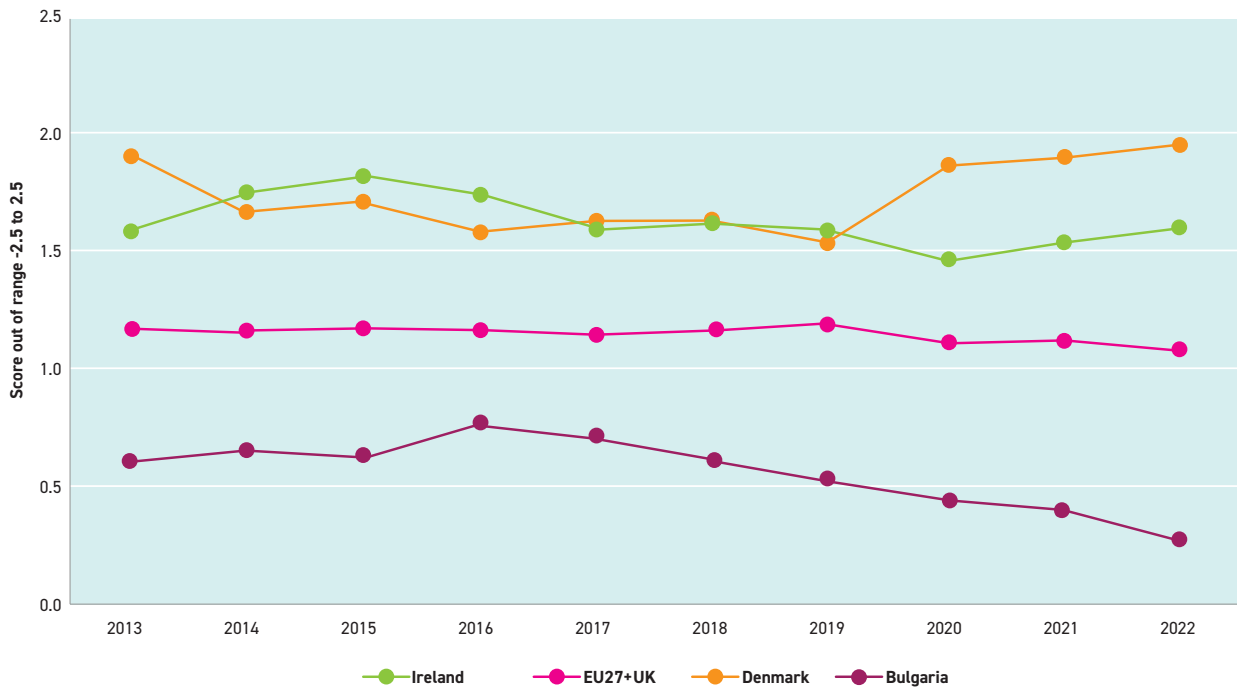
Source: IPA Analysis based on IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook data



- A sub-set of the quality of public administration indicators can be used to assess issues of competitiveness and regulation. There is an expectation that as part of a quality service, public servants will help ensure a legal and regulatory framework that encourages competition. And that they will scrutinise regulation intensity to ensure it does not become too great a burden on enterprises.
- Ireland's ranking on this competitiveness and regulation indicator is above the European average. In 2023, Ireland ranked sixth.
- Developing a public administration that encourages competition and where regulation is not too great a burden on enterprises is an important goal. But events in the banking sphere at the time of the financial crisis indicate the need for strong regulation. It must be remembered that this ranking is based on executive opinion surveys, where there would generally be an interest in less regulation.

In World Bank assessments, Ireland's regulatory quality ranks well above the European average

FIGURE 31 WORLD BANK REGULATORY QUALITY INDICATOR
 Source: World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators

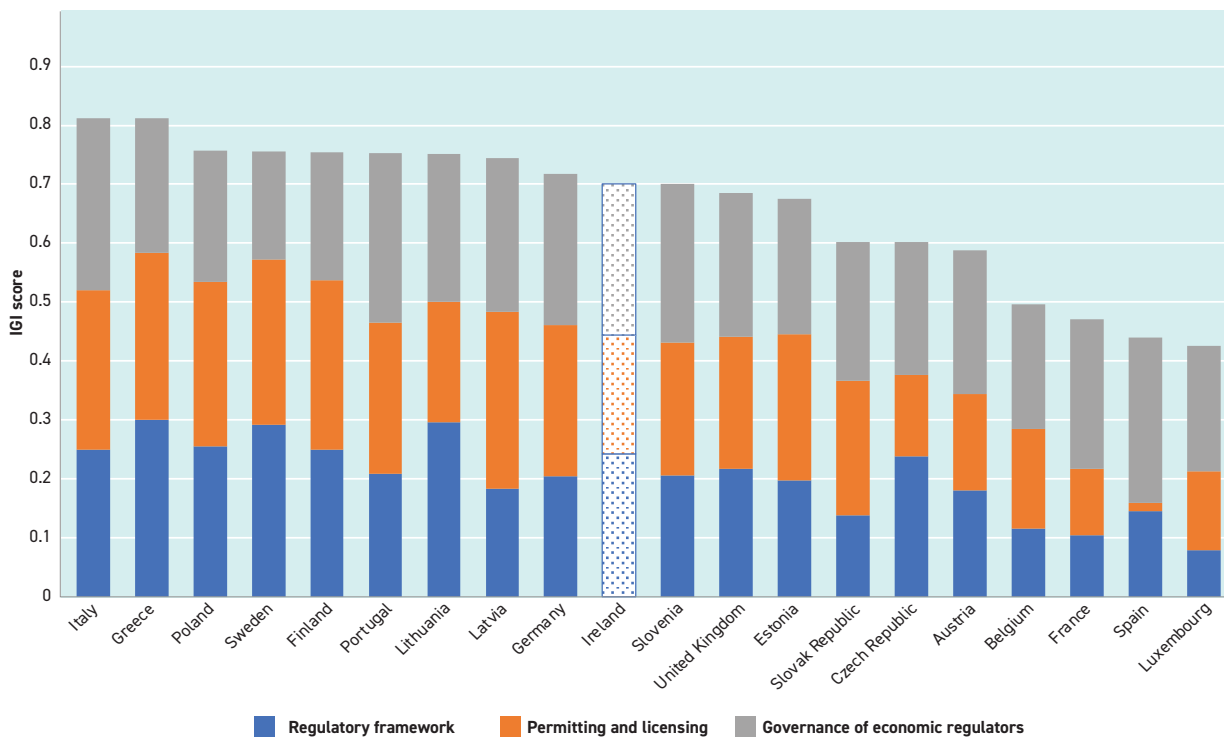


- The Regulatory Quality indicator aims to measure the ability of the government to provide sound policies and regulations that enable and promote private sector development. On this indicator Ireland ranks as well above the EU27+UK score.
- The impact of the regulatory problems identified in the financial sector in 2009 had an impact on the indicator, and Ireland dropped from first in 2009 to seventh ranked EU27+UK country on this indicator by 2013.
- In 2022 Ireland ranked fifth EU27+UK country. Denmark ranked highest.

Ireland's regulatory framework for public infrastructure scores around the average for European countries

FIGURE 32 REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE 2022

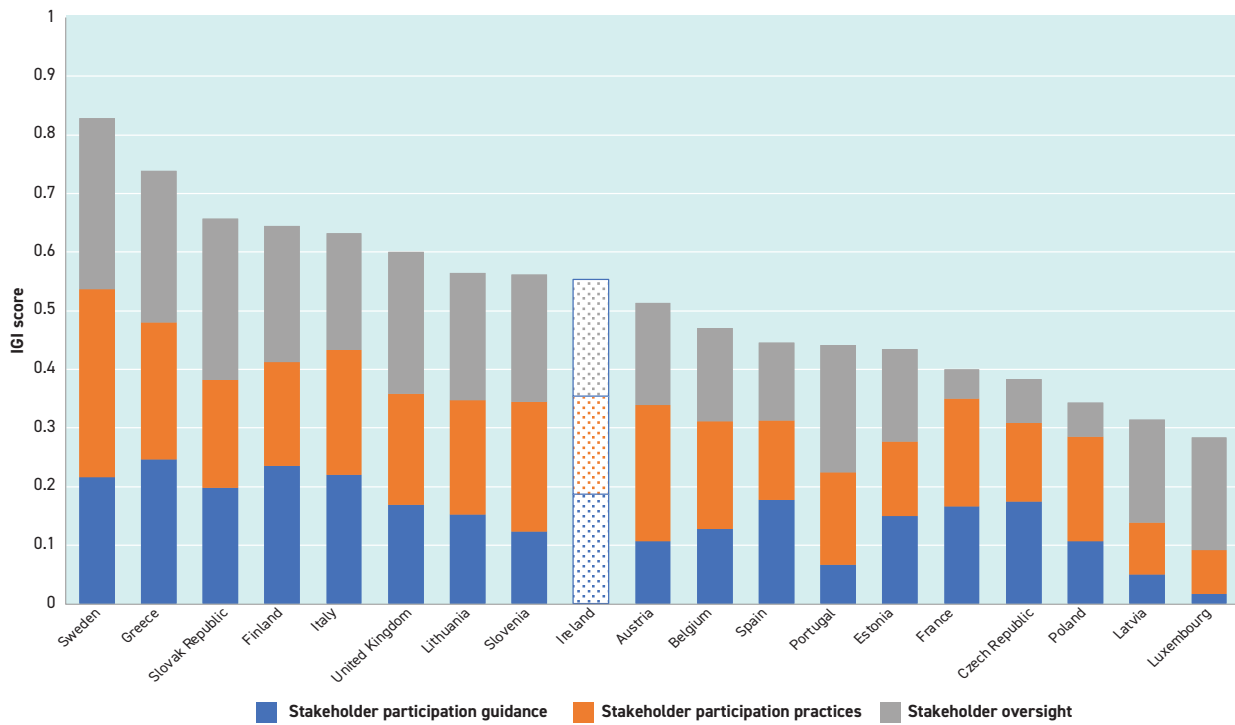
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Public infrastructure projects often involve large amounts of financial resources and take many years. They need to operate under regulations that contribute to optimising their lifespan and costs, assess risk exposure, and build resilience.
- The OECD Infrastructure Governance Indicator (IGI) on regulatory frameworks for public infrastructure provides an overview of countries' performance in promoting efficient regulatory frameworks and permit procedures, and ensuring good governance.
- Ireland's ranking on the regulatory framework with a score of 0.7 out of a maximum of 1, is around the European average. Ireland scores least well comparatively with regard to permitting and licensing.

Ireland's ranking on an indicator of stakeholder involvement in infrastructure decision making is around the European average

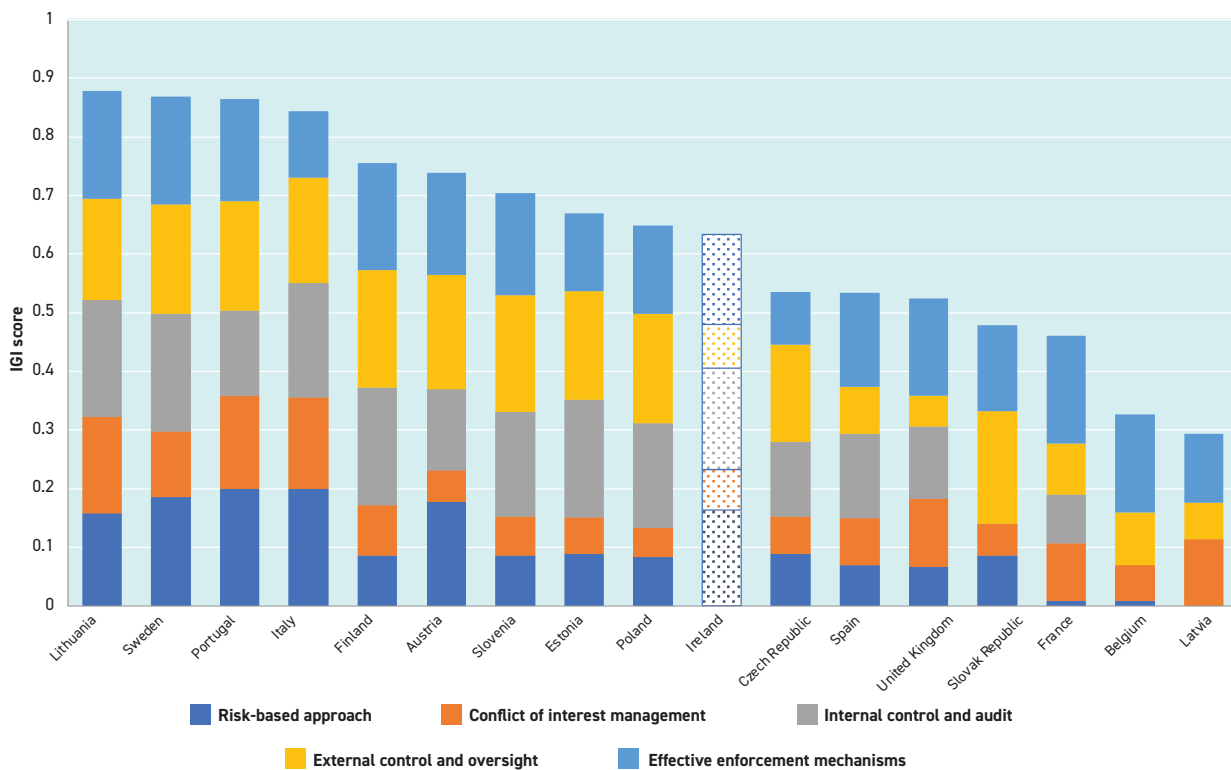
FIGURE 33 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE DECISION MAKING 2022
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Citizen and stakeholder participation can improve the design and public acceptance of infrastructure projects. Using citizen and stakeholder inputs in infrastructure decision making can help countries address long-term challenges such as climate change, and promote minority inclusion, gender equality and biodiversity protection.
- The OECD Infrastructure Governance Indicator (IGI) on stakeholder participation gives an overview of countries' performance in developing national guidance, promoting effective participation, and ensuring stakeholder oversight over infrastructure projects.
- Ireland's composite indicator score of 0.55 is around the European average. Ireland scores well for stakeholder participation guidance but less well for stakeholder participation practices.

