

# CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (CSEAS)

Seirbhís Chúnaimh  
d'Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2020



An Roinn Caiteachais  
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe  
Department of Public  
Expenditure and Reform

## SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE



See Appendix 4 [About the CSEAS](#) for further details

CSEAS Website [www.cseas.per.gov.ie](http://www.cseas.per.gov.ie)

**The CSEAS plays a key part in the Civil Service ethos of promoting employee wellbeing and organisational effectiveness**

**15% of Civil Servants made contact with the CSEAS in 2020**

**The CSEAS supports the employer's duty of care to its employees under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 in the area of psychosocial issues**

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## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) 2020 Activity Report. The CSEAS plays a key role in the Human Resource (HR) structure of the Civil Service and the contribution of the CSEAS during the COVID-19 global pandemic has been exemplary. The impact of the pandemic on our daily lives was enormous and civil servants willingly rallied to the cause by displaying resilience and adaptability in ensuring continuity of service to the public.

Underpinning the resilience and adaptability of civil servants in ever-changing and demanding circumstances are the supports offered by the CSEAS. The CSEAS collaborated with HR and management nationally to provide the ongoing support and resources necessary to assist staff attending the workplace and those adjusting to working remotely. Providing such a professional and confidential support service to staff is of the utmost importance, especially during difficult times. In response to the pandemic, the CSEAS extended service availability to include evenings and weekends. Tailored resources were developed with over 13,000 civil servants attending presentations and webinars on a range of health and wellbeing topics. The CSEAS provided information and support to 5,690 individuals in 2020 representing 15% of civil servants.

The CSEAS is a vital component of the *People Strategy for the Civil Service (2017-2020)* which sets out the broad priorities for people management and development in the Civil Service. Recognising the need for additional support with the mass introduction of remote working, the CSEAS responded by providing online resources for people managers via their website, as well as providing almost 900 specific incidences of support to managers. This support included assistance with general people management issues as well as COVID-19 specific situations.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the CSEAS for providing a professional and adaptable support service during what has been, a difficult year for all. Their commitment to promoting and enhancing staff wellbeing contributed in no small way to keeping essential services running effectively in 2020. I have every confidence that the CSEAS will continue to be an invaluable resource to civil servants, during the pandemic and beyond.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael McGrath". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael McGrath T.D.

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform



# INTRODUCTION

This Report presents an overview of the activity of the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) during 2020, a year unlike any other. The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact, nationally and beyond and this in turn impacted the activity of the CSEAS over the year.

15% (5,690) serving civil servants made contact with the CSEAS in 2020 of which:

- 9% (3,303) availed of one-to-one support
- 6% (2,387) included in-the-moment support via the central CSEAS Helpdesk/Mailbox, contacts with HR/Managers and information requests
- 10,369 one-to-one client sessions\* were provided



In response to the introduction of initial COVID-19 restrictions in mid-March, the CSEAS extended its operational hours for the central helpline to include evenings and weekends, increasing availability to provide in-the-moment support to service users. This type of support was provided to 2,387 civil servants, HR Departments and managers during the year in addition to the one-to-one client support provided to 3,303 service users. This illustrates the key role the CSEAS plays in supporting all staff during challenging times.

The CSEAS also provided out of the ordinary support in a year that was anything but ordinary, including supporting service users suffering from, and hospitalised with, COVID-19. In order to adhere to restrictions and to safeguard the health and safety of CSEAS staff and service users alike, the majority of client sessions were carried out virtually from mid-March onwards, with a total of 8,889 of the 10,369 sessions conducted via phone, email and text.



- 11% of one-to-one work-related casework related specifically to COVID-19 and associated concerns
- 10% of one-to-one work-related issues were manager consultations about staff wellbeing concerns
- CSEAS responded to 5 workplace critical incidents
- 50 staff members personally impacted by critical incidents received one-to-one support

\* A session is any contact with or on behalf of a service user

A broad range of presentations/webinars were delivered by the CSEAS across Government Departments/Offices on a wide variety of topics (see [Appendix 2](#) for details). Of the 221 presentations delivered during the year, 169 were delivered virtually to accommodate the large number of staff working remotely.

221 presentations/webinars were delivered across Government Departments/Offices on health and wellbeing related topics:

- 169 were delivered virtually
- 13,000 (approx.) civil servants attended these presentations
- Presentations were recorded by some hosting Departments/Offices facilitating ongoing access to material



The initial move to remote working across much of the Civil Service was swift, happening almost overnight. In an effort to provide support and resources to the large number of civil servants facing significant changes to their lives and work as a result of the pandemic, many tailored resources were produced by the CSEAS and added to our website.

The main body and appendices of this Report provide a more in-depth analysis of CSEAS activities in a challenging and ever-changing year.

### COVID-19 SUPPORTS:

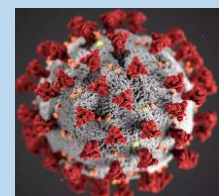
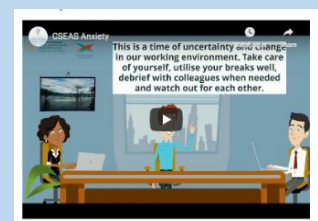
#### Additions to CSEAS Website:

- Multimedia Resources on areas such as Anxiety, Staying Connected, Remote Working, Managing Remotely
- Health and Wellbeing Resources e.g. Self-care Tips, Managing Working from Home and Childcare, Remote Working, Exercise, Nutrition and Breathing
- COVID-19 Bereavement page with links to relevant supports
- Working Parent Support Page



#### Collaborations with:

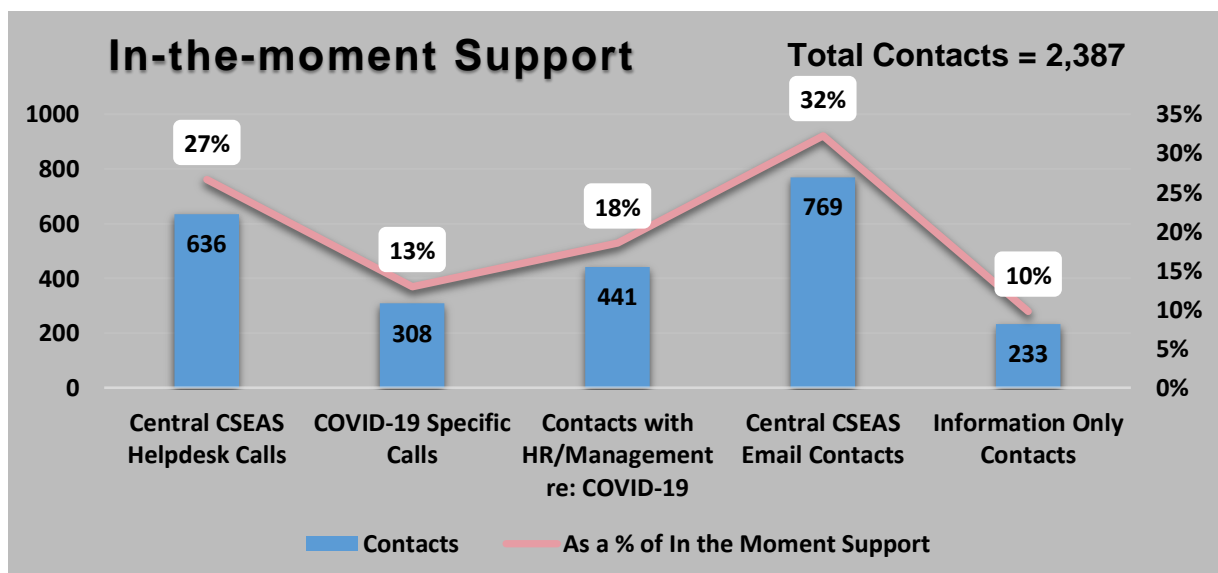
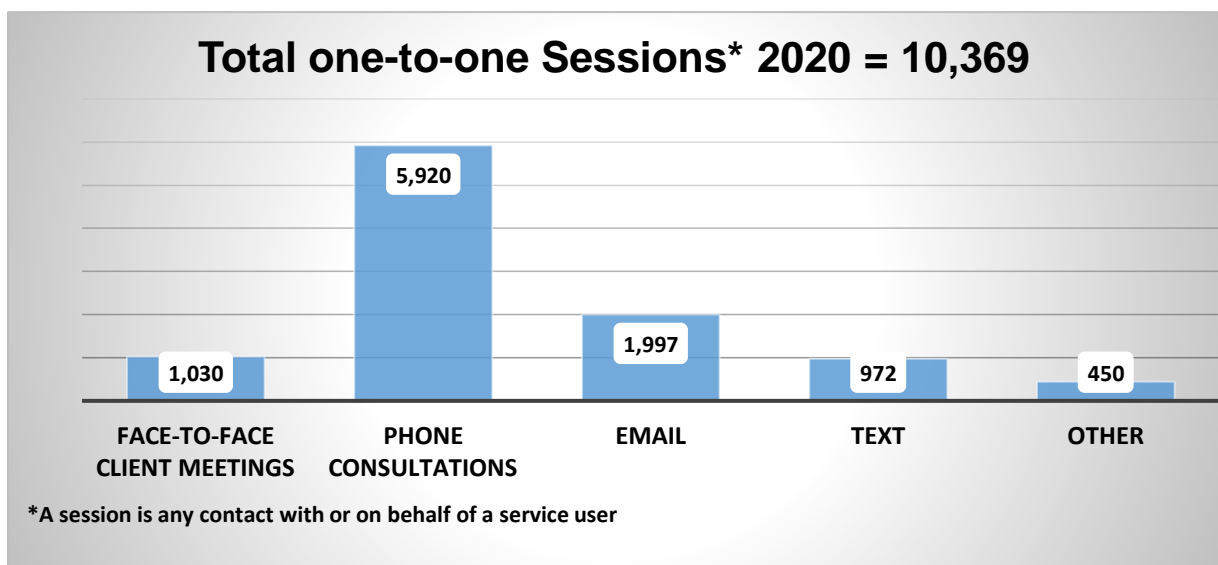
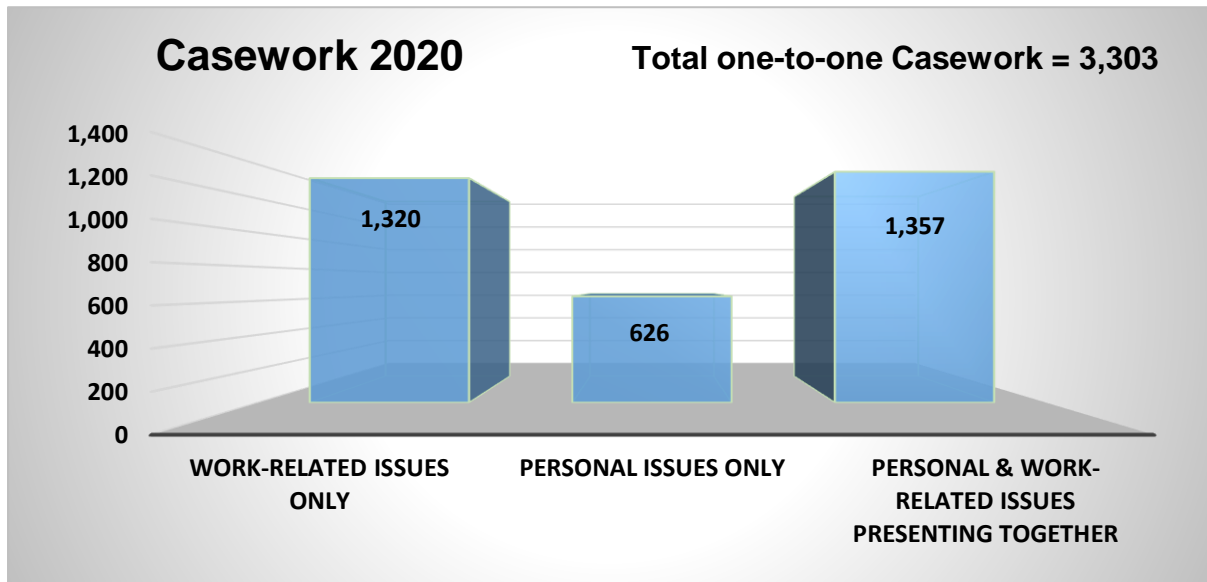
- **CSHRD Policy Unit** towards the development of new initiatives such as the Working from Home during COVID-19 Guidelines
- **OneLearning** leading to the production of resources on issues such as “Dealing with Anxiety while Working Remotely”, “Self-care for Front-line Staff” and “Childcare and Remote Working”
- **Participating in an interdepartmental project group**, led by CSHRD tasked with designing a Health and Wellbeing Framework for the Civil Service