Ireland score slightly below the European average on an indicator of the management of threats to the public integrity in infrastructure decision making

FIGURE 34 MANAGEMENT OF THREATS TO PUBLIC INTEGRITY IN INFRASTRUCTURE DECISION MAKING 2022
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

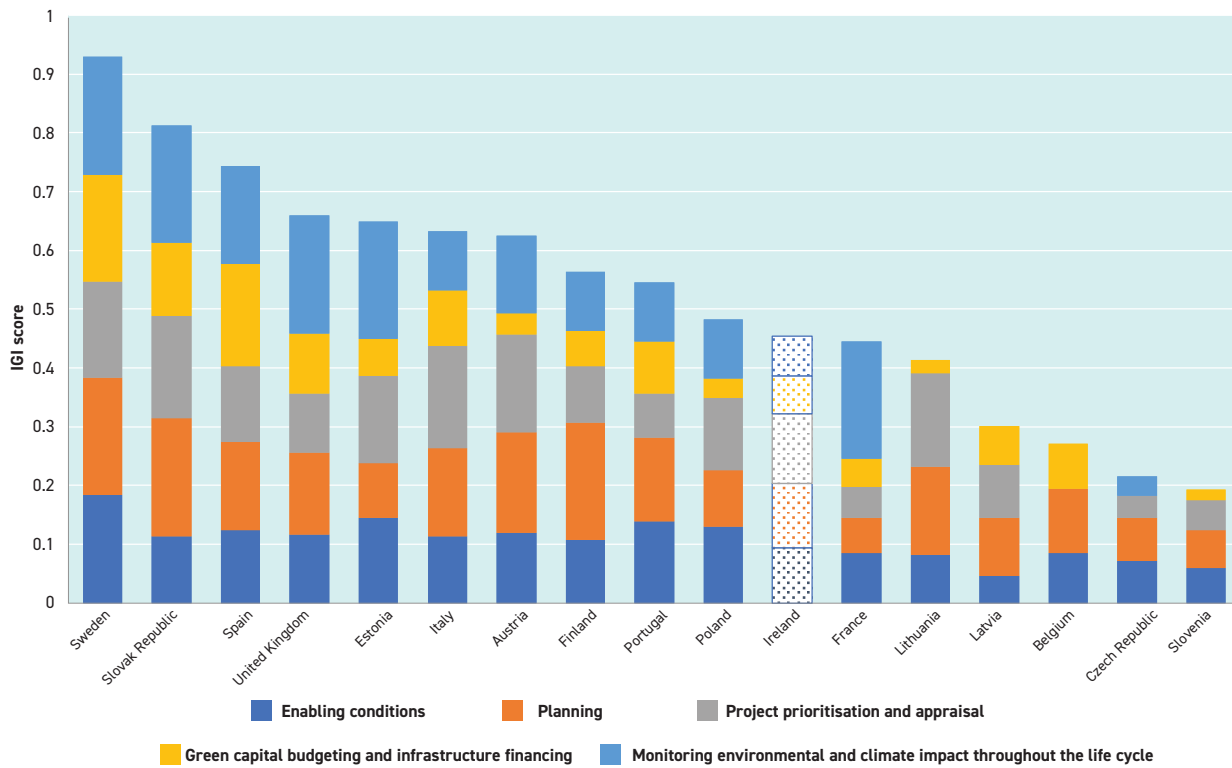


- Integrity risks can arise at every stage of the infrastructure life cycle, resulting in inappropriate use of resources or improper behaviour.
- The OECD Infrastructure Governance Indicator (IGI) on integrity provides an overview of where OECD countries stand in five sub-pillars of management of integrity risks in infrastructure governance: risk-based approaches, internal and external control, management of conflict of interest and integrity risks and enforcement mechanisms. The indicator does not measure the effectiveness or quality of implementation of these elements.
- Ireland's score on this indicator is slightly below the European average. Ireland scores least well comparatively with regard to external controls and oversight.

Ireland scores below the European average on an indicator concerning the delivery of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure

FIGURE 35 DELIVERING ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE 2022

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

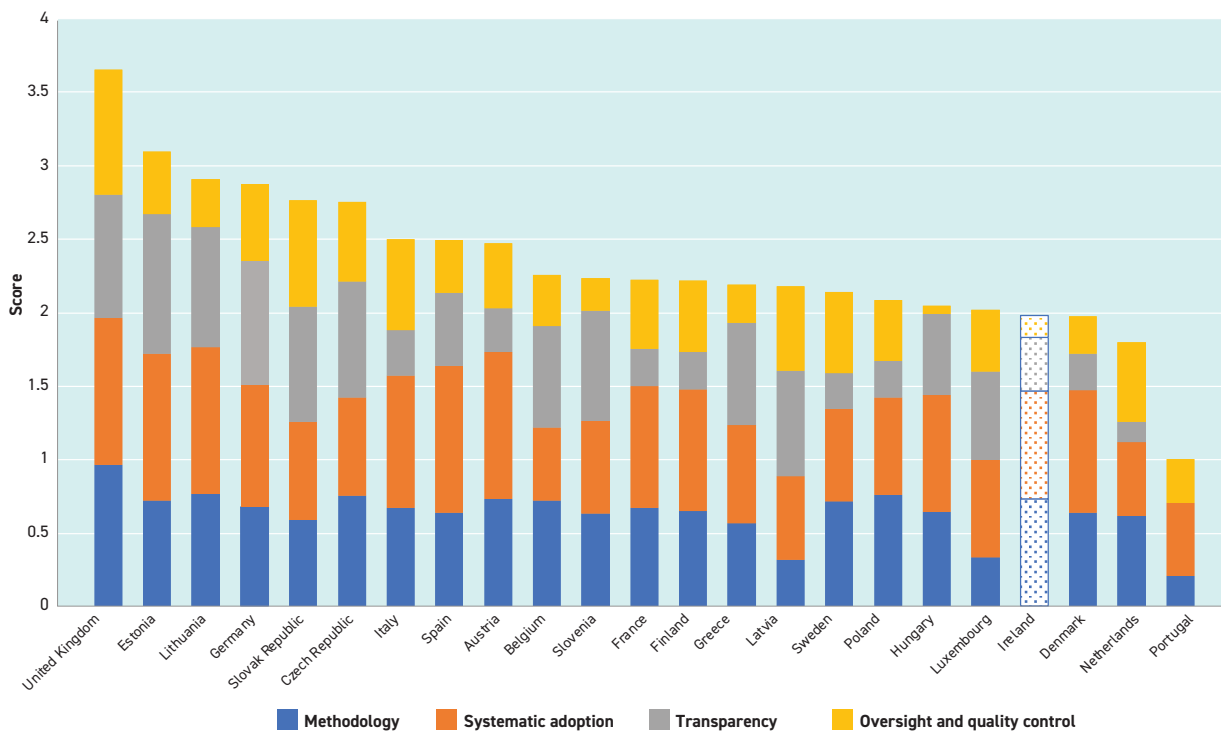


- The OECD Infrastructure Governance Indicator (IGI) on environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure provides an overview of the different governance elements supporting environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure: enabling conditions, planning, project appraisal, capital budgeting and financing and monitoring.
- Ireland scores below the European average on this composite indicator. Comparatively, Ireland scores least well with regard to monitoring environmental and climate impact throughout the life cycle.

Ireland is below the European average regarding using regulatory impact assessment for developing primary laws

FIGURE 36 REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR DEVELOPING PRIMARY LAWS 2021

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

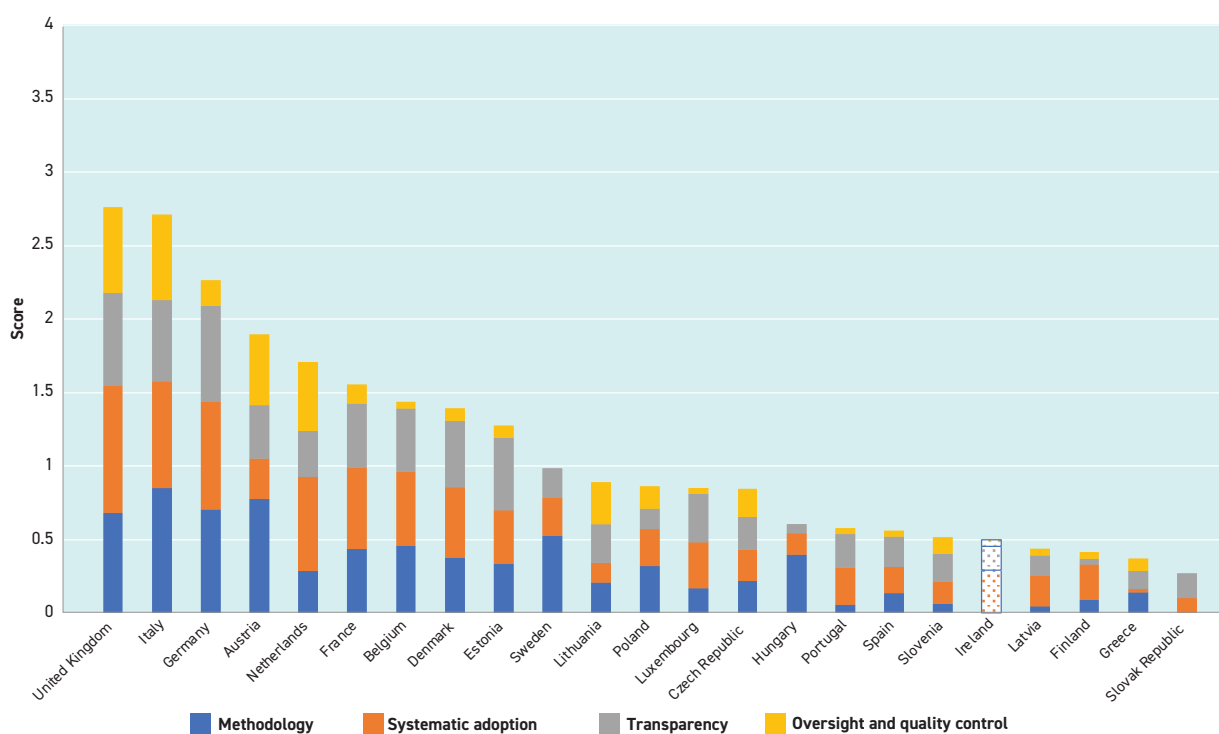


- When regulations are designed well, they can help to boost growth, and tackle issues like climate change. When not, they can result in unnecessary red tape and reduced trust in government. Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) analyses the costs and benefits of regulation and non-regulatory alternatives of achieving policy goals to identify the approach likely to deliver the greatest benefit to society.
- The OECD have developed a composite indicator to assess practice with regard to RIA composed of four categories: methodology; oversight and quality control; systematic adoption; and transparency. The maximum score for each category is 1, and the total score for the composite indicator ranges from 0 to 4.
- Ireland is well below the European average with regard to using RIA for developing primary laws. Comparatively, it scores particularly below many other countries with regard to transparency, and oversight and quality control.

Ireland's practice with regard to ex-post evaluation of primary laws is at the lower end of European practice

FIGURE 37 QUALITY OF EX-POST EVALUATION SYSTEMS FOR PRIMARY LAWS 2021

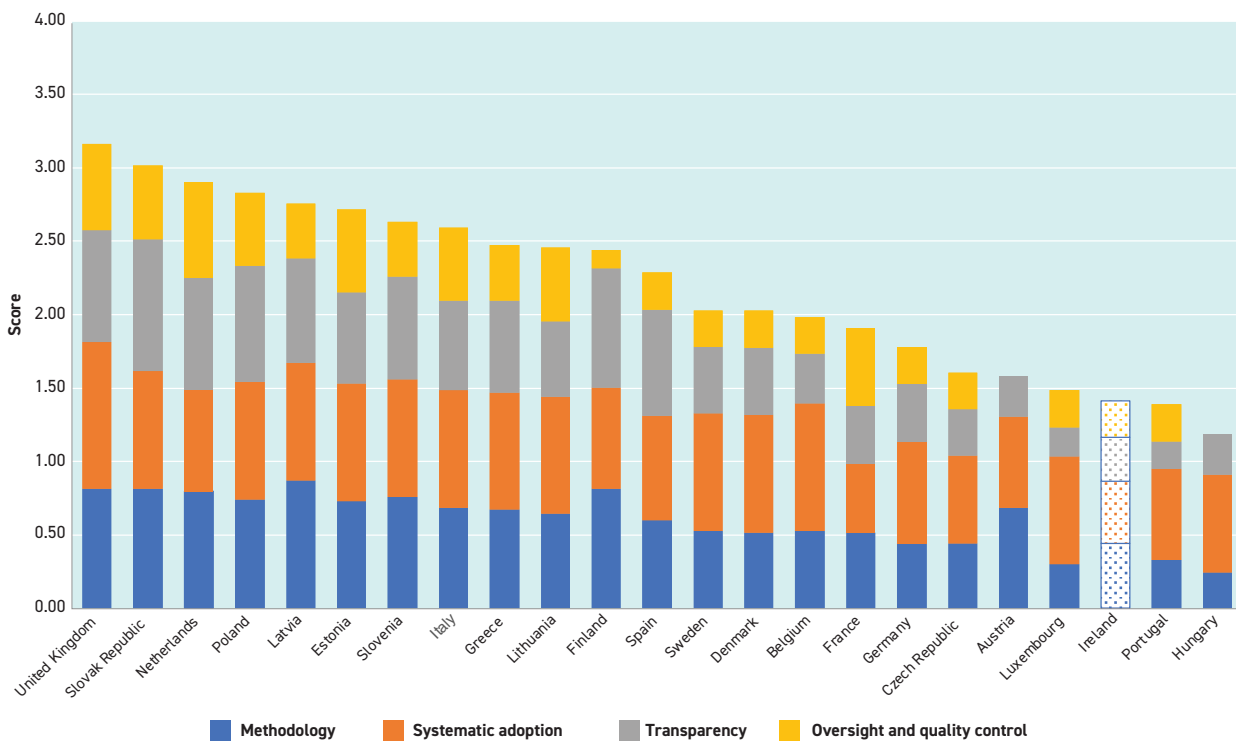
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Only after a regulation has been implemented in practice can governments assess its full effects, costs, benefits and consequences. Ex post evaluations can provide important insights for improving the design of regulations and create a feedback loop into regulatory planning and the development of new regulations.
- Ireland records a low score on the OECD index for ex-post evaluation of primary laws compared to most other European countries. The composite indicator is composed of four categories: methodology; oversight and quality control; systematic adoption; and transparency. The maximum score for each category is 1, and the total score for the composite indicator ranges from 0 to 4.
- Ireland's score on this composite index is well below the European average.

Ireland scores poorly on an index measuring stakeholder engagement in developing primary laws

FIGURE 38 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING PRIMARY LAWS 2021
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

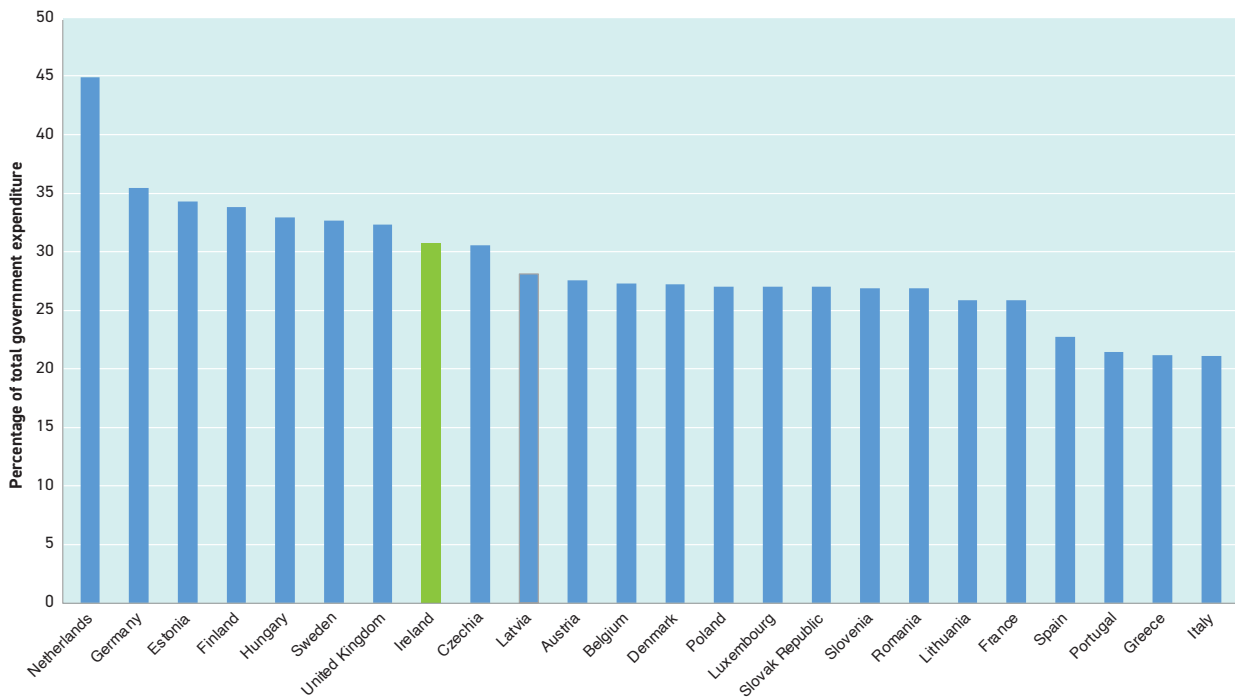


- Stakeholder engagement aims to help ensure that laws and regulations focus on user needs by involving citizens, businesses, civil society and others.
- The OECD indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG) index uses four categories to assess the level of engagement: methodology; oversight and quality control; systematic adoption; and transparency. The maximum score for each category is 1, and the total score for the composite indicator ranges from 0 to 4.
- Ireland records a low score on the index for stakeholder engagement in the development of primary laws compared to most other European countries.

Ireland's procurement spending as a proportion of total government expenditure is close to the European average

FIGURE 39 GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Governments procure large amounts of goods and services to help them implement policies and deliver public services.
- Ireland's procurement spending as a proportion of total government expenditure, at 31 per cent in 2021, is close to the European average.

4. SECTORAL PERFORMANCE

Ultimately, the provision of public administration is intended to achieve social outcomes in sectors such as health, education, law and order and transport. As such, it is important that any review of public administration looks at sectoral outcomes. In this report, some high-level education and health indicators are included, given that these areas are the largest areas of public expenditure.

In the education system, high-level outcome indicators that assess performance in reading, maths and science give an overview of performance.

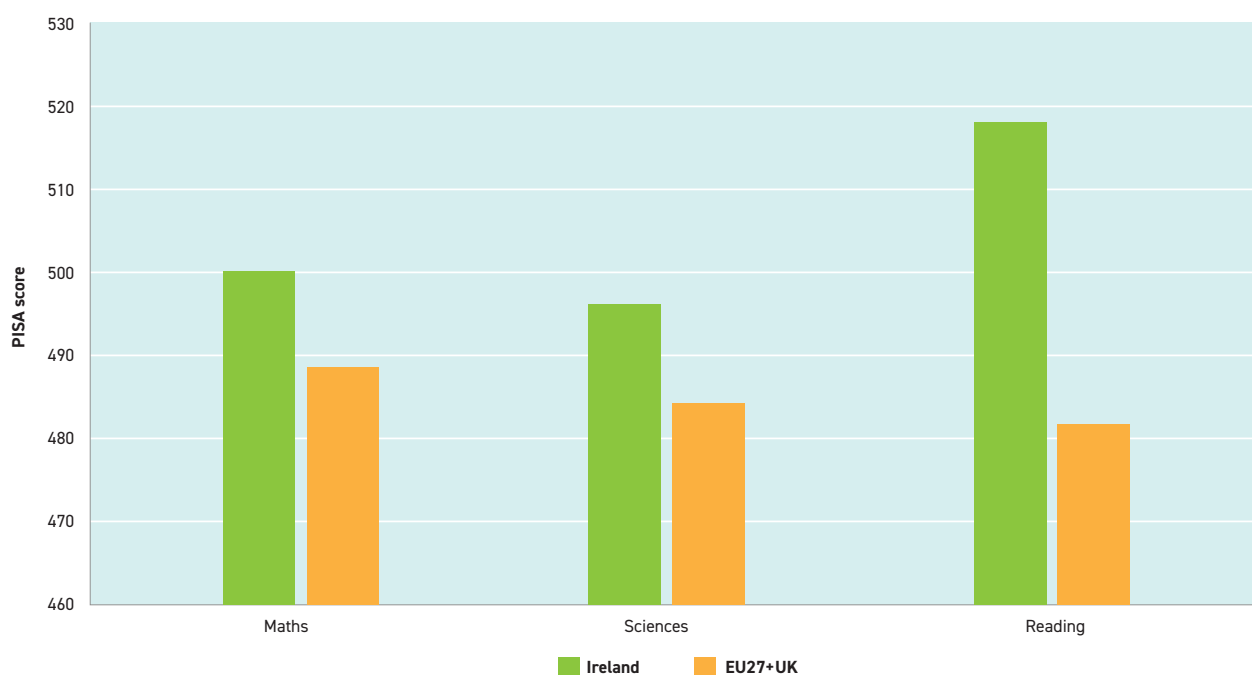
In the health sector, high-level outcome indicators in areas such as life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, and other indicators such as length of stay in hospitals, give a sense of performance at the macro level. These are commonly used indicators in international rankings of health and education systems.

In the environmental sector, high-level indicators assess performance in the policy areas of ecosystem vitality and climate change.

Ireland's educational attainment scores compare well to the European average

FIGURE 40 PISA EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT SCORES 2018

Source: OECD PISA 2018 survey

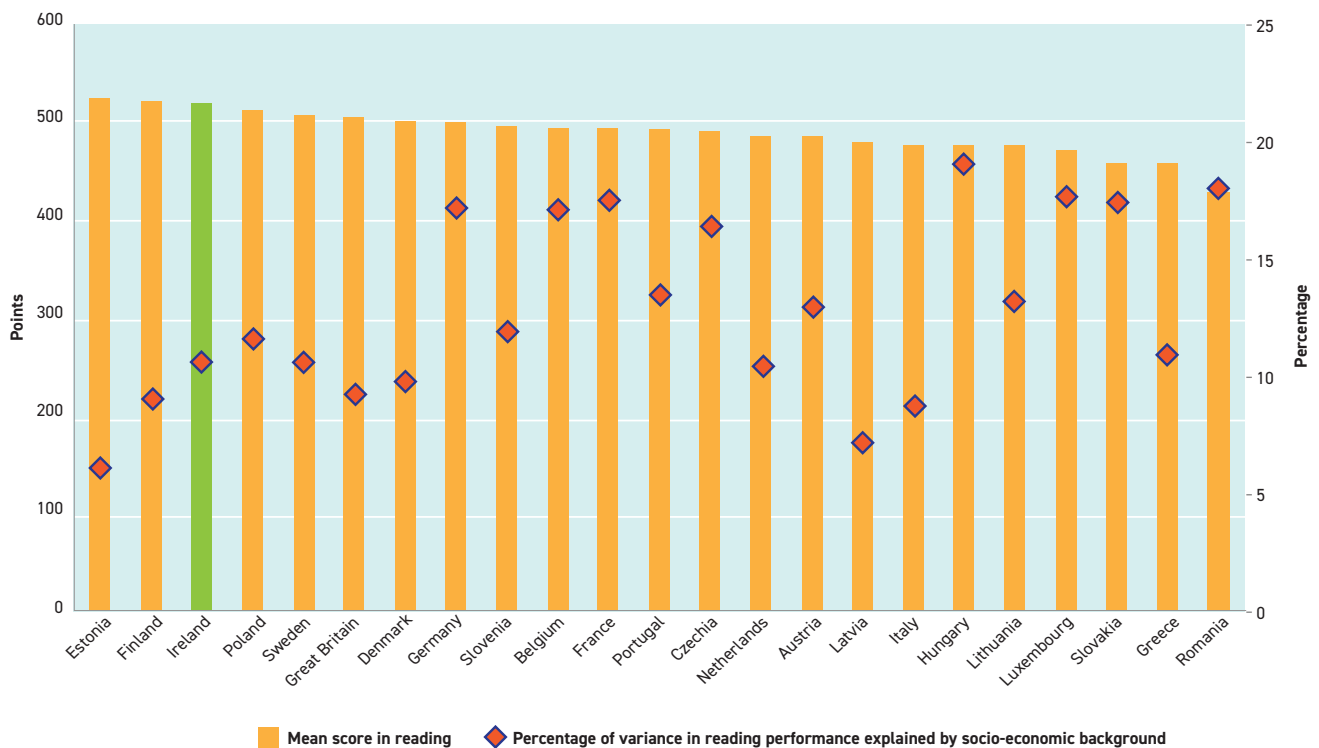


- The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey is an internationally standardised assessment administered to 15-year olds in schools. Tests are typically administered to between 4,500 and 10,000 students in each country.
- The 2018 PISA survey shows that Ireland has a higher ranking than the European average in maths, sciences and reading. Estonia is the highest ranked country in all three categories.

Irish students score well in reading with variances in performance due to socio-economic background being slightly below the European average

FIGURE 41 MEAN SCORE IN READING AND PERCENTAGE OF VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND 2018

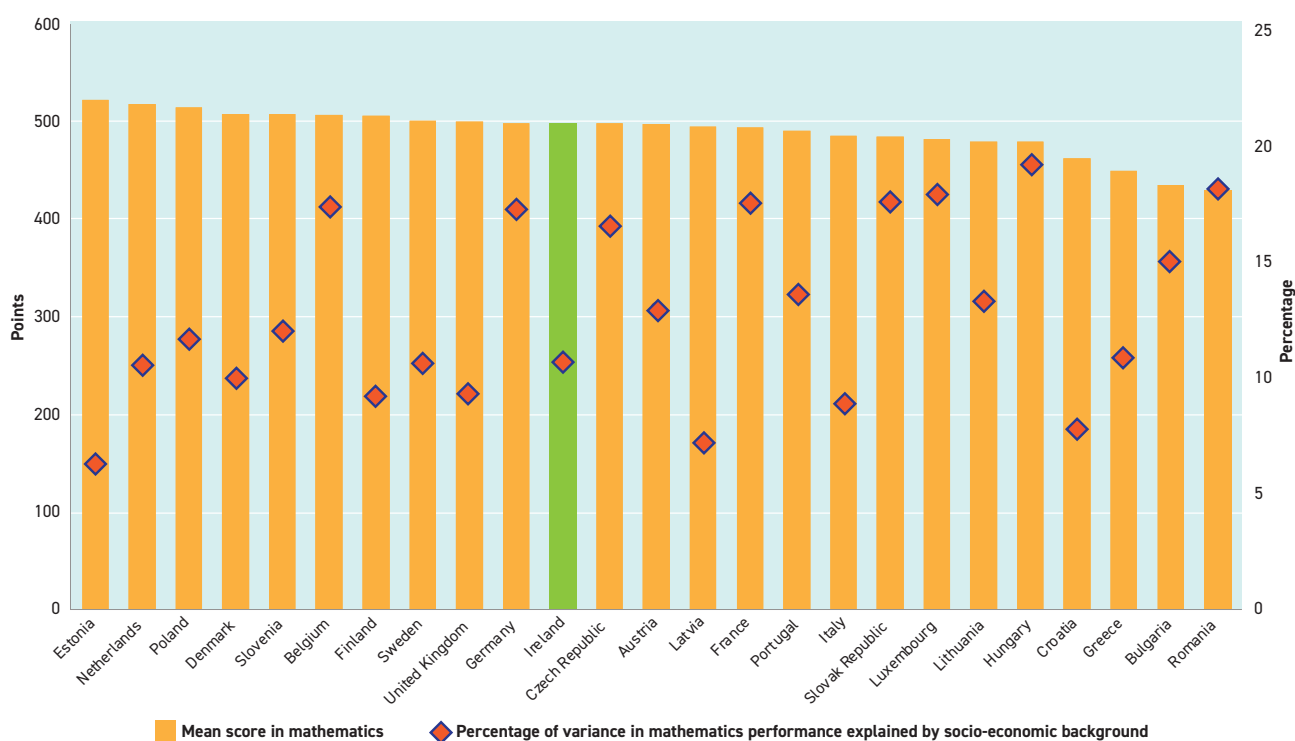
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- In 2018, students across the OECD reached an average of 487 points in reading in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Ireland (518 points) had one of the highest scores.
- However, these averages hide inequalities between students. On average across the OECD, 12 per cent of the variance in performance can be attributed to students' socio-economic status. In Ireland, this percentage is 10.7 per cent. A lower percentage means that socio-economic background plays a less significant role.

Irish students score around the average for Europe in mathematics with variances in performance due to socio-economic background being slightly below the European average

FIGURE 42 MEAN SCORE IN MATHEMATICS AND PERCENTAGE SCORE EXPLAINED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND 2018
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

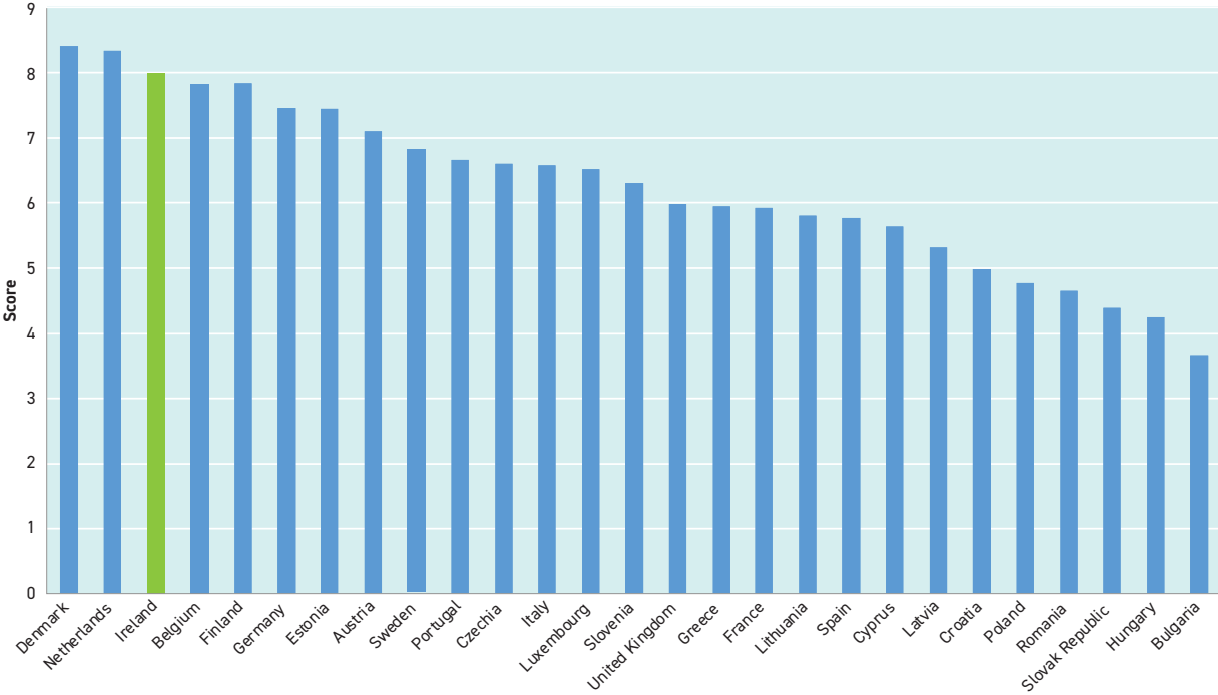


- In 2018, students across the OECD reached an average of 487 points in mathematics in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Ireland (500 points) had a slightly above average score.
- However, these averages hide inequalities between students. On average across the OECD, 12.1 per cent of the variance in performance can be attributed to students' socio-economic status. In Ireland, this percentage is 10.7 per cent. A lower percentage means that socio-economic background plays a less significant role.