**In addition to the above, we provided COVID-19 targeted supports to HR Departments and Line/Local Management.**

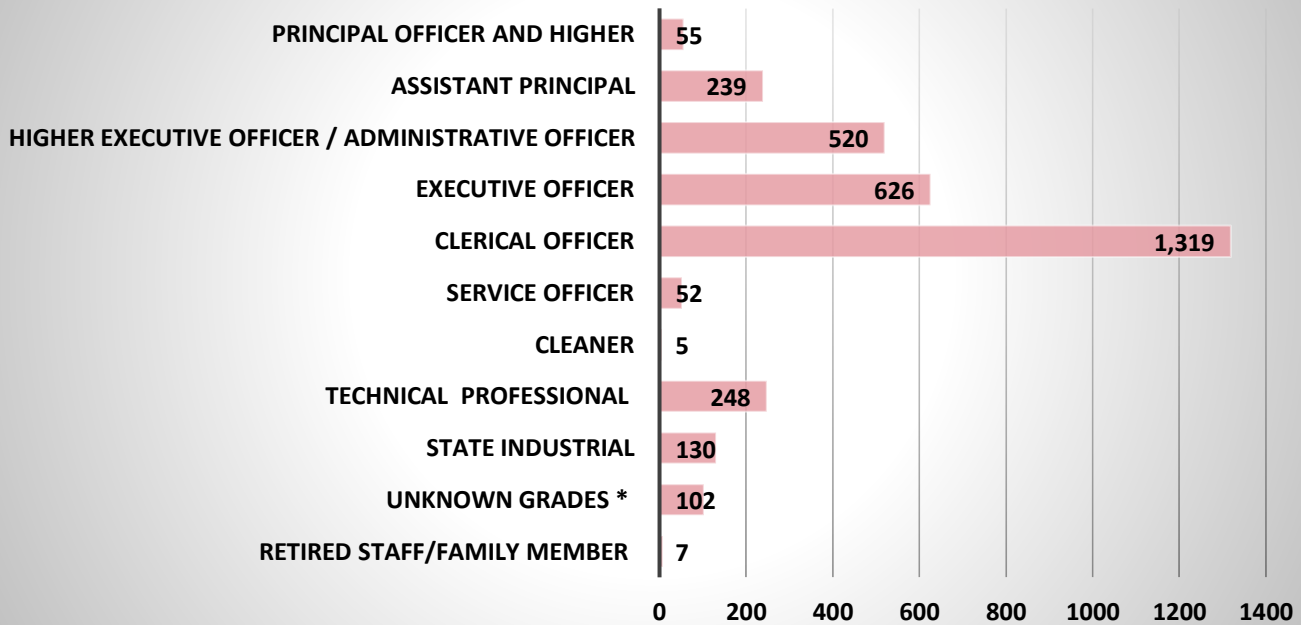
# CSEAS 2020 ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

See [Appendix 1](#) for details of one-to-one support



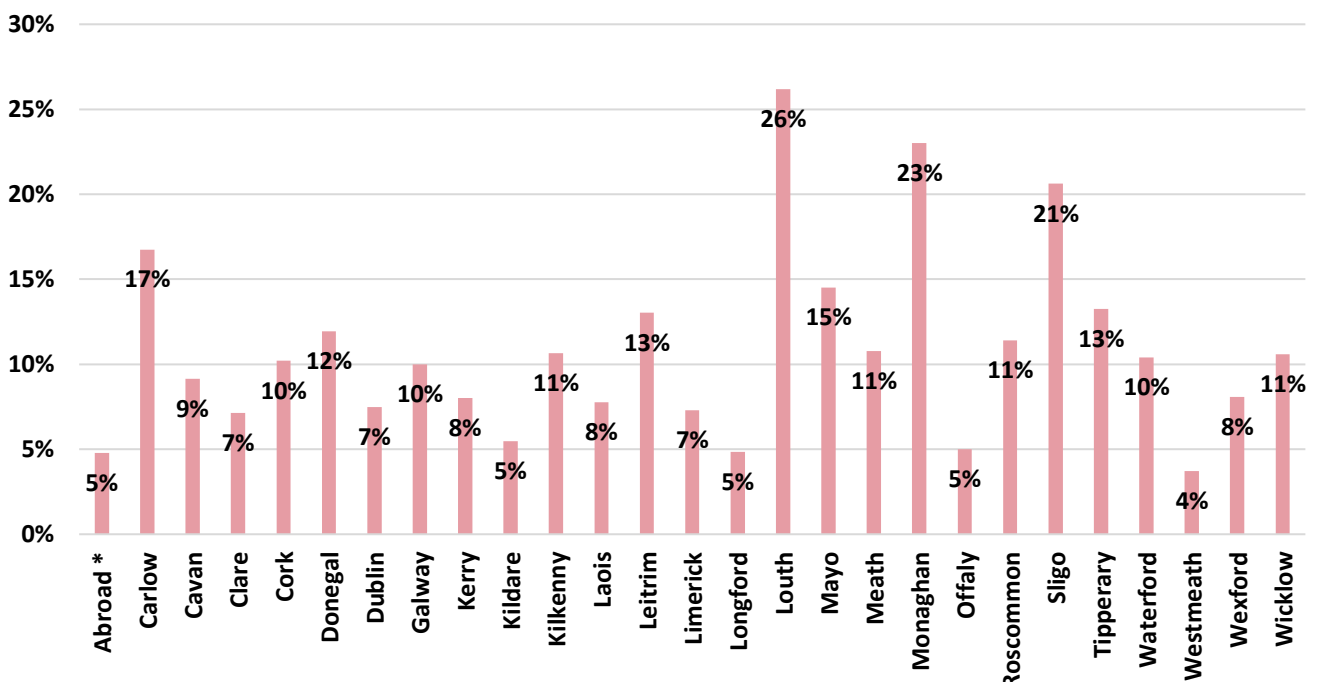
## CSEAS Casework by Grade 2020

Total one-to-one casework = 3,303



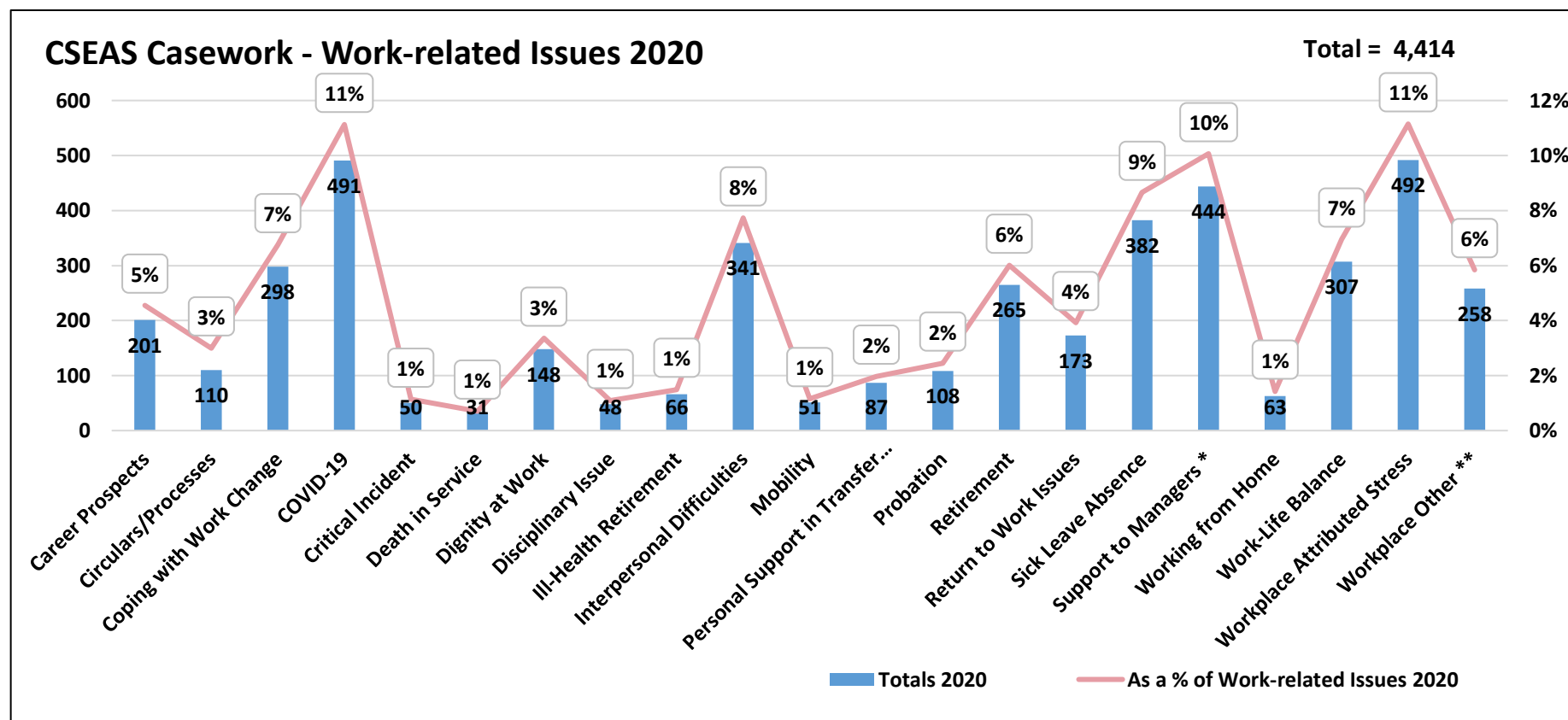
\* Unknown Grades refers to CSEAS cases where the grade was not disclosed by the service user

## % one-to-one usage (serving staff) by county across the Civil Service 2020





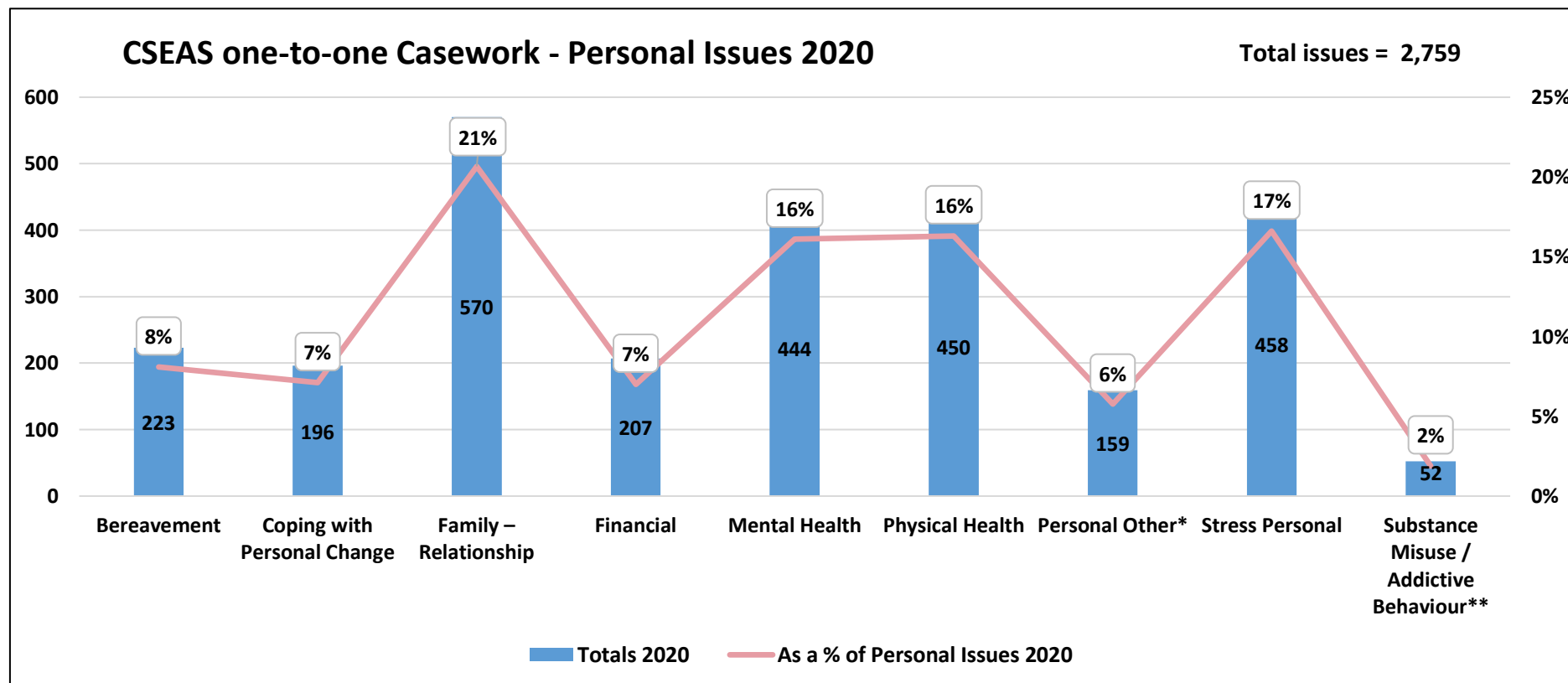
One-to-one clients using the CSEAS often wish to discuss a combination of issues. These issues are reflected individually in the figures below:



\* Support to Managers above does not include additional and targeted in-the-moment support to HR Divisions and managers in managing their responsibilities during the pandemic. In-the-moment support figures are available on page 5 of this report.