Ireland's executives perceive the primary and secondary education system relatively highly in terms of it meeting the needs of the economy

FIGURE 43 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION MEETS THE NEEDS OF A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY 2023

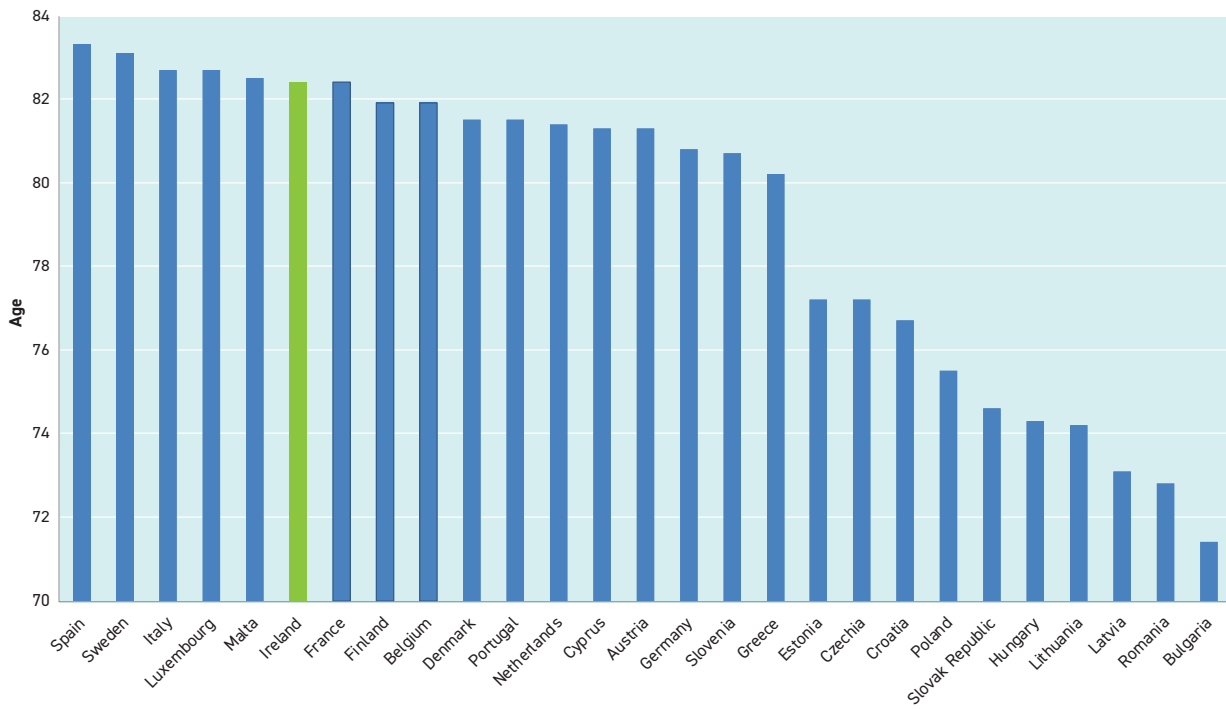
Source: IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook data



- Executive opinion about the role of the educational system in meeting the needs of a competitive economy is one (though only one) qualitative indicator of how well the education system is functioning.
- Ireland's primary and secondary education are ranked third best in Europe in terms of meeting the needs of a competitive economy, up from ninth in 2022.

Life expectancy at birth is amongst the highest in the European Union

FIGURE 44 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH 2021
Source: Eurostat

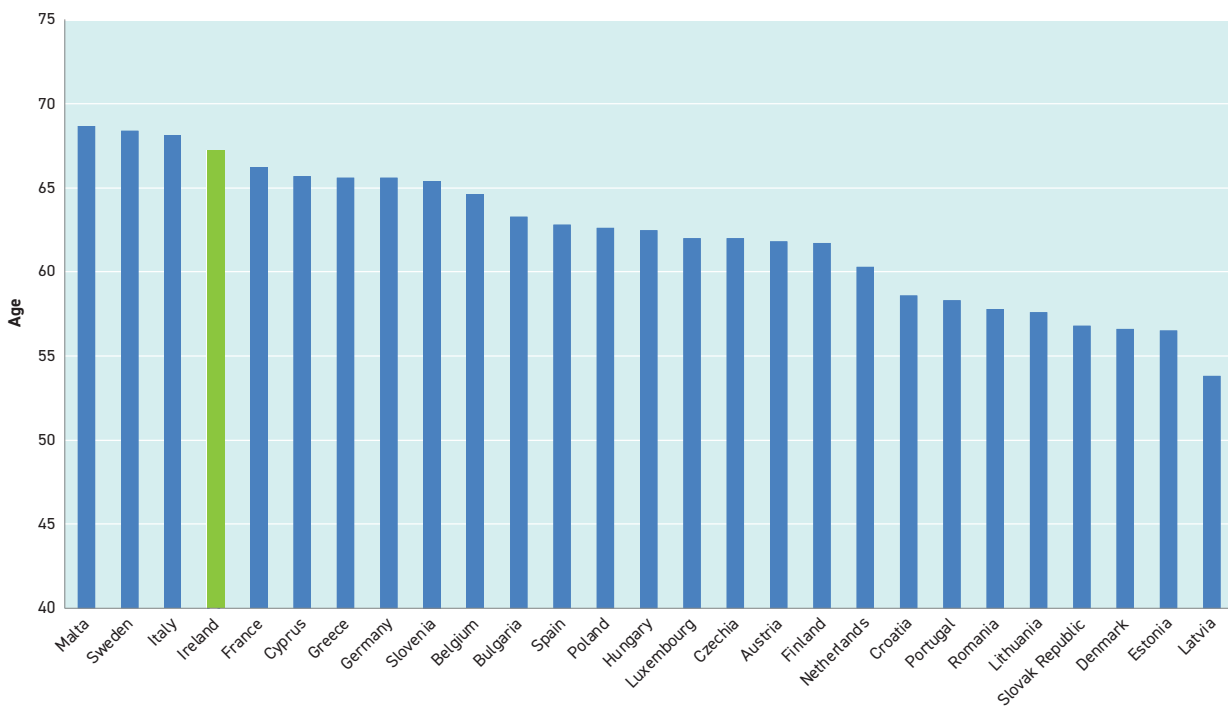


- Life expectancy at birth in Ireland for 2021 was 82.4 years; this ranked sixth highest in EU countries for 2021.

In terms of healthy life expectancy at birth Ireland ranks highly in Europe

FIGURE 45 HEALTHY LIFE YEARS AT BIRTH 2021

Source: Eurostat

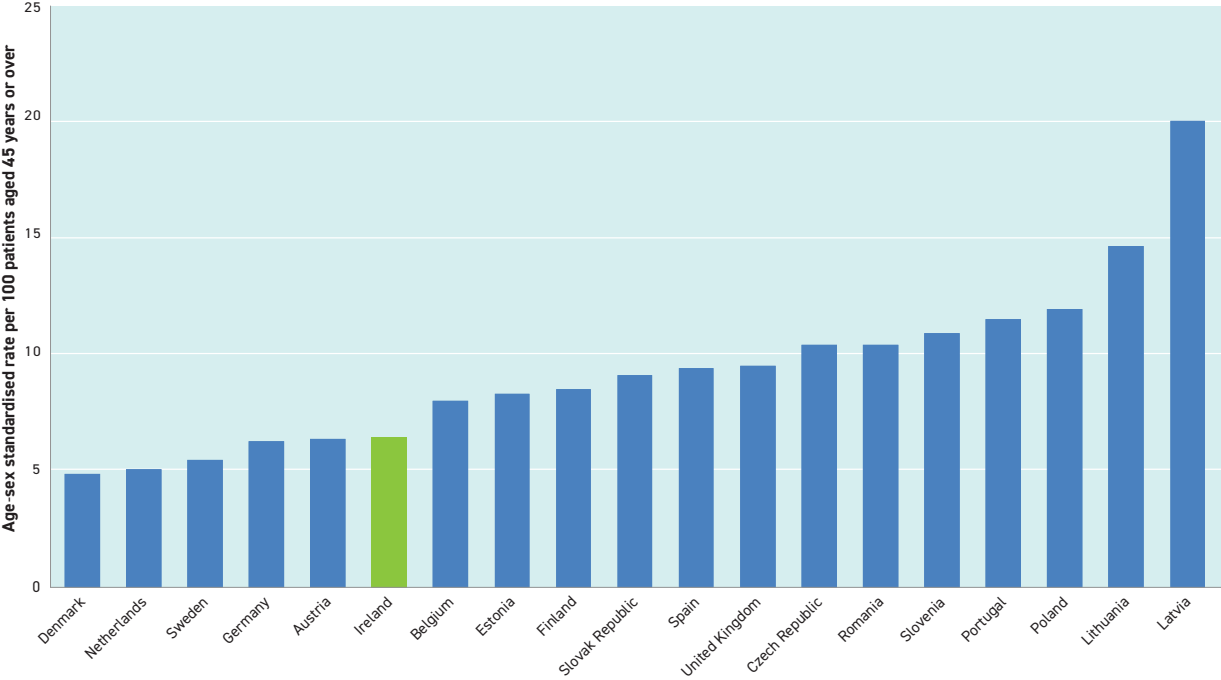


- Healthy life expectancy represents the average number of years that a person can expect to live in 'full health' by taking into account years lived in less than full health due to disease and/or injury.
- Ireland ranks fourth best in Europe in 2021 in terms of healthy life expectancy at birth, at 67.2 years; though this represents a decrease of 2.4 years on the figure for 2019, when healthy life expectancy was 69.6 years.

Ireland's mortality rate for strokes is relatively low

FIGURE 46 THIRTY DAY MORTALITY RATE AFTER ISCHAEMIC STROKE 2020

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

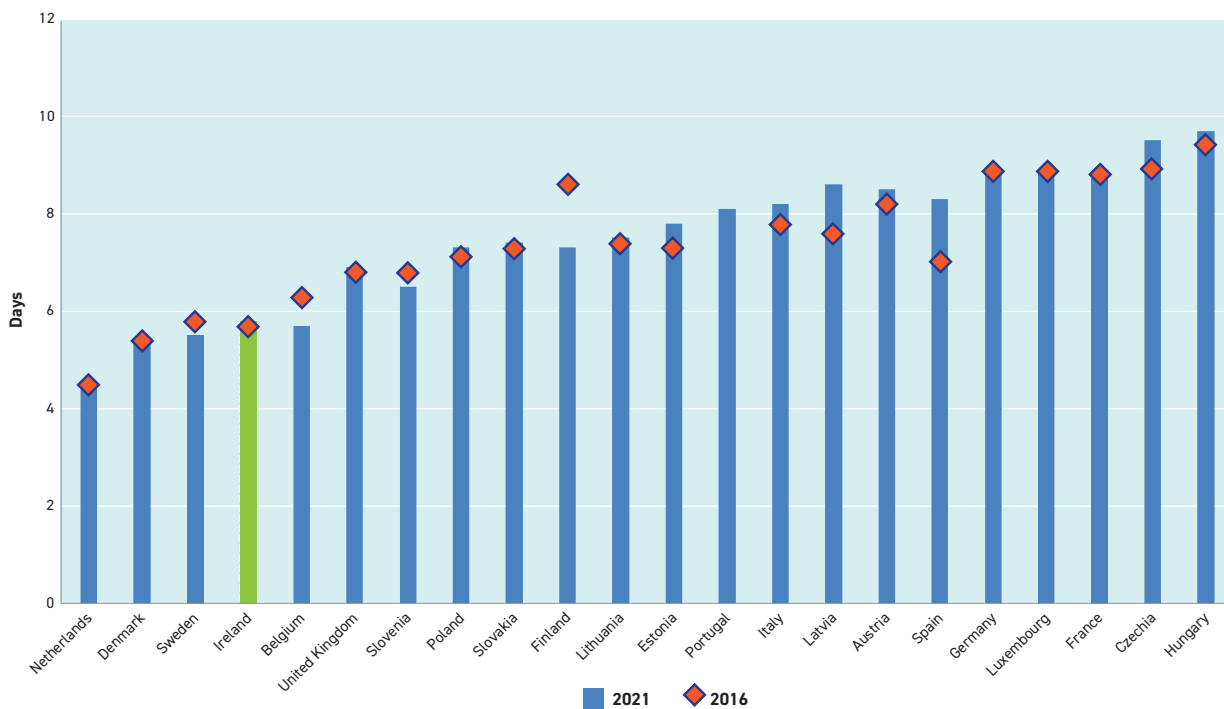


- One aspect of quality and efficiency of care is the mortality rate for various diseases following admission to hospitals.
- Ireland's health care system is relatively efficient in treating strokes, as reflected in its comparatively low thirty day mortality rate following stroke hospitalisation.

Ireland's hospitals display comparatively high levels of efficiency with regard to length of stay

FIGURE 47 AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN HOSPITALS FOR ALL CONDITIONS

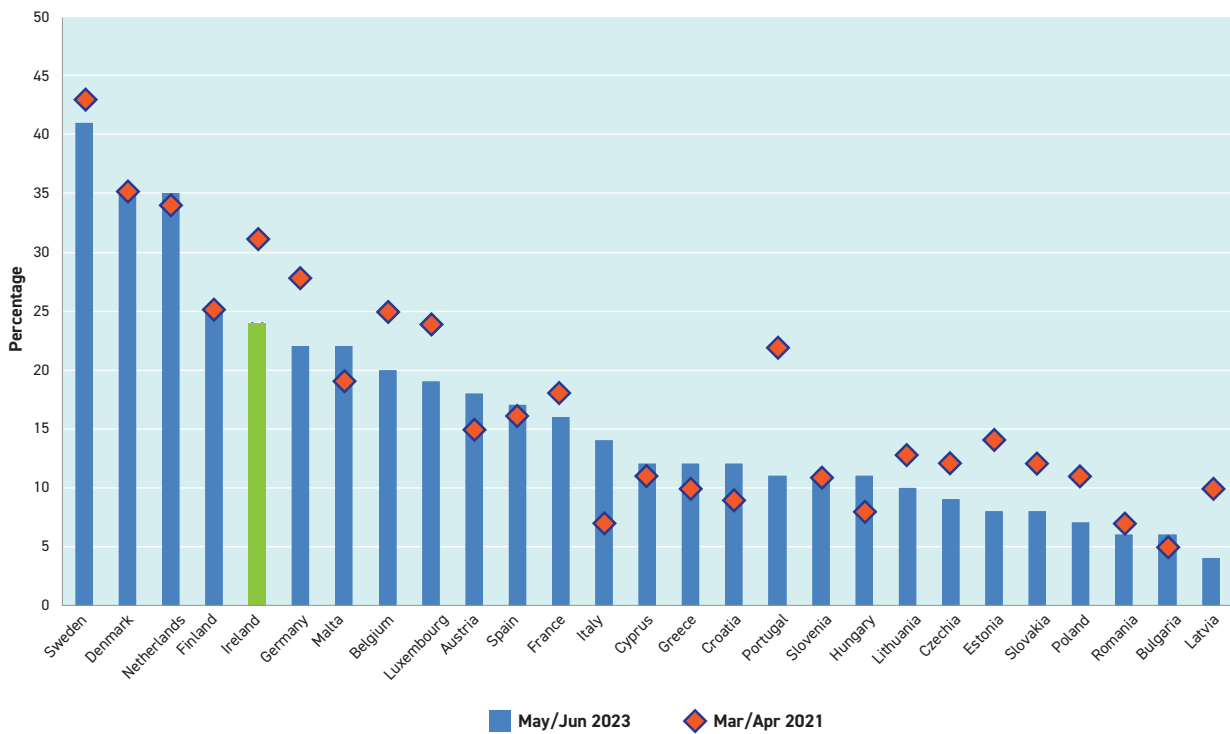
Source: OECD Health Statistics 2023



- Average length of stay in hospitals is a commonly used indicator of efficiency in the health system. All other things being equal, a shorter stay is associated with reduced costs. However, shorter stays do tend to be more service intensive and more costly per day. And too short a length of stay may cause adverse health effects.
- On a comparative basis, Ireland shows a low level of length of stay in hospitals (5.8 days in 2021), suggesting a relatively high level of efficiency.