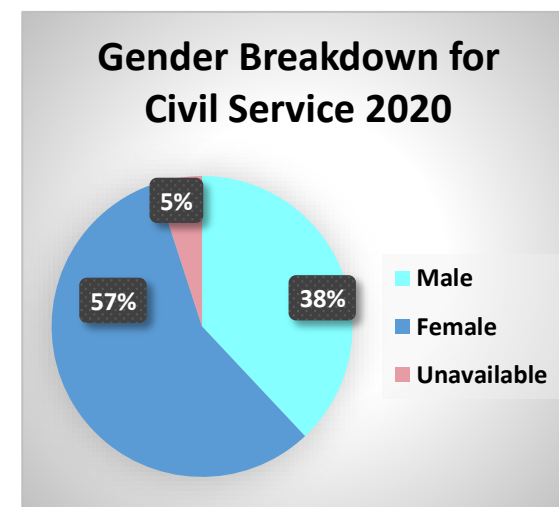
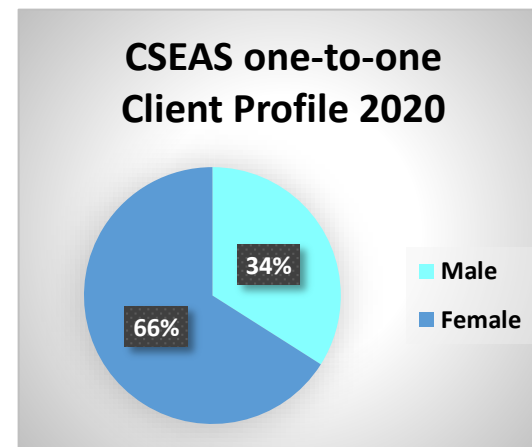
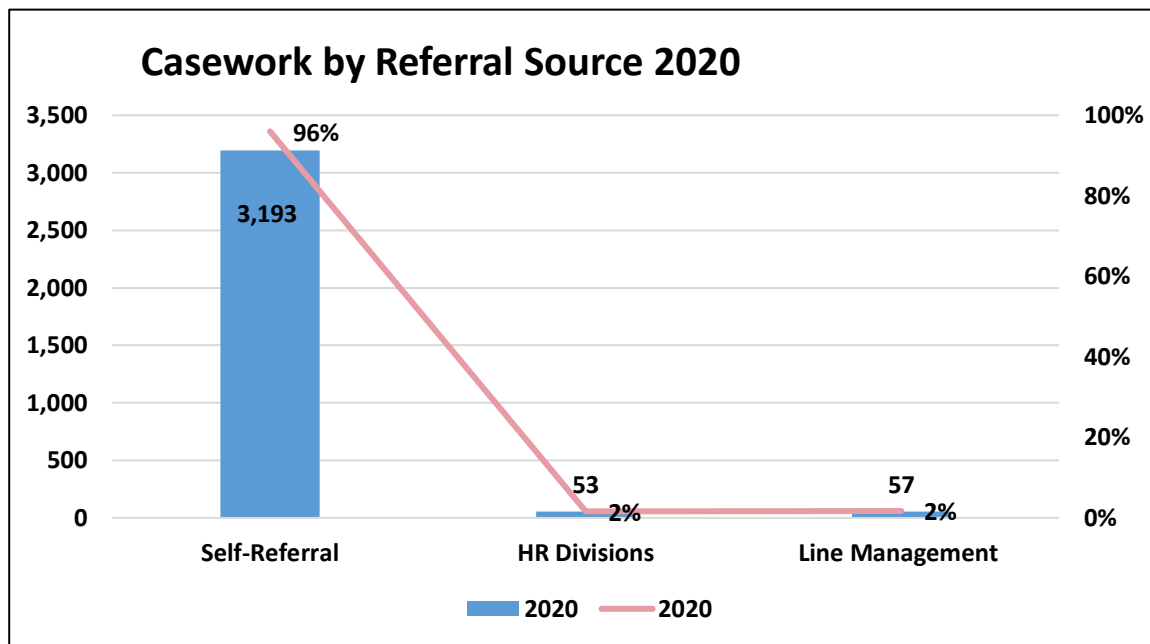
\*\* This category includes issues such as personal hygiene, violent incident and workplace issues/challenges excluding those categorised

One-to-one clients using the CSEAS often wish to discuss a combination of issues. These issues are reflected individually in the figures below:



\* This category include issues/challenges such as domestic violence, maternity and personal issues excluding those categorised

\*\* This category includes issues with alcohol, drugs, gambling and internet misuse



5% figure above includes 1,818 State Industrial staff for whom a breakdown by gender is not available

### Casework by Referral Source 2020

Self-referrals are service users who contact the CSEAS directly.

Self-referrals also include suggested referrals to the CSEAS by the following:

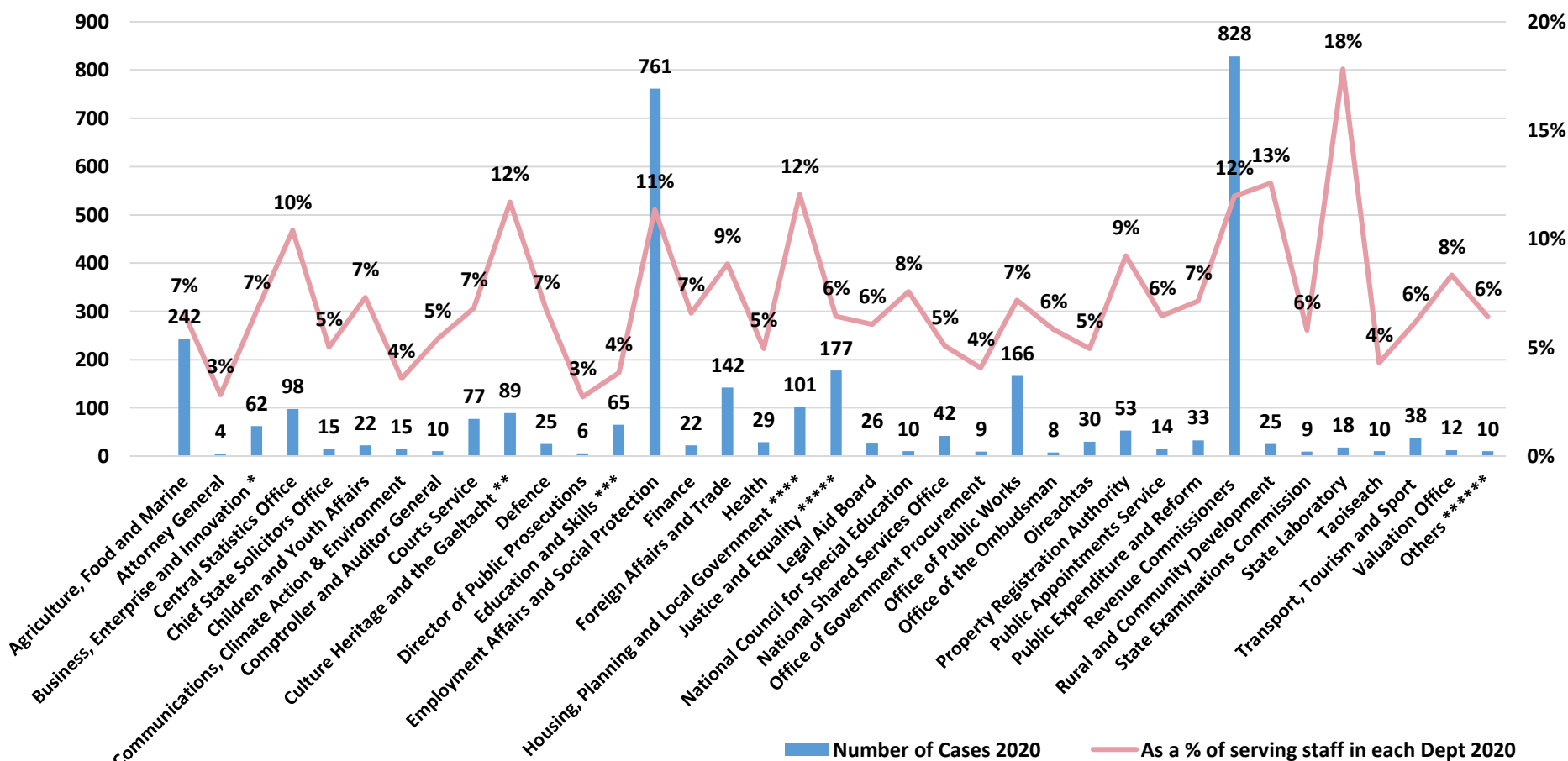
- HR
- Line Manager
- CMO
- Colleague
- Union

In keeping with Data Protection Regulations, the CSEAS only accept formal referrals from HR/Management where there is a risk to life e.g. suicidal intent or, where the referral has been recommended by the Office of the CMO.

During the period of COVID-19, HR/managers can make a management referral to the CSEAS in cases where there are concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of a staff member. Please note, in this situation, explicit consent from the staff member is required to initiate contact from the CSEAS.