The proportion of Irish people that see climate change as the most serious problem facing the world is high by European terms but has declined since 2021

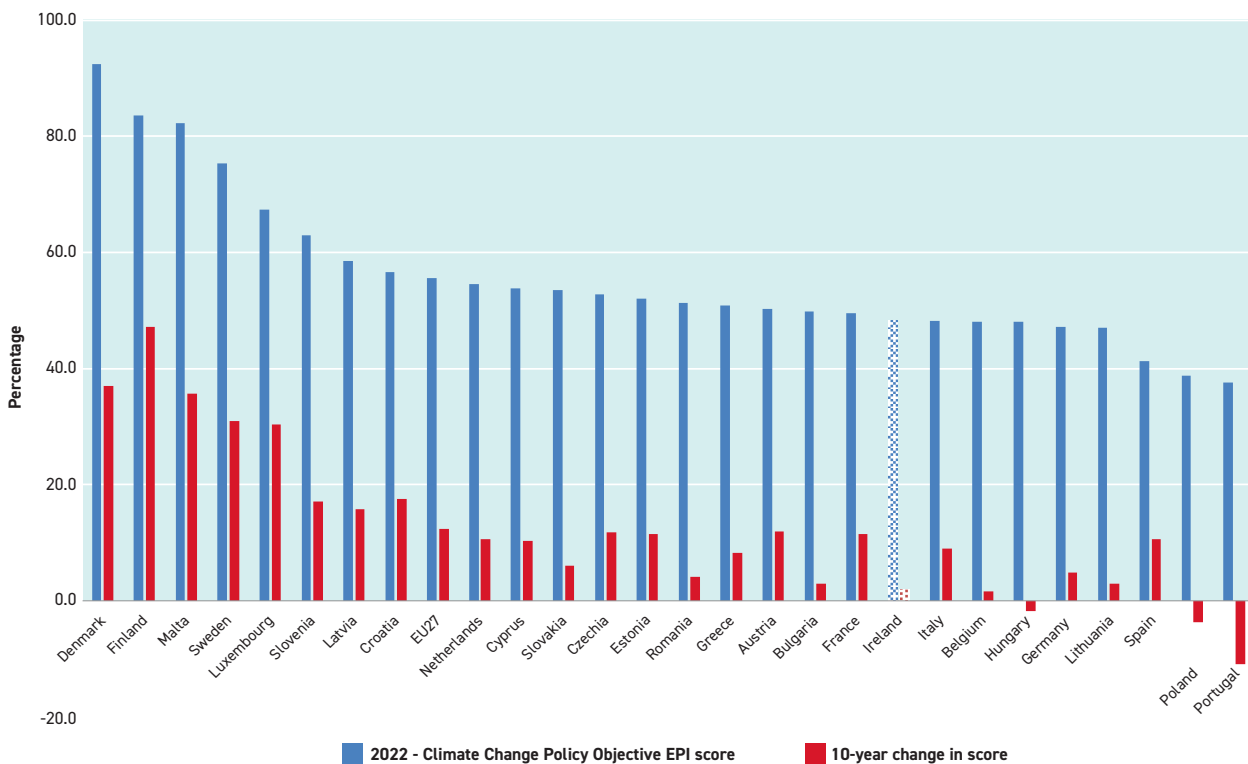
FIGURE 48 SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO VIEW CLIMATE CHANGE AS THE SINGLE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM FACING THE WORLD
Source: Eurobarometer



- According to the 2023 Eurobarometer on climate change, Ireland (24 per cent) has the fourth highest proportion of survey respondents in an EU country who view climate change as the single most serious problem facing the world at large.
- The proportion of people in Ireland who see climate change as the most serious problem facing the world has fallen by seven per cent from 2021, when it stood at 31 per cent. This is one of the larger percentage falls in the European Union.

Ireland's performance in climate change policy is below the EU27 average

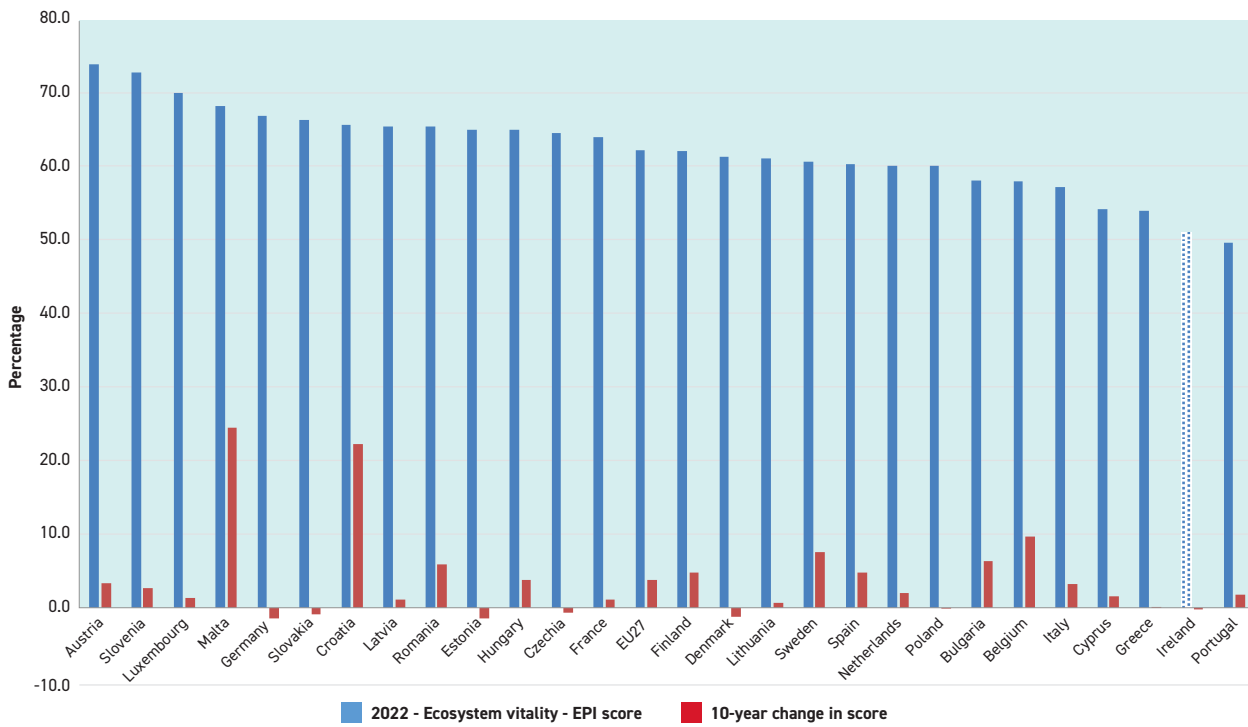
FIGURE 49 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX – CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY OBJECTIVE
Source: Environmental Performance Index 2022



- The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022, ranks 180 countries on their national efforts to improve environmental health, protect ecosystem vitality, and mitigate climate change and explores economic, governance, and social factors that help drive better environmental outcomes.
- According to the EPI 2022, Ireland's performance in the climate change policy objective, which is concerned with climate change mitigation, scored 48.2; this represents an increase of 2.0 in Ireland's score over a 10-year period.
- For this specific indicator Ireland ranks 19th in the EU27 and 56th out of 180 countries.

Ireland's performance in ecosystem vitality policy is below EU27 average

FIGURE 50 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX – ECOSYSTEM VITALITY
 Source: Environmental Performance Index 2022



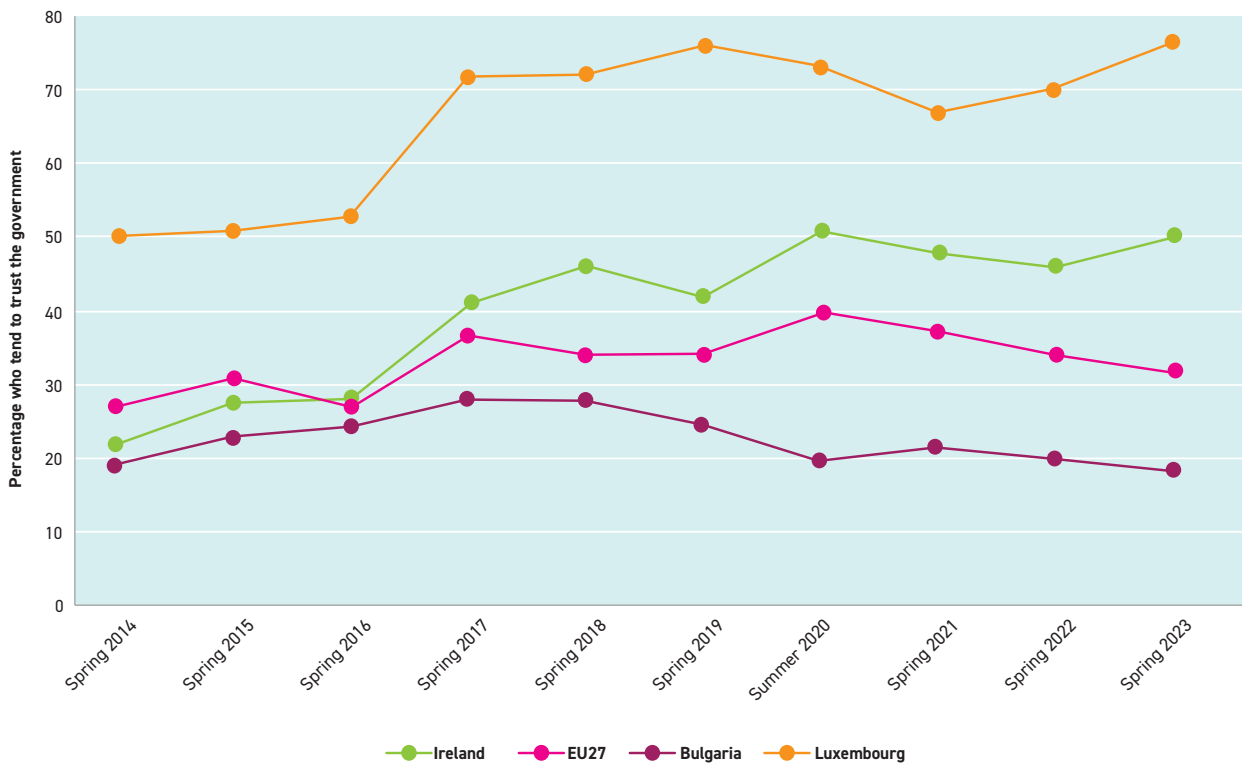
- In the Environmental Performance Index 2022, Ireland's performance in the ecosystem vitality policy objective, which measures how well countries are preserving, protecting, and enhancing ecosystems and the services they provide, scored 50.90; this represents a reduction of 0.30 in Ireland's score over a 10-year period.
- For this specific indicator Ireland ranks 26th in the EU27 and 62th out of 180 countries.

5. TRUST, SATISFACTION AND CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Twice a year Eurobarometer measures the level of public confidence in the national government and the national parliament. National government is not defined, and the extent to which it covers both political and administrative elements of government is unclear. But it is likely to primarily reflect levels of trust in the political parties in power at the time of the survey. Periodic surveys of trust in regional and local authorities and in different sectoral workforces by Eurobarometer are also examined, as are levels of satisfaction and confidence with police, education, health care, local government, and the justice system. Complaints to Ombudsman's offices are tracked as an indicator of confidence in public services, as are freedom of information requests.

Trust in government in Ireland remains above the European average

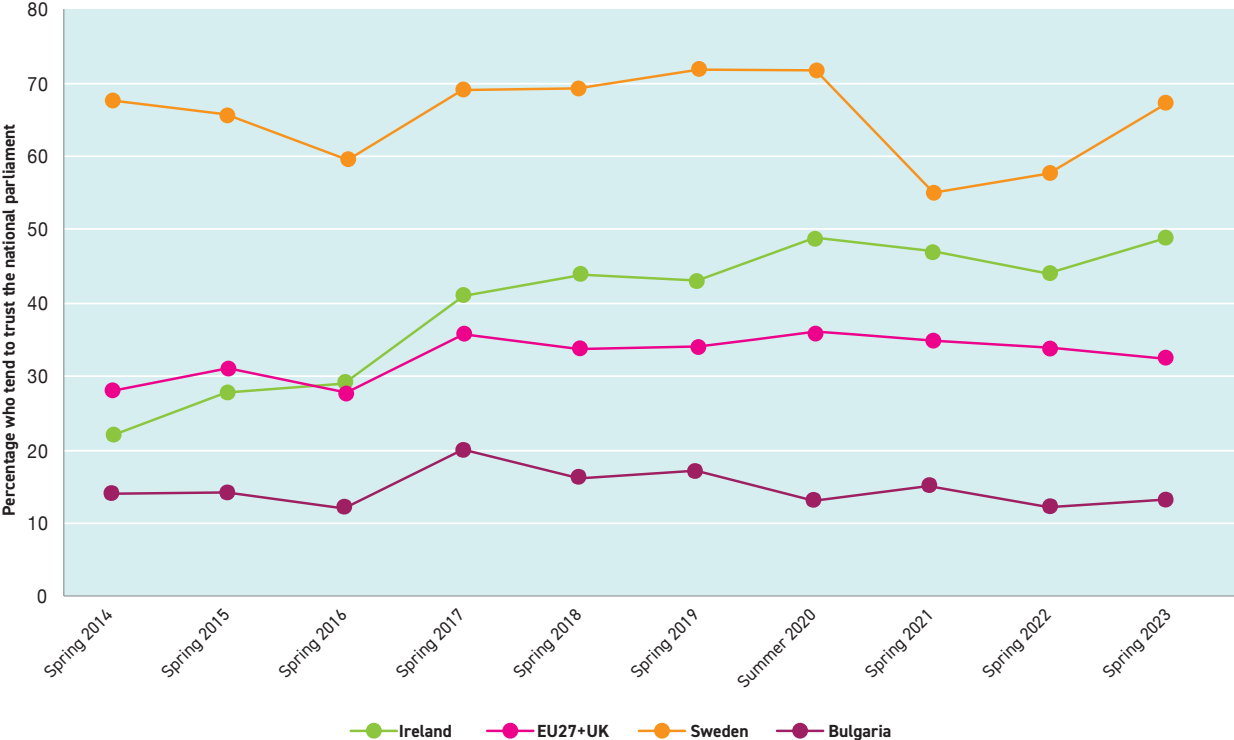
FIGURE 51 LEVEL OF TRUST IN GOVERNMENT
Source: Eurobarometer



- There was a dramatic fall in the level of trust in government in Ireland from 2008 to 2010. Trust in government in the rest of Europe also fell, but only slightly. In autumn 2010, Ireland expressed the lowest level of trust in government of any of the then EU28 (10 per cent).
- Trust in government in Ireland increased from 2010 to 2020, when trust in government in Ireland stood at just over 50 per cent.
- Trust in government in Ireland has remained relatively stable since 2020. There has been a general decline in trust in government across most of Europe over this period.

Trust in parliament in Ireland is above the European average

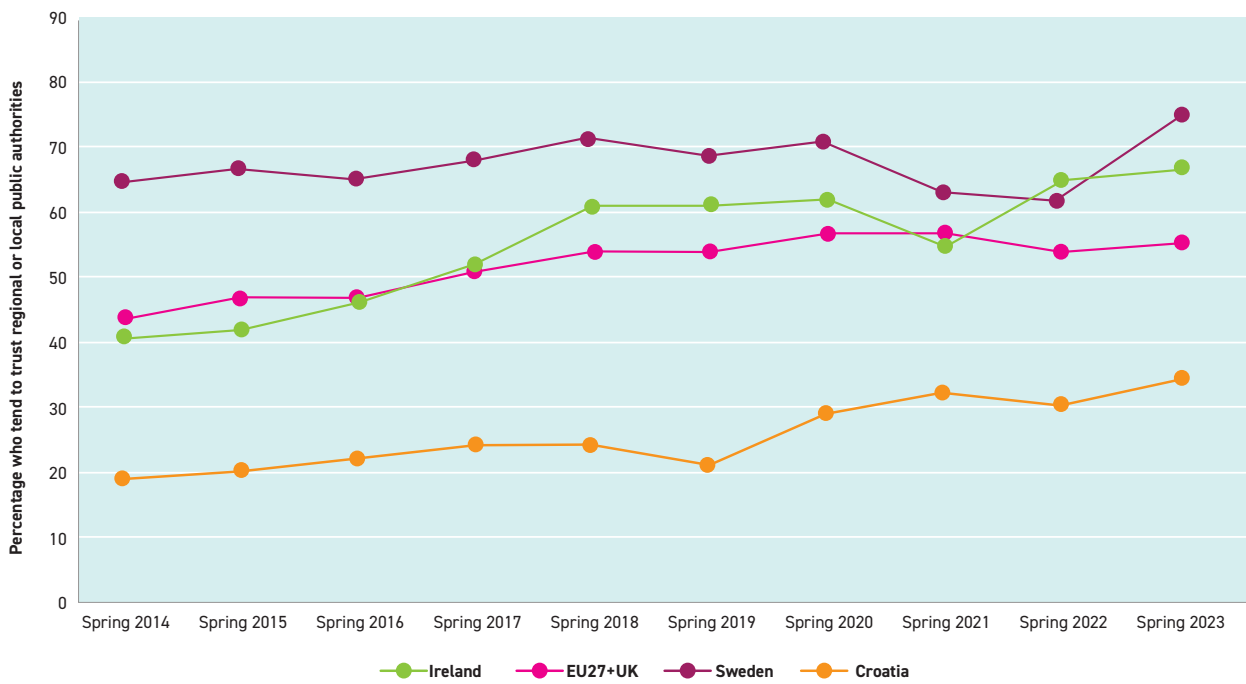
FIGURE 52 LEVEL OF TRUST IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT
Source: Eurobarometer



- From 2008 to 2010, as with trust in government, trust in parliament in Ireland dropped rapidly both in absolute terms and compared to the European average.
- Trust in parliament in Ireland has gradually increased from 2012, standing at 49 per cent in 2023.
- There has been a gradual but small reduction of trust in parliament across Europe generally since 2020, as shown by the EU27 average, standing at 33 per cent in spring 2023.

Trust in regional and local authorities has risen above the European average in the last couple of years

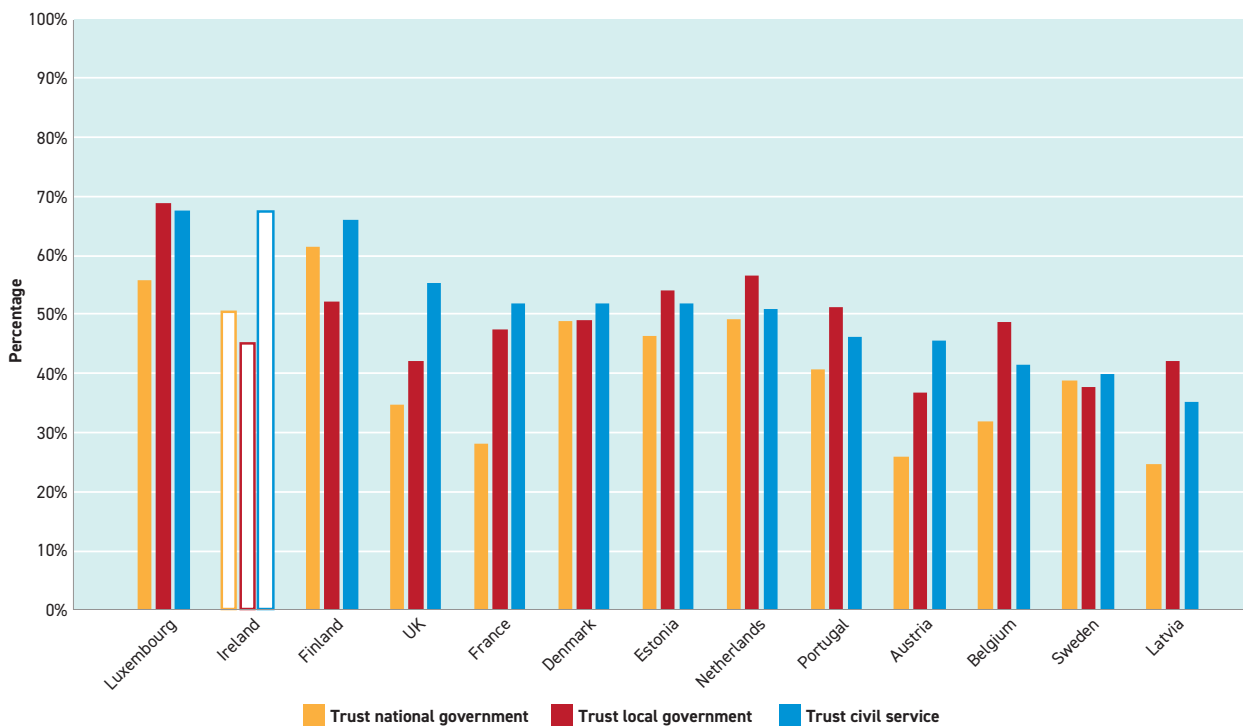
FIGURE 53 LEVEL OF TRUST IN REGIONAL OR LOCAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
Source: Eurobarometer



- The level of trust in regional and local authorities in Ireland was at 30 per cent in 2012, down from 40 per cent in 2008. It has gradually increased since then, and stood at 66 per cent tending to trust regional and local authorities in spring 2023.
- As at spring 2023 Ireland is joint sixth highest in the EU27 on this indicator.

Trust in public institutions in Ireland is comparatively high compared to other European countries

FIGURE 54 LEVEL OF TRUST IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE CIVIL SERVICE
Source: OECD Trust Survey 2022

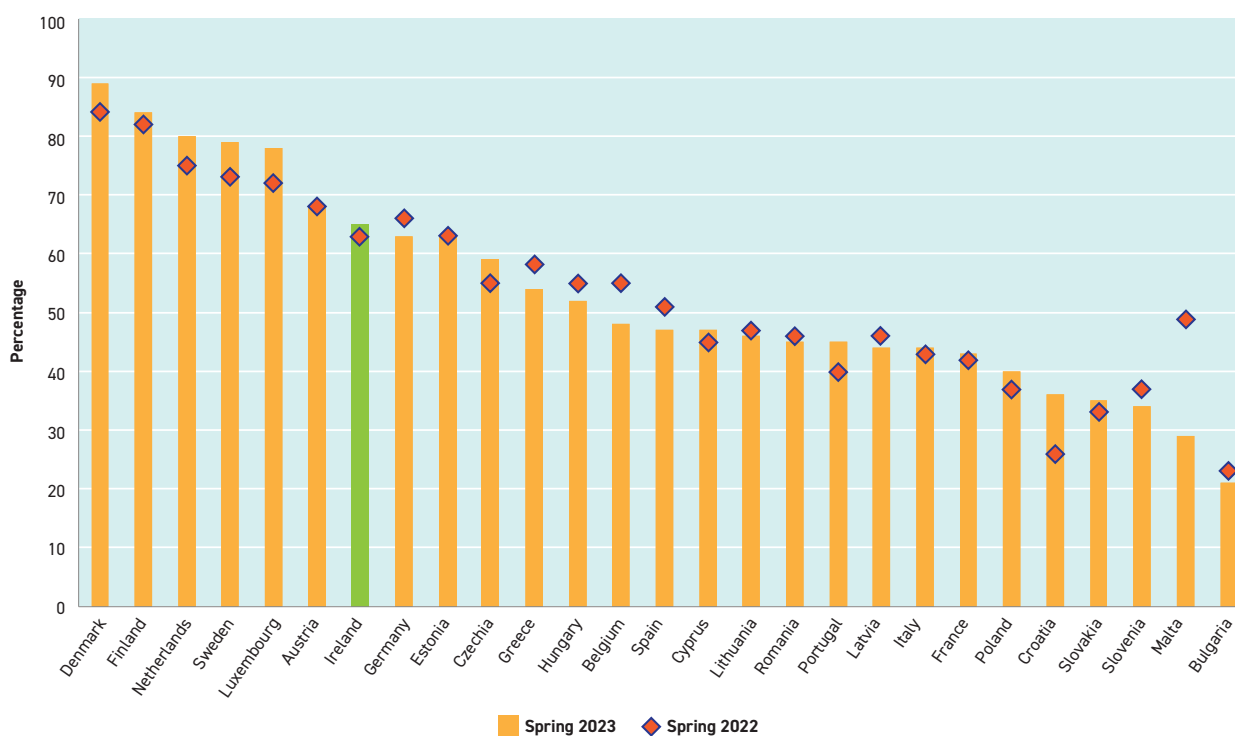


- The OECD published a report based on a survey of the drivers of trust in public institutions in 2022. Ireland shows a relatively high level of trust compared to the other countries surveyed.
- Trust in the civil service is second highest, behind Luxembourg, with 68 per cent saying they trust the civil service.
- While levels of trust in national government (51 per cent) and local government (45 per cent) are relatively low, they are still at the higher end of countries surveyed.

Ireland ranks reasonably highly with regard to trust in the justice/legal system

FIGURE 55 TEND TO TRUST JUSTICE/LEGAL SYSTEM

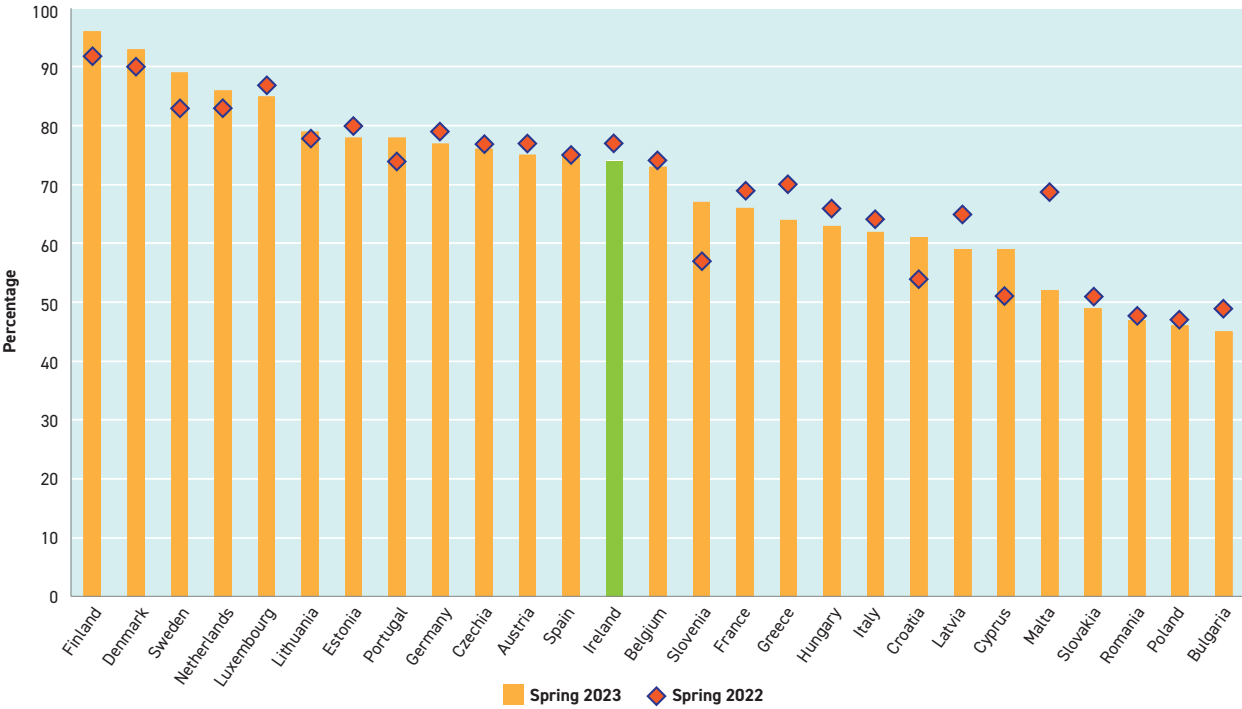
Source: Eurobarometer



- Ireland, with trust in the justice/legal system at 65 per cent, ranks above the EU27 average in this category. However, the level of trust has dropped from 74 per cent in 2020.
- Denmark and Finland display the highest levels of trust with the justice/legal system.