## Casework by Department 2020

Total one-to-one cases = 3,303



\* includes Labour Court, Companies Registration Office, Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement, Workplace Relations Commission

\*\* includes National Gallery, National Library

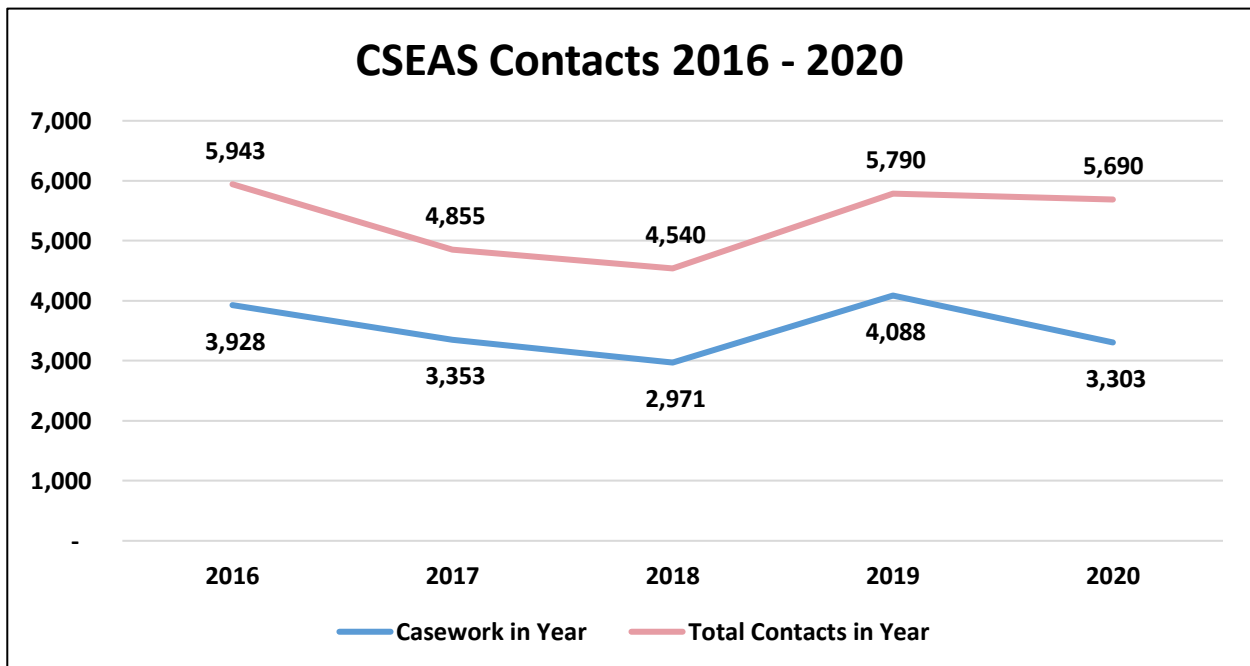
\*\*\* includes National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

\*\*\*\* includes Met Éireann, Office of the Planning Regulator

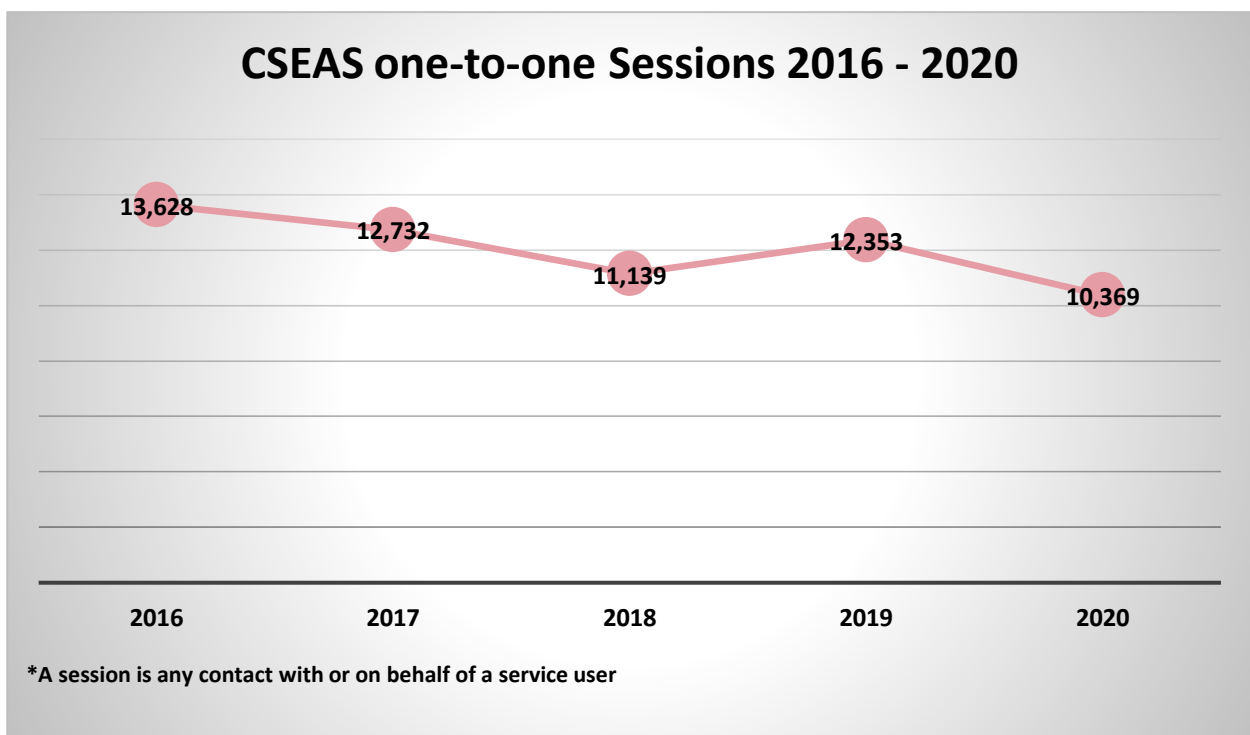
\*\*\*\*\* includes civil servants in the Irish Prison Service, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Data Protection Commission, Probation Service, Policing Authority,

\*\*\*\*\* includes Garda Ombudsman (GSOC), National Library, President's Establishment, National Museum

# CSEAS ACTIVITY TRENDS 2016 - 2020

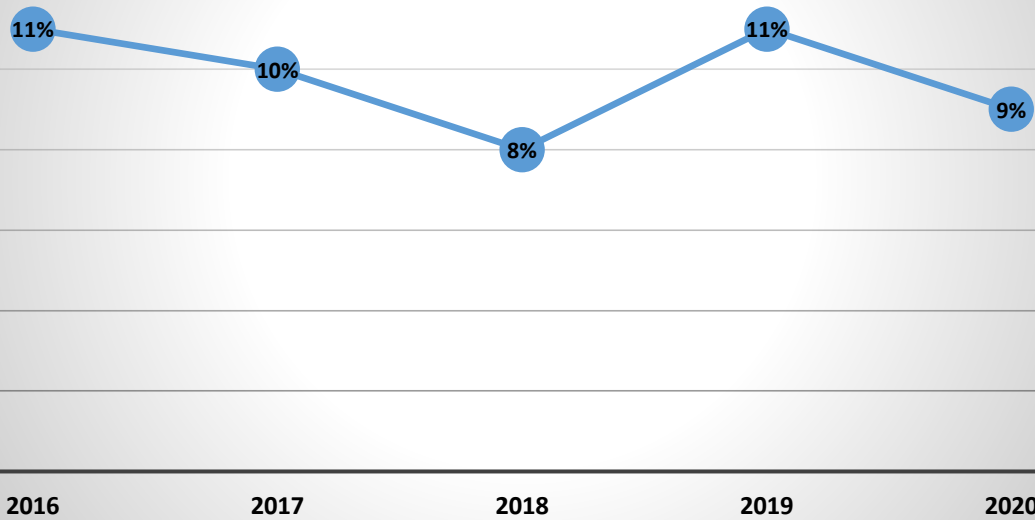


— “Total Contacts in Year” include callers/emails to the central CSEAS helpdesk and email address together with callers to individual Employee Assistance Officers requesting information only

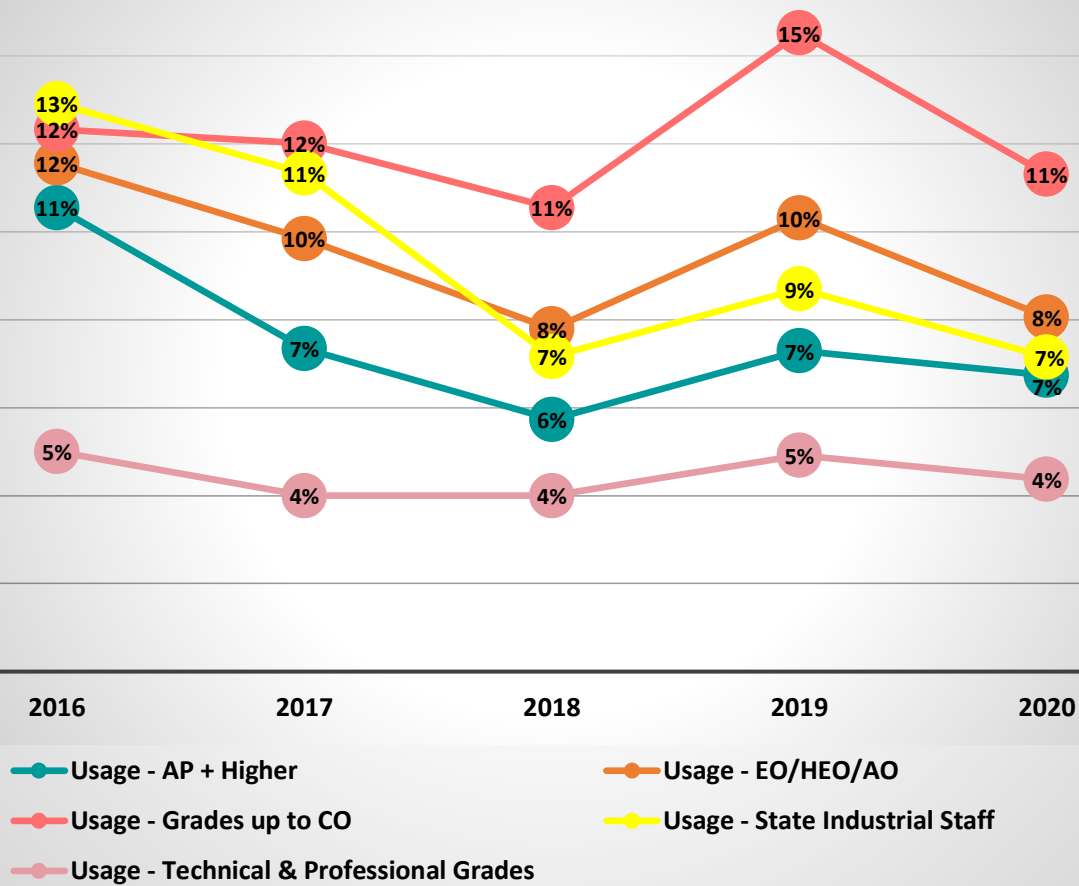




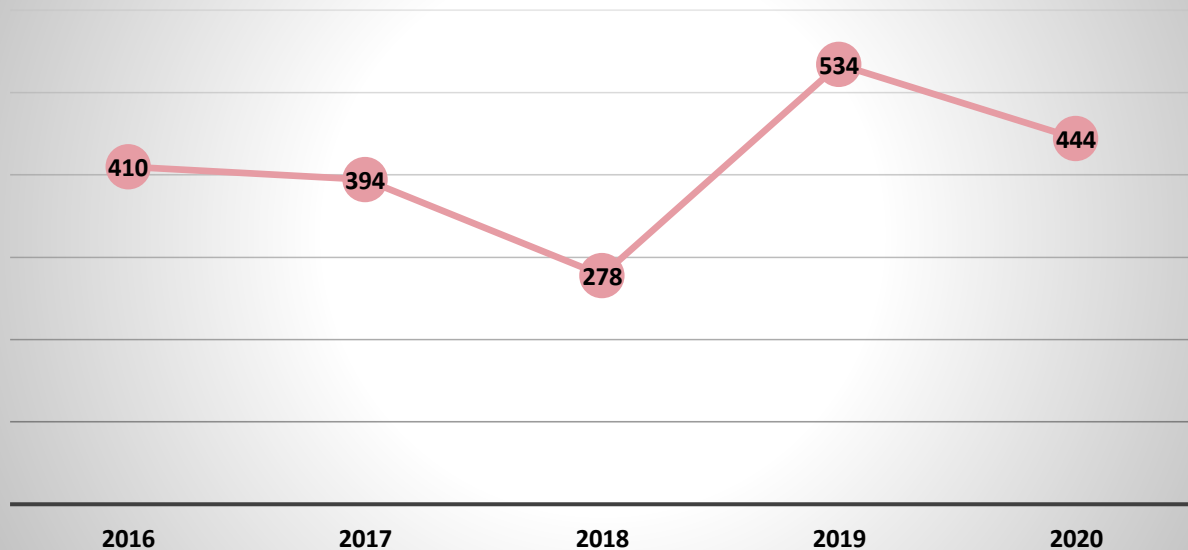
## CSEAS one-to-one usage across the Civil Service 2016 – 2020



## CSEAS one-to-one usage by Grade 2016 - 2020



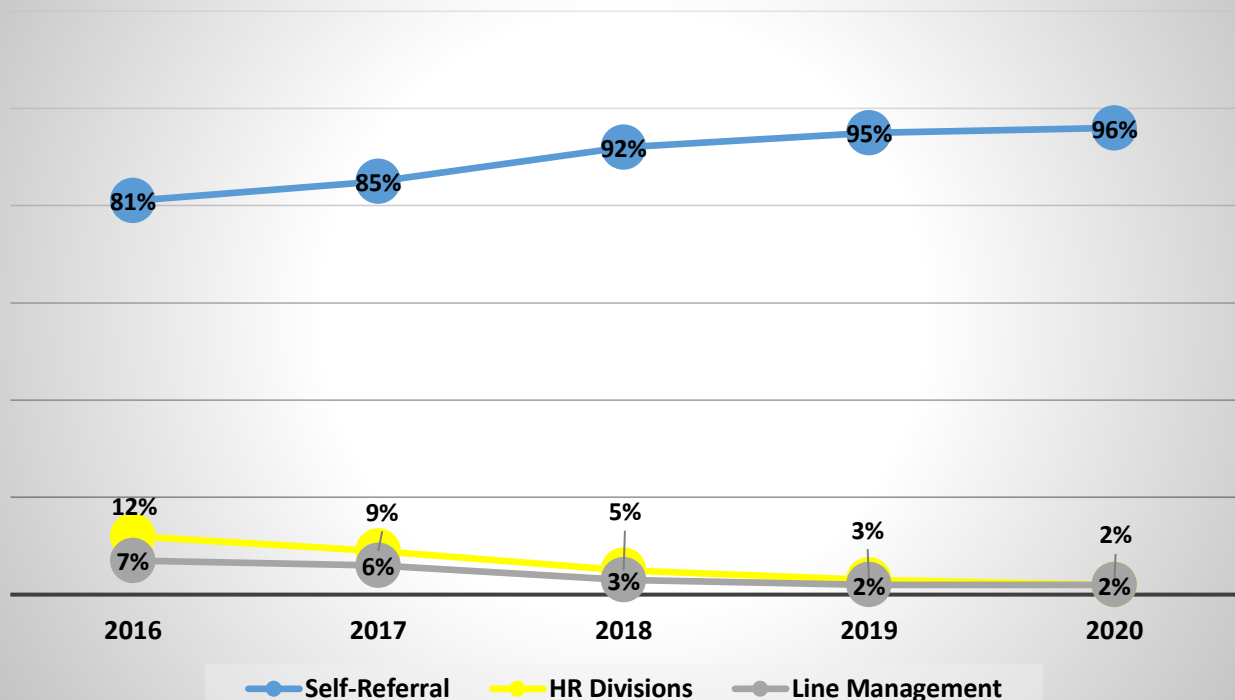
## One-to-one Support to Managers



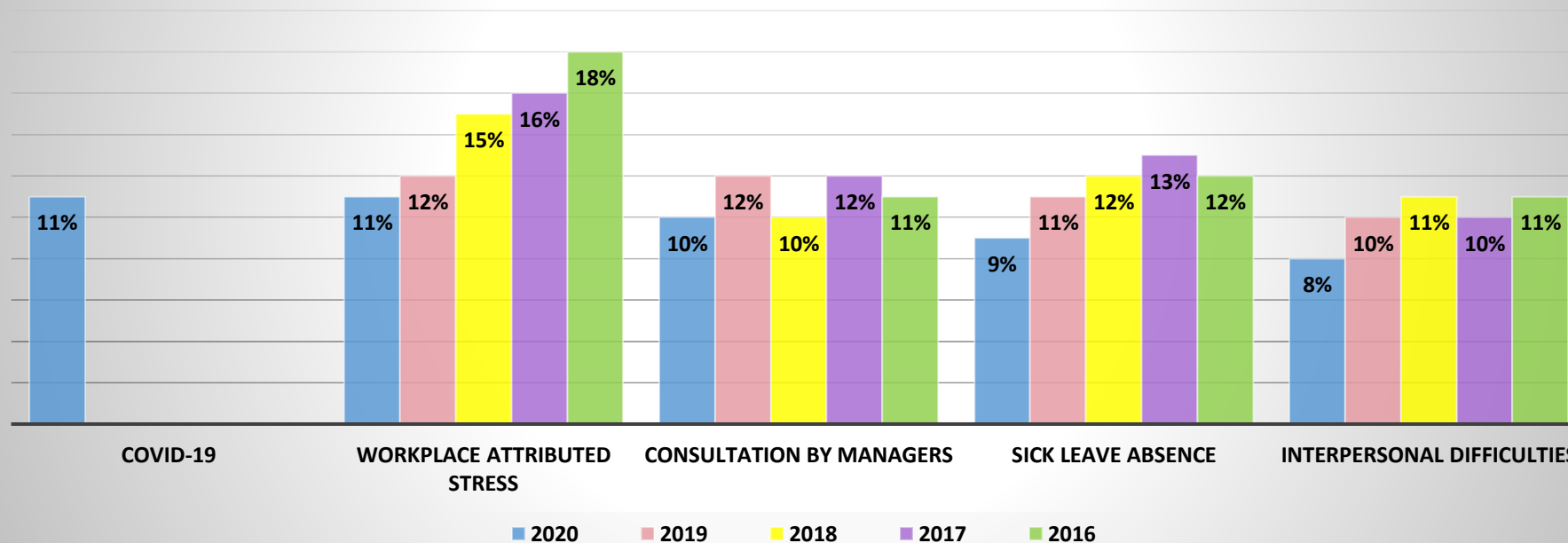
\* Consultation by managers in their role as People Managers

One-to-one Support to Managers above does not include additional and targeted in-the-moment support to HR Divisions and managers in meeting their responsibilities during the pandemic. In-the-moment support figures are available on page 5 of this report.

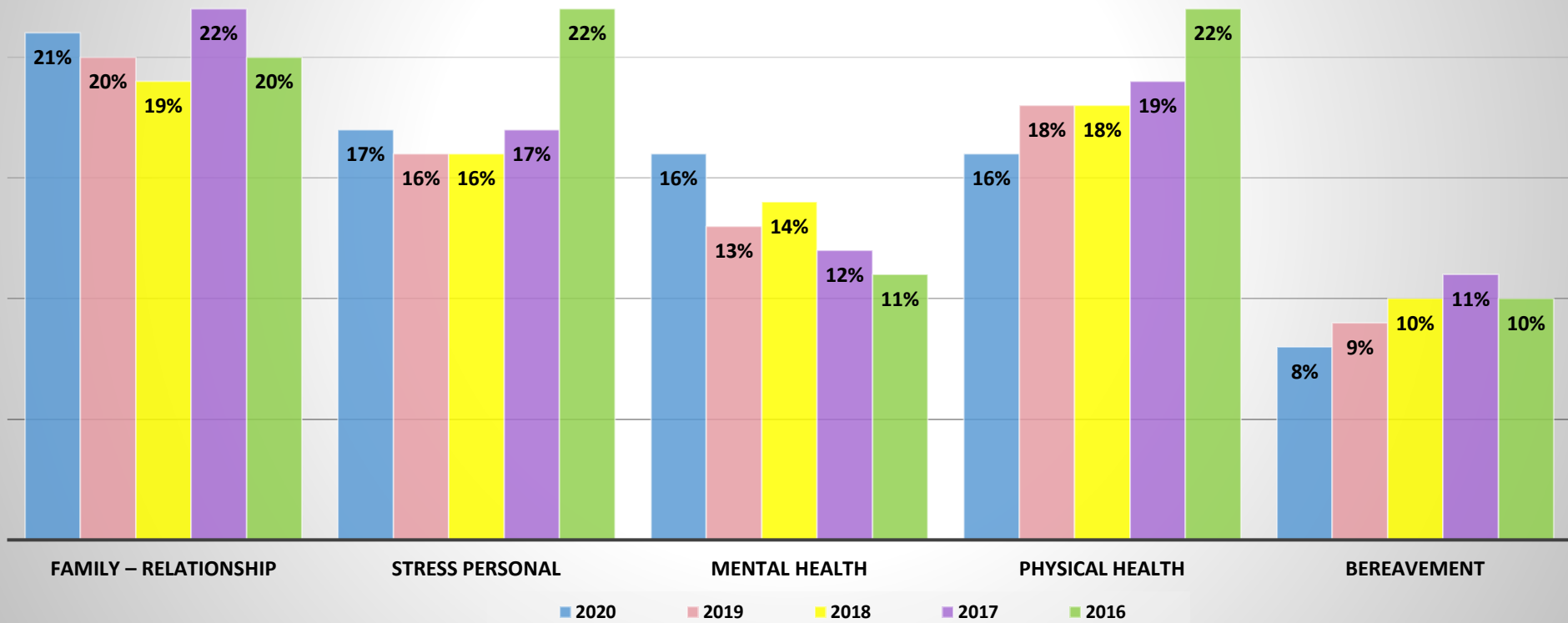
## Casework by Referral Source 2016 - 2020



**CSEAS one-to-one Casework**  
**Top work-related issues presenting as a % of total Work-related Issues 2020**  
*(2016 to 2019 are shown for comparison purposes)*



**CSEAS one-to-one Casework**  
**Top personal issues presenting as a % of total Personal Issues 2020**  
*(2016 to 2019 are shown for comparison purposes)*



CSEAS one-to-one Casework – Top Work-related Issues presenting as a % of Total Work-related Issues in each of the last 5 years									
2020		2019		2018		2017		2016	
COVID-19	11%	Consultation by Managers	12%	Workplace Attributed Stress	15%	Workplace Attributed Stress	16%	Workplace Attributed Stress	18%
Workplace Attributed Stress	11%	Workplace Attributed Stress	12%	Workplace Other	13%	Workplace Other	14%	Sick Leave Absence	12%
Consultation by Managers	10%	Workplace Other	12%	Sick Leave Absence	12%	Sick Leave Absence	13%	Interpersonal Difficulties	11%
Sick Leave Absence	9%	Sick Leave Absence	11%	Interpersonal Difficulties	11%	Consultation by Managers	12%	Consultation by Managers	11%
Interpersonal Difficulties	8%	Interpersonal Difficulties	10%	Consultation by Managers	10%	Interpersonal Difficulties	10%	Workplace Other	11%

CSEAS one-to-one Casework – Top Personal Issues presenting as a % of Total Personal Issues in each of the last 5 years									
2020		2019		2018		2017		2016	
Family – Relationship	21%	Family – Relationship	20%	Family – Relationship	19%	Family – Relationship	22%	Physical Health	22%
Stress Personal	17%	Physical Health	18%	Physical Health	18%	Physical Health	19%	Stress Personal	22%
Mental Health	16%	Stress Personal	16%	Stress Personal	16%	Stress Personal	17%	Family – Relationship	20%
Physical Health	16%	Mental Health	13%	Mental Health	14%	Mental Health	12%	Mental Health	11%
Bereavement	8%	Bereavement	9%	Bereavement	10%	Bereavement	11%	Bereavement	10%
								Financial	10%



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: DETAILS OF CSEAS ACTIVITY 2020

**Table 1: CSEAS Casework by Department/Office**

	Number of Cases 2020	As a % of serving staff in each Dept 2020	Total Serving Staff (Established & State Industrial) at end Sept 2020
Agriculture, Food and Marine	242	7%	3,685
Attorney General	4	3%	141
Business, Enterprise and Innovation *	62	7%	923
Central Statistics Office	98	10%	942
Chief State Solicitors Office	15	5%	299
Children and Youth Affairs	22	7%	301
Communications, Climate Action & Environment	15	4%	421
Comptroller and Auditor General	10	5%	185
Courts Service	77	7%	1,130
Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht **	89	12%	761
Defence	25	7%	372
Director of Public Prosecutions	6	3%	220
Education and Skills ***	65	4%	1,694
Employment Affairs and Social Protection	761	11%	6,708
Finance	22	7%	334
Foreign Affairs and Trade	142	9%	1,605
Health	29	5%	585
Housing, Planning and Local Government ****	101	12%	838
Justice and Equality *****	177	6%	2,751
Legal Aid Board	26	6%	429
National Council for Special Education	10	8%	132
National Shared Services Office	42	5%	827
Office of Government Procurement	9	4%	221
Office of Public Works	166	7%	2,314
Office of the Ombudsman	8	6%	137
Oireachtas	30	5%	606
Property Registration Authority	53	9%	575
Public Appointments Service	14	6%	217
Public Expenditure and Reform	33	7%	462
Revenue Commissioners	828	12%	6,918
Rural and Community Development	25	13%	199
State Examinations Commission	9	6%	155
State Laboratory	18	18%	101
Taoiseach	10	4%	233
Transport, Tourism and Sport	38	6%	616
Valuation Office	12	8%	144
Others *****	10	6%	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,303</b>		<b>38,337</b>