Trust in the police is around the European average

FIGURE 56 TEND TO TRUST - THE POLICE
Source: Eurobarometer

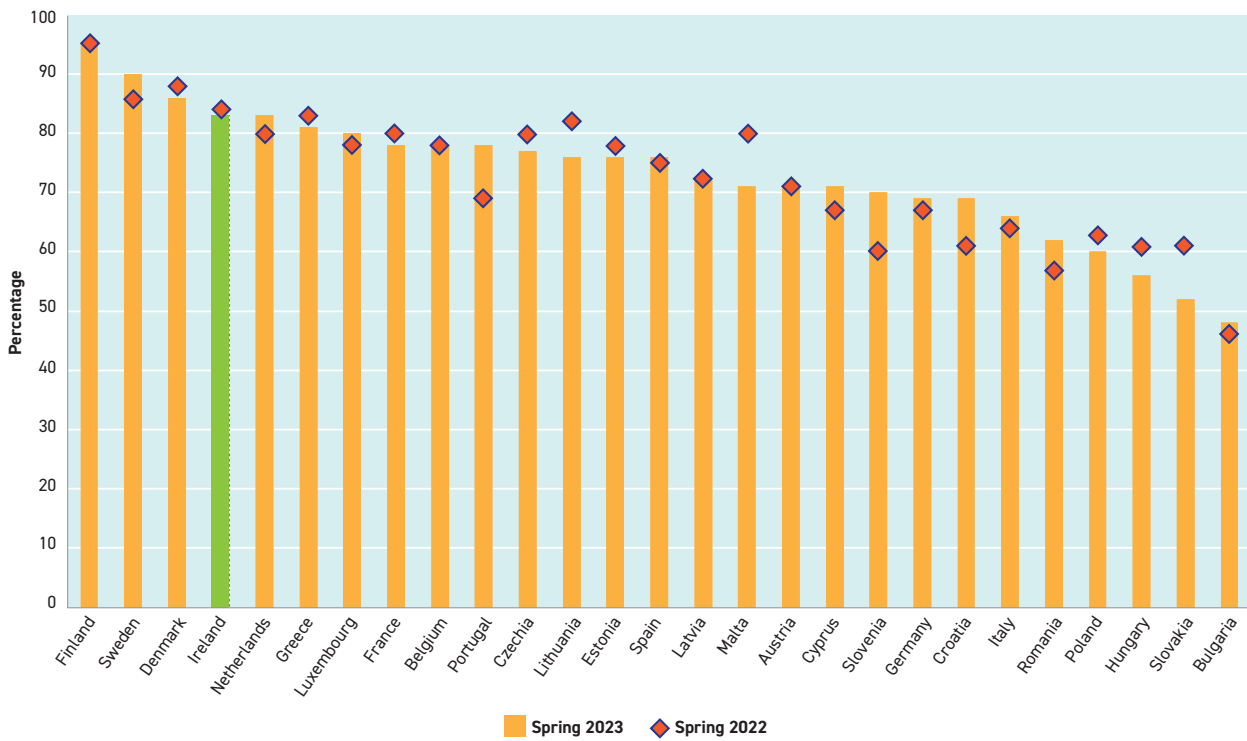


- Trust in the police in Ireland fell significantly to 67 per cent in 2018, from a high of 78 per cent in spring 2017. It is at 74 per cent in spring 2023.
- Finland and Denmark have very high trust scores of over 90 per cent.

There is a high level of trust in the army in Ireland

FIGURE 57 TEND TO TRUST - THE ARMY

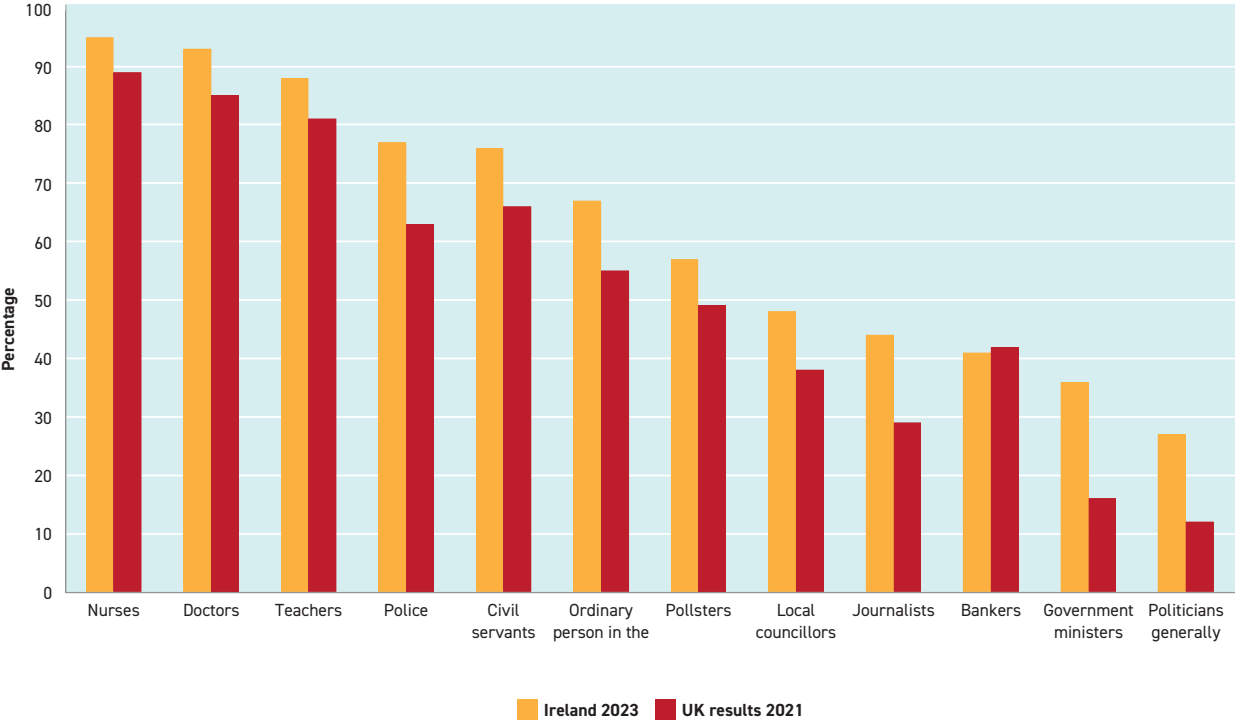
Source: Eurobarometer



- Ireland is the fourth highest country in Europe with regard to level of trust in the army, with a score of 83 per cent.
- This category had the highest European average trust score of all the public services surveyed, at 72 per cent.

Trust in public servants to tell the truth is reasonably high

FIGURE 58 LEVEL OF TRUST TO TELL THE TRUTH
Source: Ipsos (Ireland) Veracity Index for Ireland, Ipsos Veracity Index for UK

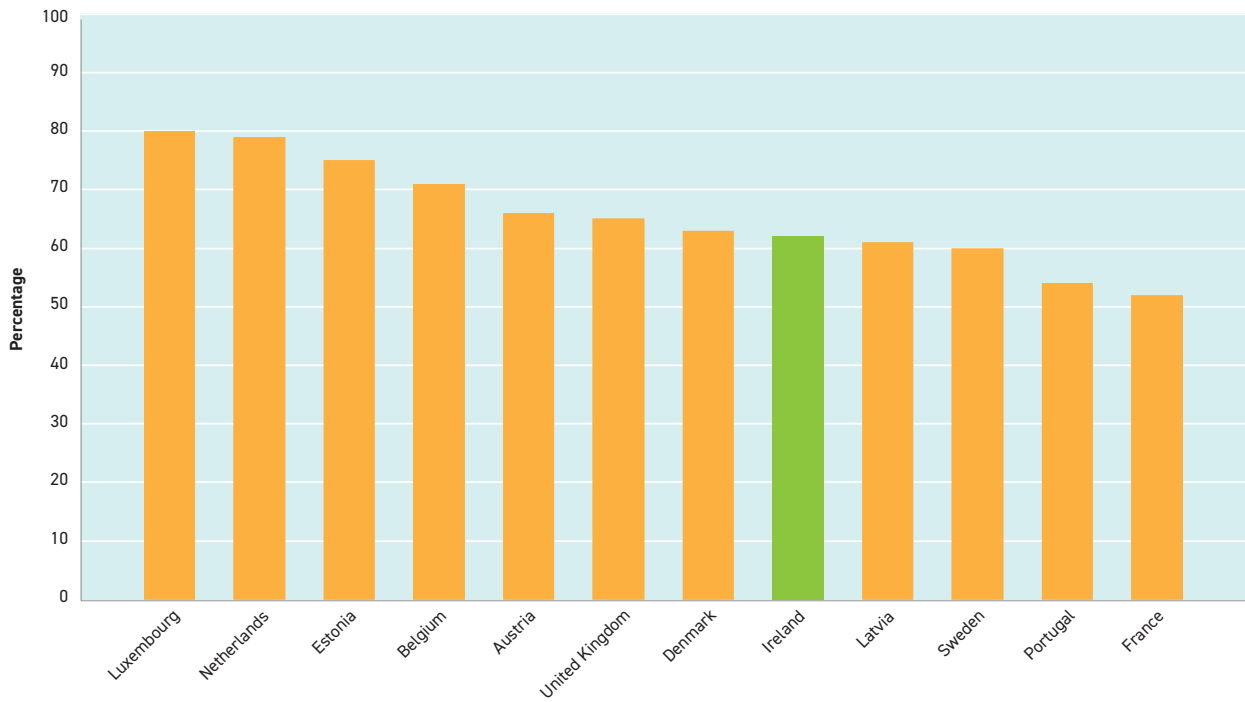


- In general, the level of trust in public servants is much higher than the level of trust in government ministers or politicians generally.
- There is over 90 per cent trust in nurses and doctors to tell the truth. This drops to 77 per cent for the police and 76 per cent for civil servants (up from 63 per cent for civil servants in 2021).
- Levels of trust in Ireland are generally somewhat higher than in the UK, particularly with regard to trust in government ministers and politicians generally.

Citizen satisfaction with administrative services is towards the lower end of European countries surveyed

FIGURE 59 CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES 2021

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

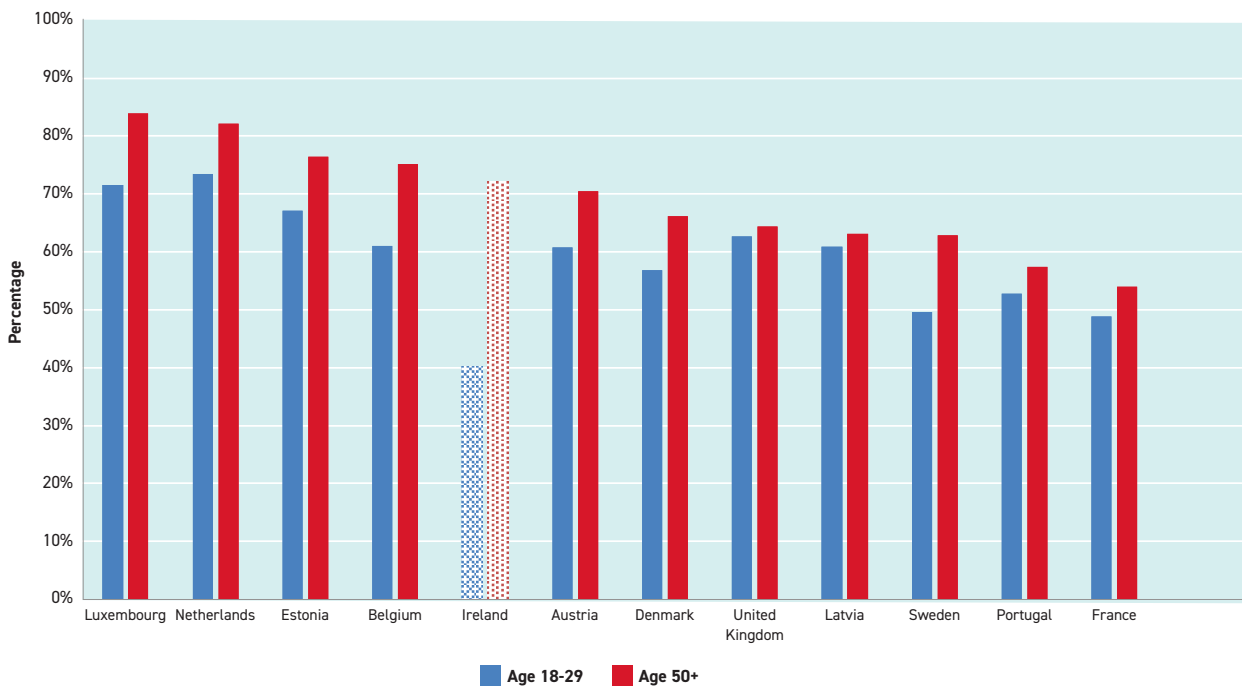


- Citizen satisfaction with administrative services in 2021 was at 62 per cent in Ireland, towards the lower end of those European countries surveyed.
- Luxembourg and the Netherlands recorded satisfaction levels of around 80 per cent.

Citizen satisfaction with administrative services is particularly low in the 18-29 age group

FIGURE 60 SATISFACTION WITH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BY AGE GROUP 2021

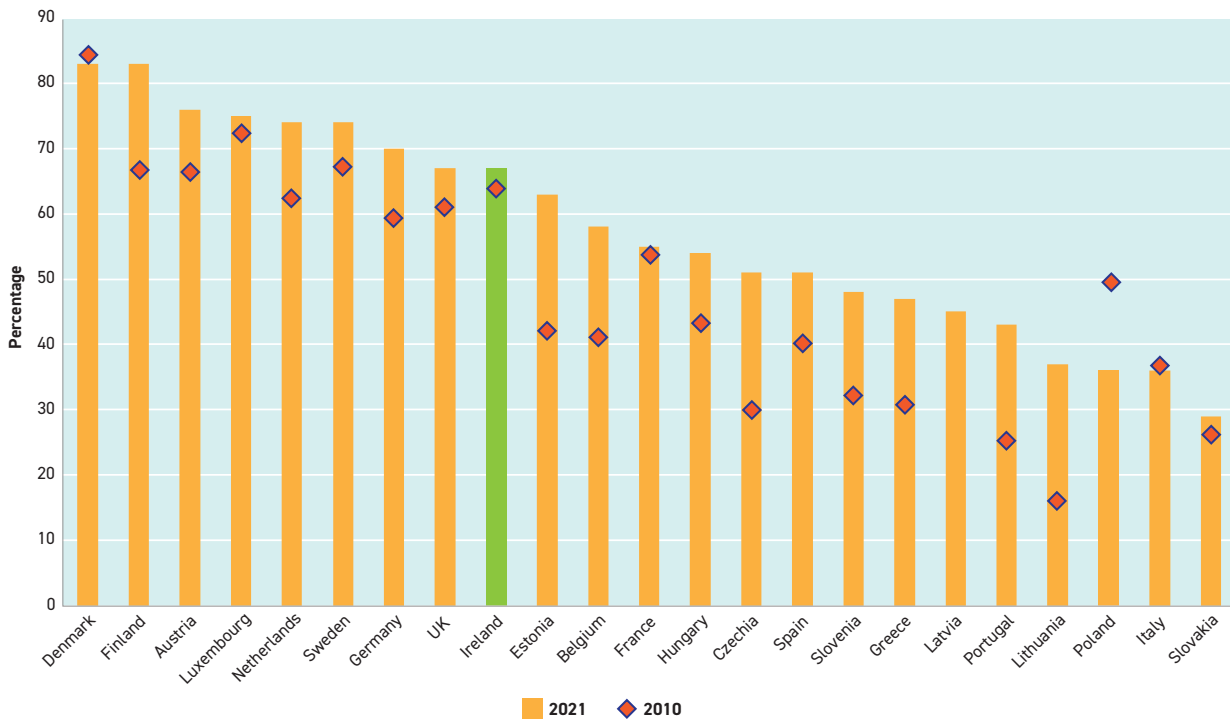
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Citizen satisfaction with administrative services in 2021 is particularly low, at 40 per cent, amongst the 18–29-year-old age group. It was the lowest level of satisfaction of any of the European countries surveyed.
- Satisfaction amongst those aged 50 and above is higher, at 72 per cent.