\* includes Labour Court, Companies Registration Office, Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement, Workplace Relations Commission

\*\* includes National Gallery

\*\*\* includes National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

\*\*\*\* includes Met Éireann and the Office of the Planning Regulator

\*\*\*\*\* includes civil servants in the Irish Prison Service, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Data Protection Commission, Policing Authority, Probation Service

\*\*\*\*\* includes Garda Ombudsman (GSOC), National Museum, President's Establishment

**Table 2: CSEAS Casework by County**

County	Total CSEAS Cases by County 2020	% Usage (serving staff) by County across the Civil Service 2020	Total Staff in Civil Service by County (figures from DPER As at end Sept 2020) **
Abroad *	19	5%	398
Carlow	33	17%	197
Cavan	33	9%	361
Clare	35	7%	490
Cork	223	10%	2,185
Donegal	102	12%	854
Dublin	1,387	7%	18,575
Galway	107	10%	1,071
Kerry	79	8%	985
Kildare	61	5%	1,116
Kilkenny	47	11%	441
Laois	51	8%	658
Leitrim	40	13%	307
Limerick	110	7%	1,509
Longford	35	5%	720
Louth	155	26%	592
Mayo	114	15%	785
Meath	86	11%	797
Monaghan	29	23%	126
Offaly	27	5%	541
Roscommon	30	11%	263
Sligo	181	21%	878
Tipperary	121	13%	912
Waterford	68	10%	653
Westmeath	41	4%	1,102
Wexford	72	8%	893
Wicklow	16	11%	151
Location unavailable	1	0%	777
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,303</b>		<b>38,337</b>

\* Staff posted abroad figure does not include local recruits

\*\* Includes State Industrial Staff. Excludes Garda Civilians and Prison Officers as they do not come within the remit of the CSEAS

**Table 3: CSEAS Casework by Grade**

	<b>Total Cases 2020</b>	<b>2020 Cases as a % of Serving Staff in each grade</b>	<b>Numbers in Grades Sept 2020 <sup>1</sup></b>
Assistant Principal	239	8%	3,078
Clerical Officer	1,319	11%	11,510
Cleaner	5	6%	85
Executive Officer	626	8%	8,061
Higher Executive Officer and Administrative Officer	520	8%	6,160
Principal Officer and Higher	55	4%	1,287
Service Officer	52	9%	575
State Industrial Grades	130	7%	1,818
Technical Professional	248	4%	5,675
Unknown Grades *	102	-	88
Retired Staff/Family Member **	7	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,303</b>		<b>38,337</b>

<sup>1</sup> Separating General Service Grades from Professional & Technical Equivalents

\* Unknown Grades refers to CSEAS cases where the grade was not disclosed by the service user

\*\* This category relates mainly to Death in Service / death of a retired staff member

## Table 4: CSEAS Casework by Category

One-to-one clients using the CSEAS often wish to discuss a combination of issues. These issues are reflected individually in the figures below:

Work-related Issues	Totals 2020	As a % of Work-related Issues 2020
Career Prospects	201	5%
Circulars/Processes	110	3%
Coping with Work Change	298	7%
COVID-19	491	11%
Critical Incident	50	1%
Death in Service	31	1%
Dignity at Work	148	3%
Disciplinary Issue	48	1%
Ill-Health Retirement	66	1%
Interpersonal Difficulties	341	8%
Mobility	51	1%
Personal Support in Transfer Requests	87	2%
Probation	108	2%
Retirement	265	6%
Return to Work Issues	173	4%
Sick Leave Absence	382	9%
Support to Managers*	444	10%
Working from Home	63	1%
Work-Life Balance	307	7%
Workplace Attributed Stress	492	11%
Workplace Other**	258	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,414</b>	<b>100%</b>
Personal Issues	Totals 2020	As a % of Personal Issues 2020
Bereavement	223	8%
Coping with Personal Change	196	7%
Family – Relationship	570	21%
Financial	207	7%
Mental Health	444	16%
Physical Health	450	16%
Personal Other***	159	6%
Stress Personal	458	17%
Substance Misuse / Addictive Behaviour****	52	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,759</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>7,173</b>	

\* Does not include additional and targeted in-the-moment support to HR Divisions and managers in managing their responsibilities during the pandemic. In-the-moment support figures are available on page 5 of this report.

\*\* Includes issues such as personal hygiene, violent incidents and other challenges excluding those categorised

\*\*\* Includes issues such as domestic violence, maternity and other challenges excluding those categorised

\*\*\*\* Includes issues with alcohol, drugs, gambling, internet misuse



## APPENDIX 2: CSEAS HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROMOTION 2020

At the request of Government Department/Offices, the CSEAS is available to deliver presentations/webinars on a variety of topics. These sessions are tailored to suit the specific needs of the requesting Department/Office and may cover a variety of topics within the same presentation. The CSEAS aims to be flexible in accommodating the needs of management and staff in these instances. In 2020, approximately 22% of all presentations/webinars delivered by the CSEAS related specifically to COVID-19, covering themes such as Wellness during COVID-19 and Wellbeing While Working Remotely.

To accommodate staff working remotely, 169 of the 221 CSEAS webinars during the year were delivered virtually. This led to an increase in the number of attendees at presentations/webinars and allowed the CSEAS to reach a wider audience, with an estimated 13,000 civil servants attending. Some presentations were recorded by hosting departments facilitating ongoing staff access to the CSEAS presentation.

### Presentations/Webinars Categorised by Department/Office

Department/Office/Others	Topic	Number	Total
<b>Agriculture, Food and the Marine</b>	Bereavement	1	<b>11</b>
	Building Resilience	3	
	Health & Wellbeing	1	
	Introduction to the CSEAS	3	
	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	3	
<b>Attorney General</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Business Enterprise and Innovation</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>3</b>
	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	1	
	Wellbeing while managing remotely	1	
<b>C&amp;AG – Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General</b>	Self-Care for Staff While Remote Working	2	<b>2</b>
<b>Central Statistics Office</b>	Building Resilience	5	<b>20</b>
	Health & Wellbeing	1	
	Introduction to the CSEAS	3	
	Positive Psychology	3	
	Self-Care for Staff	1	
	Stress Management	5	
	Tips for Lone Workers	2	

Department/Office/Others	Topic	Number	Total
<b>Chief State Solicitor's Office</b>	Bereavement	1	<b>7</b>
	Resilience	2	
	Self-Care for Managers	4	
<b>Communications, Climate Action and the Environment</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>2</b>
	Self-Care during COVID-19	1	
<b>Courts Service</b>	Building Resilience	2	<b>5</b>
	Introduction to the CSEAS	2	
	Work/Life Balance	1	
<b>Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht</b>	Dignity at Work	1	<b>2</b>
	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	
<b>Defence</b>	Wellbeing while Working Remotely	2	<b>2</b>
<b>Director of Public Prosecutions</b>	Building Resilience	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Education &amp; Skills</b>	Health & Wellbeing	1	<b>2</b>
	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	
<b>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	28	<b>38</b>
	Retirement	1	
	Self-Care for Managers	3	
	Self-Care for Staff	1	
	Self-Care for Staff While Remote Working	1	
	Stress Management	2	
	Suicide Awareness	2	
<b>Finance</b>	Building Resilience	1	<b>3</b>
	Dignity/Harmony at Work	1	
	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	
<b>Foreign Affairs and Trade</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>7</b>
	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	1	
	People Managers Guide	1	
	Self-Care for Staff	4	

Department/Office/Others	Topic	Number	Total
<b>Garda Ombudsman</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	2	<b>4</b>
	Stress Management	2	
<b>Health</b>	Health & Wellbeing	1	<b>2</b>
	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	
<b>Housing, Planning and Local Government</b>	Bereavement	1	<b>2</b>
	Self-Care During COVID-19	1	
<b>Justice and Equality</b>	Difficult Conversations & Practicing Self Care	1	<b>22</b>
	Introduction to the CSEAS	9	
	Remaining Positive & Connected During COVID-19	8	
	Resilience	1	
	Stress Management	1	
	Wellbeing While Remote Working	2	
<b>Met Éireann</b>	Self-Care During COVID-19	1	<b>2</b>
	Self-Care for Staff	1	
<b>National Council For Special Education</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>2</b>
	Stress Management	1	
<b>National Shared Services Office</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	<b>4</b>
	Remaining Positive and Connected during COVID-19	1	
	Wellness during COVID-19 Pandemic	1	
	Wellness for Managers during COVID-19 Pandemic	1	
<b>Office of Government Procurement</b>	Introduction to the CSEAS	2	<b>3</b>
	Wellness During COVID-19	1	
<b>Office of Public Works</b>	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	3	<b>4</b>
	Planning for Retirement – Input to courses run by OPW	1	

Department/Office/Others	Topic	Number	Total
Office of the Ombudsman	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	2
	Self-Care for Staff during Challenging Times	1	
Office of the Ombudsman for Children	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	2
	Self-Care During Challenging Times	1	
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	Health & Wellbeing	7	31
	Introduction to the CSEAS	6	
	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	6	
	People Managers Guide	1	
	Self-Care During COVID-19	7	
	Self-Care for Night Shift Workers	1	
	Stress Management	3	
Public Appointments Service	CSEAS as a Resource for Managers	1	3
	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	
	Self-Care during COVID-19*	1	
Public Expenditure and Reform	Bereavement During COVID-19	1	7
	Introduction to the CSEAS	2	
	Remaining Positive and Connected during COVID-19	1	
	Wellbeing during COVID-19 Pandemic	1	
	Wellness for Managers during COVID-19 Pandemic	1	
	Wellness for Staff during COVID-19 Pandemic	1	
Rural and Community Development	Self-Care during COVID-19	4	4
State Laboratory	Health and Wellbeing	1	2
	Wellbeing While Managing Remotely	1	
Taoiseach	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	2
	Stress Management	1	

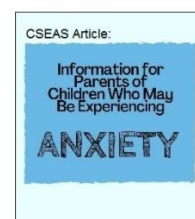
Department/Office/Others	Topic	Number	Total
Transport, Tourism and Sport	Coping with COVID-19	1	4
	Introduction to the CSEAS	2	
	Mental Health & Wellbeing/Positive Mental Health	1	
Valuation Office	Introduction to the CSEAS	1	2
	Wellbeing for Managers Managing Remotely	1	
AO/Third Secretary Network	Wellness During COVID-19	1	1
Interdepartmental: AO Graduate Development Programme – Leadership Module	Building Resilience and The Corporate Athlete	9	9
HR Managers Network	Wellness During COVID-19	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>221</b>

In addition to presentations on Suicide Awareness, the CSEAS also provided support to civil servants undergoing training in managing situations involving a risk to life.

## Feature Articles Submitted to Various Departments

During 2020 the CSEAS, at the request of HR Departments, contributed to staff wellbeing by producing various articles on health and wellbeing topics for distribution across all Civil Service Departments. Examples of topics included:

- The Art of Mindful Living
- Effective Communication
- Work Life Balance
- Home Working and Childcare
- Positivity and Self Care
- Coping with Change
- CSEAS Tips for a Healthier Lifestyle



## APPENDIX 3: CSEAS WEBSITE

The CSEAS website is a key communication platform which provides comprehensive information and support on a wide range of health and wellbeing topics. As well as being an important reference point for staff, it highlights CSEAS publications, events and news.

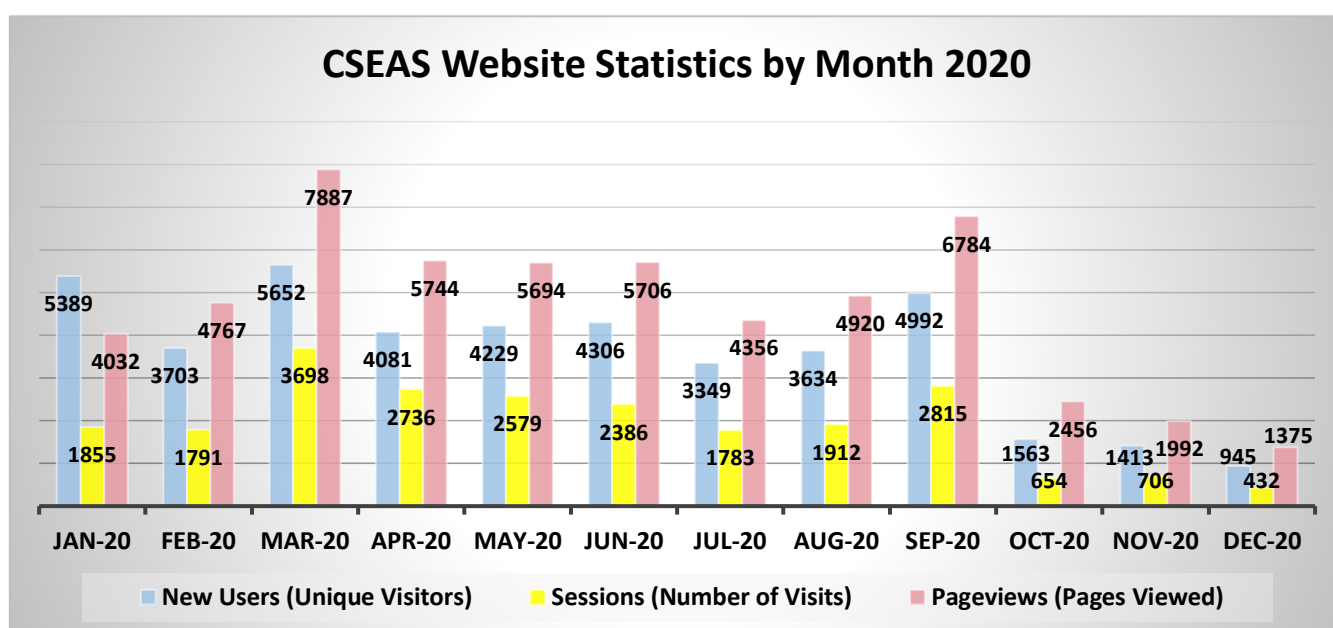


In 2020, many COVID-19 resources and supports were added to the website. A dedicated COVID-19 Support page was launched in March, with further additions later in the year including a COVID-19 Bereavement Support page in April and a Working Parent Support page in August. A wide range of resources were developed in response to the pandemic including articles, pamphlets and videos covering topics such as anxiety, self-care, remote working and childcare, and, dealing with grief and loss during COVID-19.



The website had a total of 43,256 unique visitors in 2020, representing a significant increase on 2019 which saw 17,307 unique visitors to the site. Undoubtedly COVID-19 related supports on the website had a large part to play in this increase. Many of these resources were also circulated widely to HR Departments, managers and staff throughout the Civil Service.

The CSEAS website uses Google Analytics to report website traffic. Since 1 October 2020, individuals can disable Google Analytics with the result that the CSEAS website traffic data from that date is much lower in comparison with earlier months and is not a clear reflection of the accurate number of visitors to the website. The website traffic for 2020 is displayed below.



The CSEAS acknowledges and thanks the OGCI0 for its ongoing expertise and support in the maintenance of the website.



## APPENDIX 4: ABOUT THE CSEAS

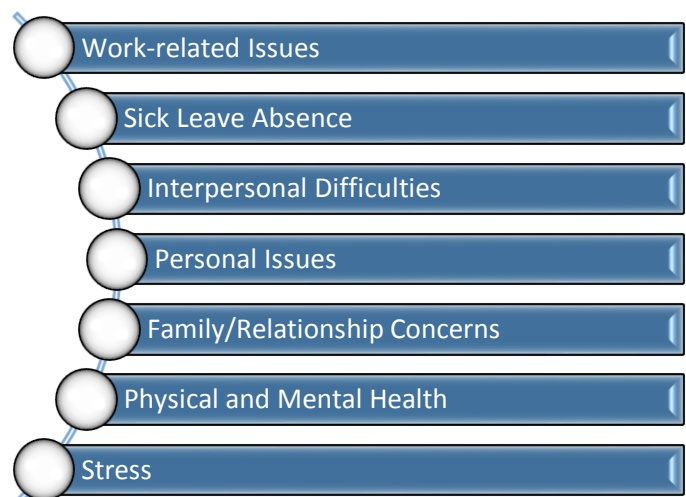
### Who We Are

The CSEAS is the Employee Assistance Programme for the Irish Civil Service. It is a centralised service, operating on a regional basis, within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) offering supports and services to all civil servants. It plays a key part in an ethos of promoting employee wellness and organisational effectiveness. Provision of this service is a recognition that staff are a valued resource, whose continued wellbeing contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service. The CSEAS supports the employer's duty of care to its employees under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 in the area of psychosocial issues such as stress, bullying and harassment, alcohol and drug misuse.

### What We Do

#### Support Staff Members

The core element of the work of the CSEAS is supporting staff. It is a free and confidential<sup>1</sup> service provided to civil servants at times of personal and/or work-related difficulties. Such difficulties, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and/or attendance and quality of life.



In 2020, the CSEAS extended the operational hours of our central helpline to include evenings and weekends, increasing availability of in-the-moment support to service users during the COVID-19 pandemic. Normal hours on this helpline were restored in September with out of hours support provided by prior arrangement. An on-duty Employee Assistance Officer (EAO) is available on this helpline to provide support and assistance to service users via telephone and email. The availability of virtual support (i.e. contacts made by telephone, email and text message) was essential to CSEAS service users due to restrictions on face-to-face interactions being in place for most of the year.

<sup>1</sup> Details on confidentiality and exceptions to this are available on the CSEAS website [www.cseas.per.gov.ie](http://www.cseas.per.gov.ie)

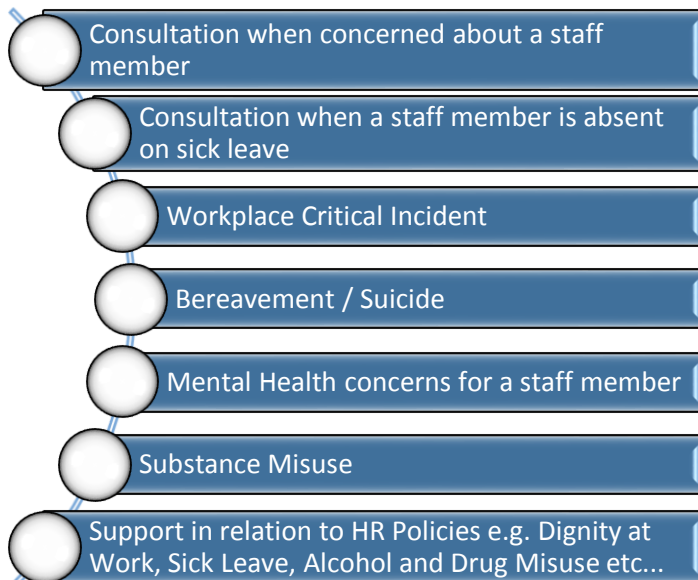
## Support People Managers

The CSEAS proactively engages with managers<sup>2</sup> who are supporting staff impacted by personal/work-related challenges.

CSEAS support to managers includes the facility to anonymously<sup>3</sup> discuss staff issues arising. This allows managers to obtain support and guidance in dealing with the situation, explore options for managing it and, consider the benefit of suggesting the use of the CSEAS to the staff member. In

keeping with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR), the CSEAS can only accept formal referrals from HR/Management where there is a risk to life e.g. suicidal intent or, where the referral has been recommended by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

The CSEAS referral process was reviewed in light of COVID-19 and the large proportion of civil servants working remotely most, if not all, of the time. HR/managers can now make a management referral to the CSEAS in cases where there are concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of a staff member. Please note, in this situation, explicit consent from the staff member is required to initiate contact from the CSEAS.

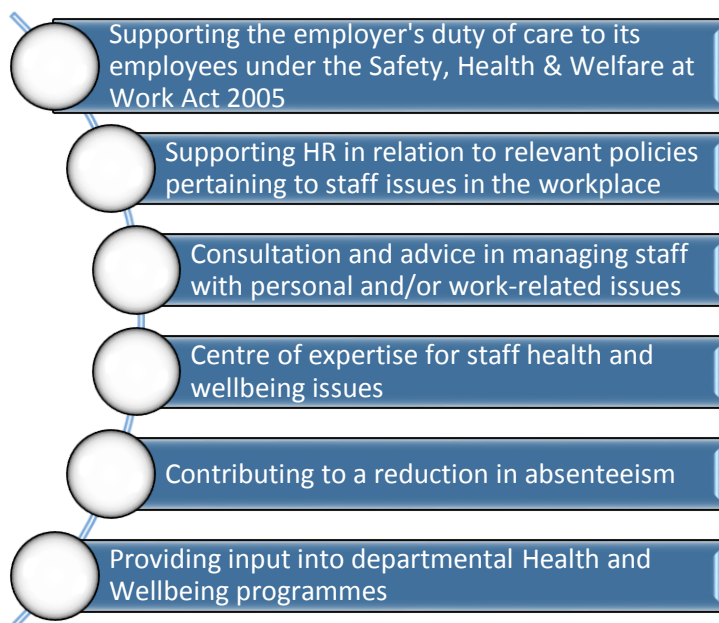


<sup>2</sup> CSEAS protocols on confidentiality are adhered to in engagement with HR/Management

<sup>3</sup> Consultations should be on an anonymised basis bearing in mind GDPR obligations

## Support to HR

Working with HR Divisions, the CSEAS engages in early interventions to help staff minimise sick leave absences, assist in return to work and to restore work capacity<sup>4</sup>. In 2020, the CSEAS worked closely with CSHRD, DPER, on a range of projects. This included working with the Policy Unit providing input into the development of new policies such as the Working From Home Guidelines and the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19.



CSEAS support to HR Divisions includes the facility for HR personnel to anonymously<sup>4</sup> discuss issues that can impact on staff wellbeing such as sick leave, absenteeism, return to work, underperformance, disciplinary issues and, inter-personal difficulties. This allows HR personnel obtain support and guidance in dealing with the situation arising, explore options for managing it and consider the benefit of suggesting the use of the CSEAS to staff members. In keeping with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR), the CSEAS can only accept formal referrals from HR/Management where there is a risk to life e.g. suicidal intent or, where the referral has been recommended by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

The CSEAS referral process was reviewed in light of COVID-19 and the large proportion of civil servants working remotely most, if not all, of the time. HR/managers can now make a management referral to the CSEAS in cases where there are concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of a staff member. Please note, in this situation, explicit consent from the staff member is required to initiate contact from the CSEAS.

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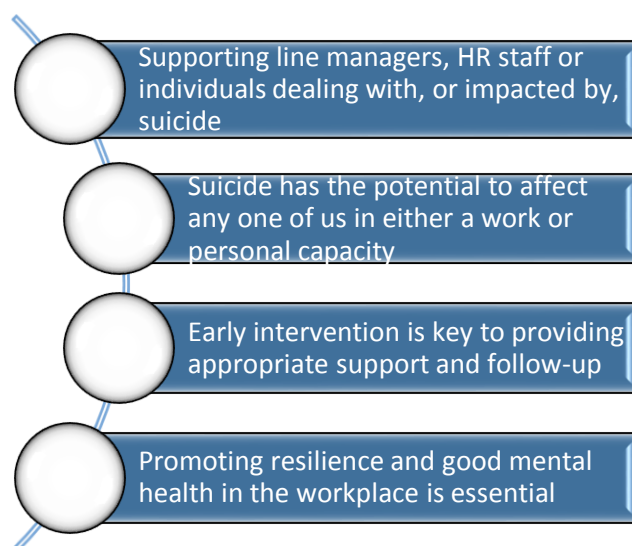
<sup>4</sup> CSEAS protocols on confidentiality are adhered to in engagement with HR/Management

## Responding to Suicide in the Workplace

In 2020, the CSEAS supported 83 civil servants who had been affected by suicide or had suicidal ideation. "Connecting for Life", Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020, recognises the importance of developing guidance, training and support to workplaces in relation to suicide prevention.