Citizen satisfaction with the judicial system and the courts in Ireland is above the European average

FIGURE 61 CITIZEN CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDICIARY SYSTEM AND THE COURTS
 Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

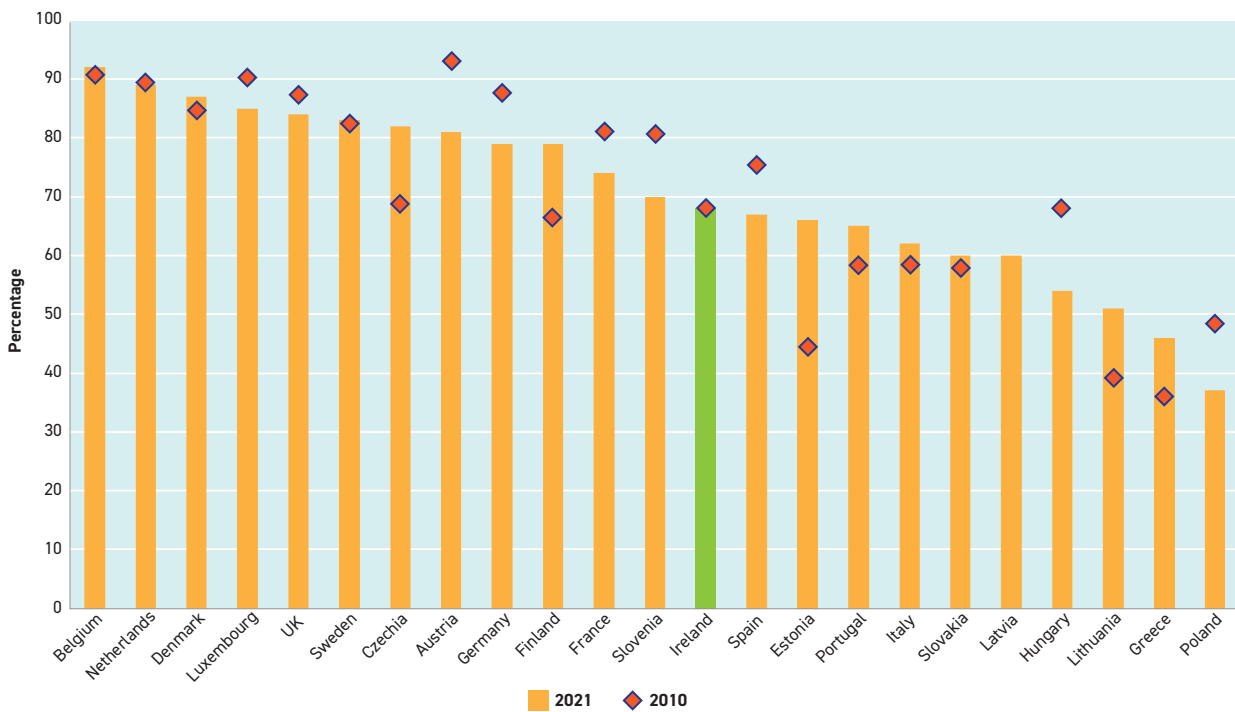


- Citizen satisfaction with the judicial system and the courts in Ireland in 2021, at 67 per cent is above the European average.
- Confidence has remained at a relatively stable level since 2007.

Citizen satisfaction with the healthcare system is just below the European average

FIGURE 62 CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023

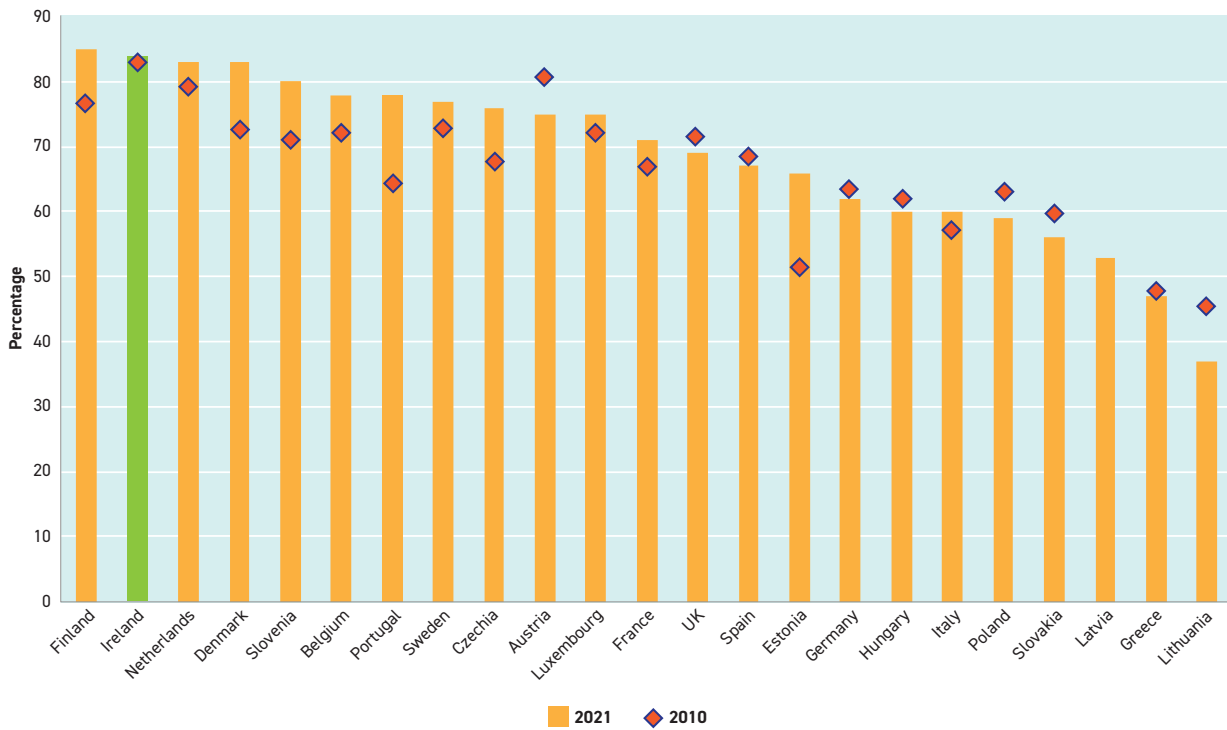


- At 68 per cent, citizen satisfaction with the healthcare system in 2021 is a little below the European average.
- Satisfaction levels have not changed dramatically in recent years: they were at 68 per cent in 2010 and 60 per cent in 2016.

Citizen satisfaction with the education system and schools remains at a high level

FIGURE 63 CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND SCHOOLS

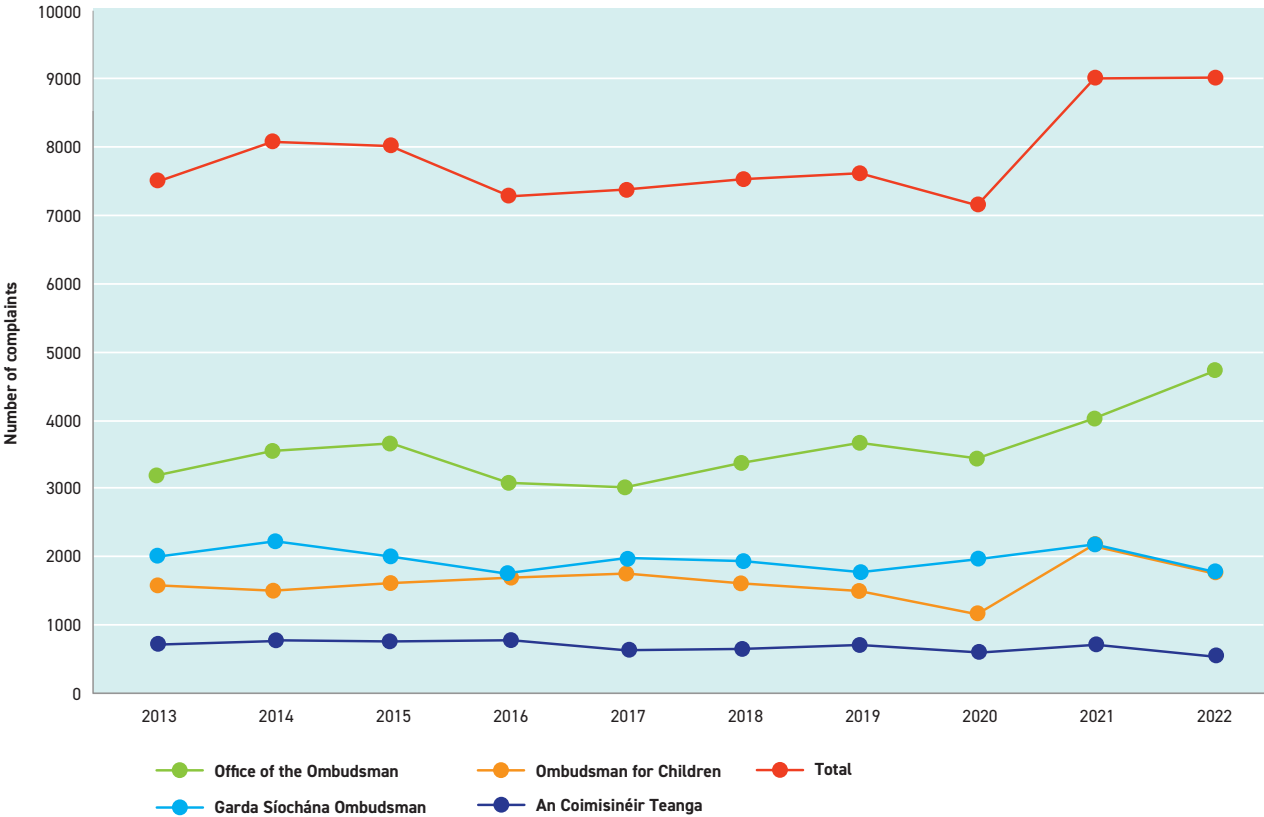
Source: OECD Government at a Glance 2023



- Citizens express a high level of satisfaction with the education system and schools, at 84 per cent in 2021 (up from 76 per cent in 2020 when it dipped slightly).
- Ireland scored the second highest level of satisfaction with the education system behind Finland.

Complaints to Ombudsman offices increased sharply in 2021 and levelled off overall in 2022 while continuing to increase in the Office of the Ombudsman

FIGURE 64 COMPLAINT TO THE OMBUDSMAN OFFICERS
Source: Various Ombudsman Office annual reports.

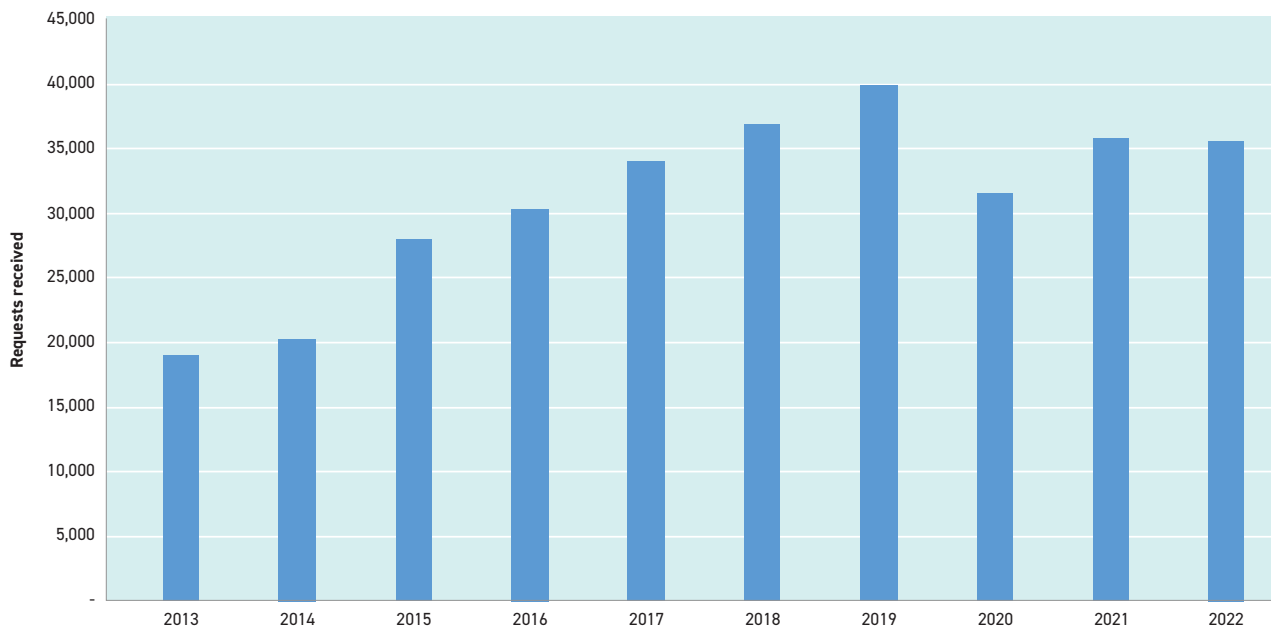


- Ombudsman offices received 9,029 complaints in 2022.
- Complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman increased from 4,004 in 2021 to 4,791 in 2022 in the Office of the Ombudsman. Complaints to all other Ombudsman offices fell between 2021 and 2022.

The number of freedom of information requests received by public bodies remains high but levelled off in 2022

FIGURE 65 NUMBER OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS RECEIVED

Source: Office of the Information Commissioner annual reports



- The number of freedom of information (FOI) requests in 2022 was 35,465. This represents a slight decrease compared to 2021.
- Prior to 2020 there has been a continuous upward trend in FOI requests, from just over 10,000 in 2007, with a large increase since 2014, when the Freedom of Information Act 2014 removed restrictions and extended the range of bodies covered.
- The HSE accounts for just under a third of the requests received.

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APPENDIX 1

INDICATORS USED TO MAKE UP THE IPA PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION QUALITY INDICATOR
(data from IMD World Competitiveness yearbook)

	Data Source and Indicator	Description
Traditional Public Service Values Indicator (TPSVI)	Justice Processes	Justice is fairly administered
	Bribery and Corruption	Existence of bribery and corruption
	Transparency	Government policy is transparent

	Data Source and Indicator	Description
Competitiveness and Regulation Indicator (CRI)	Legal and Regulatory Framework	The legal and regulatory framework encourages the competitiveness of enterprises
	Public Sector Contracts	Public sector contracts are sufficiently open to foreign bidders
	Intellectual Property Rights	Intellectual property rights are adequately enforced
	Public and Private Sector Ventures	Public and private sector ventures are supporting technological developments
	Bureaucracy	Bureaucracy hinders business activities