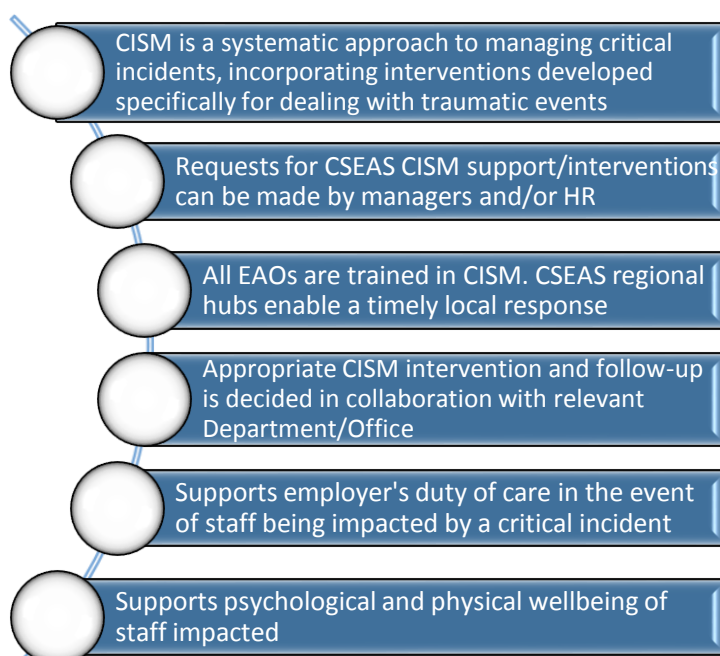
Promoting resilience and positive mental health in the workplace is essential for a healthy and effective workforce and, recognising this, the CSEAS offers a range of resources such as presentations, leaflets, desk buddies and information designed to assist and support those in psychological distress.

All EAOs are trained in suicide first aid having attended the HSE's ASIST and/or safeTALK training.



## Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

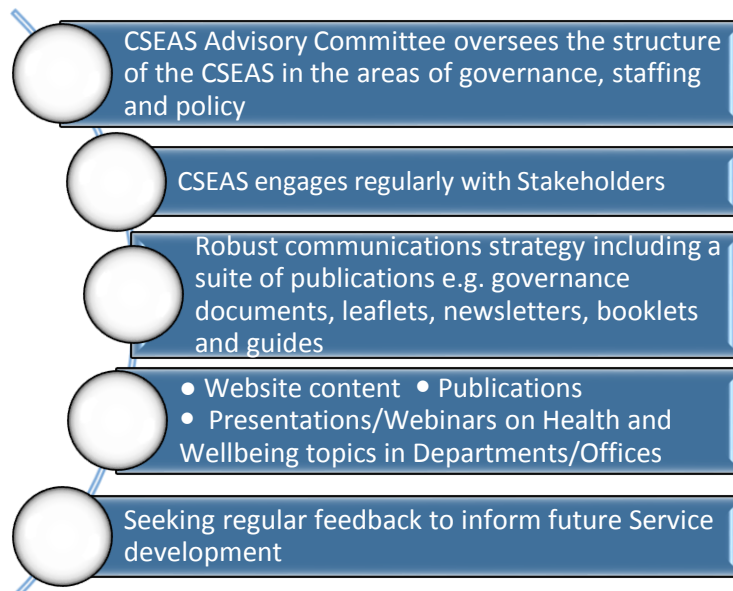
A critical incident in the workplace is an event out of the range of normal experience – one which is sudden and unexpected and may have a physical and/or emotional impact. In some cases it may involve the perception of a threat to life. These challenging events can have the potential to create significant distress and can overwhelm one's usual coping mechanisms. CISM is a systematic approach to managing critical incidents, incorporating interventions developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events. In responding effectively and professionally to a workplace critical incident, the aim of a CISM intervention is to minimise the potential negative consequences for both the individual(s) and the organisation.



In 2020, the CSEAS provided CISM interventions following 5 workplace critical incidents. In addition to availing of support in a group setting, staff can avail of one-to-one CSEAS support when impacted by a workplace critical incident. In 2020, the CSEAS provided support to 50 individual staff members affected by a critical incident.

## Governance, Communications and Service Development

The **CSEAS Advisory Committee** oversees the structure of the CSEAS in the areas of governance, staffing and policy. Committee members comprise a Chairperson from DPER, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for the Civil Service, HR Managers from a number of Departments/Offices and the Secretary to the Civil Service General Council Staff Panel. For full details, see [CSEAS Structure](#).



Fundamental to core CSEAS service delivery is the implementation of a strategic communications plan. This ensures smooth delivery of service to all stakeholders. The CSEAS has a robust communications strategy which outlines how we communicate with customers utilising various forms of media. In addition to a user-friendly website, the CSEAS has a suite of publications including governance documents, leaflets, newsletters, booklets and guides. The CSEAS also delivers presentations to staff on health and wellbeing topics and participates in the HR Managers Network meetings and a number of working groups.

The CSEAS welcomes feedback from all stakeholders. A key activity within the CSEAS is reviewing, refining and developing internal policies, protocols, systems and guidelines. This assists in the delivery of a quality customer-centric service to all stakeholders.

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The CSEAS recognises the need to treat all client data in an appropriate and lawful manner. We are committed to complying fully with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). The CSEAS revised all relevant CSEAS documents and publications to comply with GDPR. The GDPR page on our website includes the following:

- GDPR Statement
- GDPR Consent Form
- GDPR FAQs
- Confidentiality Statement
- CSEAS Website Privacy Statement

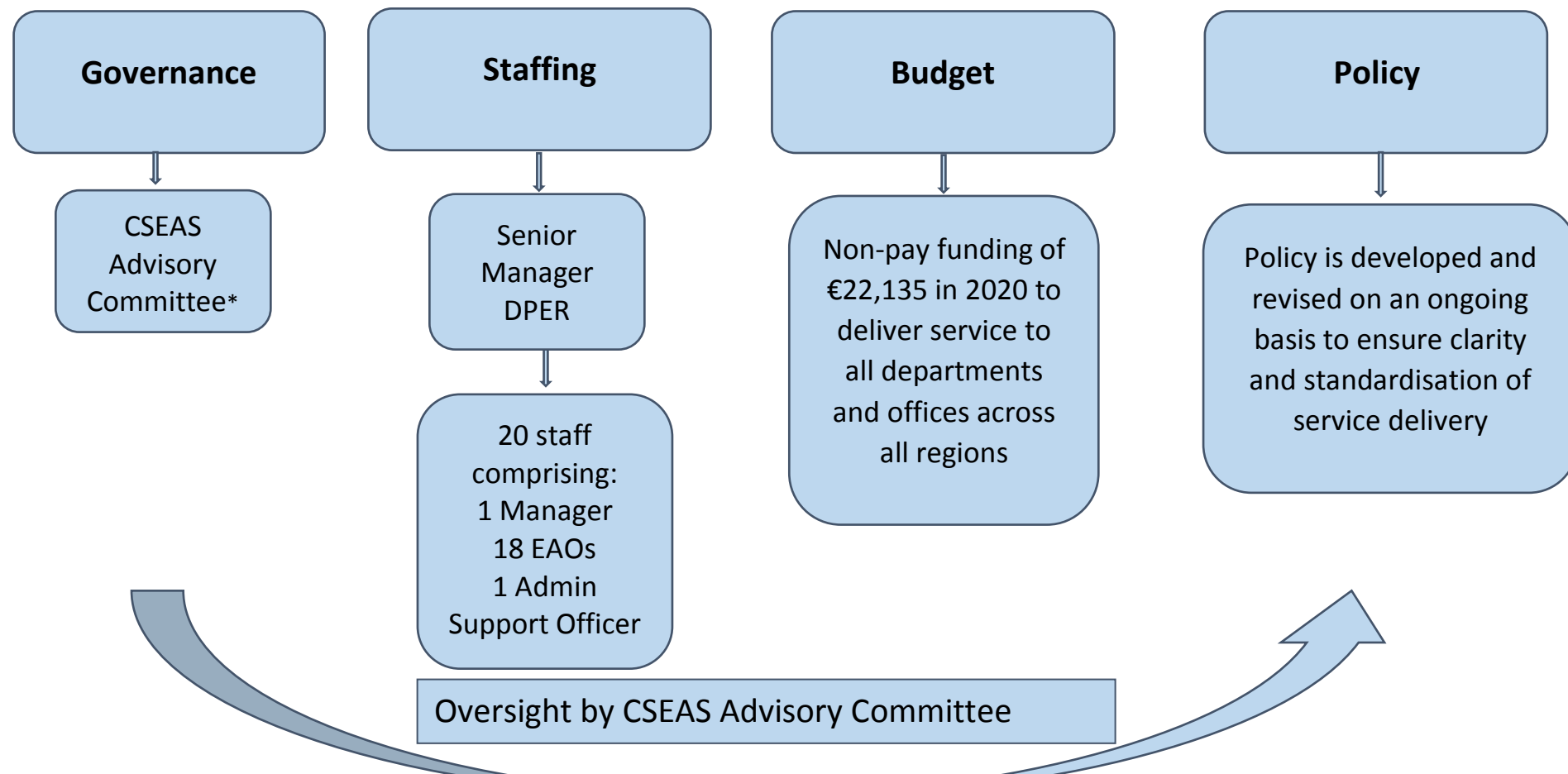
The revised CSEAS HR/Management Referral process is available [HERE](#)

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

The CSEAS team is committed to providing a quality service through its centres of expertise throughout the country. EAOs continually develop their skills through CPD such as formal training, shared learning, mentoring, buddy systems and peer support. This ensures continued high standards in service delivery benefitting both the individual and the organisation.



## CSEAS Structure



\*The CSEAS Advisory Committee comprises (1) A Chairperson who is a representative from DPER (2) The Chief Medical Officer for the Civil Service (3) HR Managers from a number of Departments/Offices: In 2020 HR Managers were from the Departments of (a) Employment Affairs and Social Protection (b) Finance (c) Foreign Affairs & Trade (d) Housing, Planning and Local Government. HR representatives from Departments change every 2 years on a phased basis, with some overlap to ensure continuity of experience on the Advisory Committee. (4) The Secretary to the Civil Service General Council Staff Panel. Current members of the CSEAS Advisory Committee can be viewed on the CSEAS website [www.cseas.per.gov.ie](http://www.cseas.per.gov.ie)

# APPENDIX 5: CONTACTING THE CSEAS



**Central Phone  
Number**  
  
**0761 000 030**



**cseas@per.gov.ie**



**www.cseas.per.gov.ie**



**CSEAS**  
**Department of Public Expenditure and Reform**  
**4th Floor, St. Stephen's Green House**  
**Earlsfort Terrace**  
**Dublin 2**  
**D02 PH42**

**Contact details for individual EAOs are available on the CSEAS website**



**On-duty EAO available at 0761 000 030**

**Mon – Thurs: 9am to 5.45pm**  
**Fri: 9am to 5.15pm**  
**(except bank/public holidays)**



## **CSEAS Team 2020**

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### **CSEAS Manager**



**Susan Clarke**

### **Acting CSEAS Manager**

**(w.e.f. 27 Oct 2020)**



**Claire Murphy**

### **Administration Support Officer**



**Vincent Dillon**

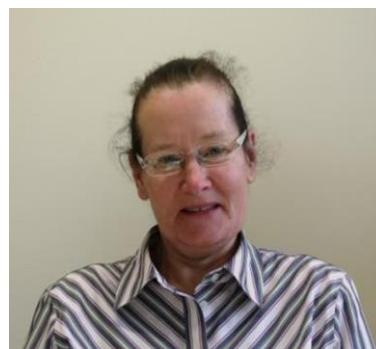
# Employee Assistance Officers



**Margaret Fagan**



**Deirdre Maye**



**Triona King**



**Bernie Moran**



**Geraldine Carey**



**Michael Stapleton**



**Fran Scott**



**Carmel Dalton**



**Rosemary Branagan**



**Deirdre Farrell**



**Antoinette Mahon**



**Ann Duffy**



**Philip O'Callaghan**



**Donna Casey**



**Claire Delahunt**



**Claire Murphy**



**Derek Hollingsworth**



**Fiona Mortell**

# **CSEAS ACTIVITY REPORT 2020**

**PUBLISHED MARCH 2021**