



RETAIL FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE (Revised 2024)

1. Background

The Retail Forum, previously known as the Retail Consultation Forum, was established by the Government in 2014 as part of the Action Plan for Jobs process. The Retail Forum provides a platform for structured engagement between the Retail Sector and relevant Government Departments/bodies. The purpose of the Retail Forum is to allow key issues of relevance to the sector to be discussed with a view to identifying practical actions which can be taken by the Government or by industry itself to support the sector.

The sector provides employment in every community in the country and is an important part of every local economy. In addition, Retail indirectly supports jobs in other areas, such as logistics and distribution, and provides an important outlet for Irish products.

Information regarding the Retail Forum, including issues discussed at meetings can be found on [Retail sector in Ireland - DETE \(enterprise.gov.ie\)](https://enterprise.gov.ie)

2. Membership

- The Retail Forum comprises of retail sector representative bodies, Government Departments and Agencies, and retailers.
- Every effort is made to ensure that representation from the retail sector includes a mix of business size, sectors, urban/rural base, etc.
- Additional practitioners may be invited to attend meetings of the Retail Forum from time to time, where they have a particular expertise in an area under discussion.
- Membership of the Forum shall be on a voluntary basis. Any costs incurred by members in the activities of the Forum shall be borne by the members or their parent organisations.
- Due to the current size of the Forum, there is only capacity for one representative, from each member organisation, to attend Forum meetings. If you are unable to attend, an alternate can attend in your place.

Chairperson

The Retail Forum is Chaired by the Minister in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with responsibility for Retail.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Members

Representatives from the retail sector will include;

- Chambers Ireland
- Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association (CSNA)
- Dublin Town
- Hardware Association Ireland (HAI)
- Irish Congress of Trade Union (ICTU)
- Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)
- Irish Small and Medium Enterprises (ISME)
- Retail Excellence
- Retail Grocery Dairy & Allied Trades Association (RGDATA)
- Retail Ireland
- Retail Ireland Skillnet
- Small Firms Association
- A minimum of 6 additional retailers/representatives from the sector

The following public sector bodies may be represented on the Forum. Government Departments will represent agencies of their Departments.

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Justice
- Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform
- Department of Rural & Community Development
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of the Taoiseach
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- Department of Transport
- LGMA - County & City Managers Association

3. Retail Forum Meetings

- The Retail Forum meets four times each year and convenes meetings more frequently if required. Meetings can be held by hybrid, in person or online..
- The Forum considers issues of relevance to the Retail sector on a thematic basis.
- Retail Forum members may be asked to contribute to the Forum’s Annual Work Programme.
- To encourage openness and the sharing of information, the work of the Forum shall be subject to Chatham House Rules regarding the non-attribution of views or information received during the Forum’s work and meetings.
- The Forum may establish sub-groups to support it in its tasks. Members, depending on availability, may be asked to participate in these groups to address or deliver on specific actions, as needs arise.
- The Forum shall, from time to time, call on relevant experts to support the work of the Retail Forum.
- Retail Forum members may be asked to undertake agreed additional tasks as appropriate, which may support the retail sector.
- Minutes of Retail Forum meetings will be approved under the ‘Silence Procedure’ ie a copy of the draft minutes will be emailed to Retail Forum members and if no amendments are received by the Retail Forum secretariat by a given date, the minutes will be deemed approved.
- [Minutes](#) of Retail Forum meetings are published on the Department’s website.
- All correspondence should be directed to the Secretary of the Forum on matters pertaining to the work of the Forum – retail@enterprise.gov.ie

4. Review

The functions and operations of the Retail Forum will be reviewed on a regular basis.

5. Privacy Notice

Any personal information which you volunteer to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”) and Data Protection Acts 1988-2018. Further details on how we process or “use” your Personal Data can be found by viewing our [Privacy Notice](#).

If you have any additional queries about how we use your Personal Data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at: dataprotection@dbei.gov.ie

6. Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

The Retail Forum is deemed 'exempt' under section 5(5)(n) of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 from having to register its activities on the Lobbying Register once specified transparency criteria are applied. The criteria provided for in the 'Transparency Code' prepared by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is at **Appendix A**. Members are asked to review the Transparency Code and advise the Retail Forum secretariat if they are or have been a designated public official. (A designated public official as defined in the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 is at **Appendix B**).

**Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
January 2024**

Appendix A

The following is an extract from the 'Transparency Code' prepared by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The full document can be found on www.lobbying.ie

'Transparency Code – Criteria which must apply to avail of the exception under Section 5(5)(n) of the Act

Relevant groups must meet the following transparency criteria in order to be regarded as a "relevant body" (as defined in the Act) and to avail of the exemption set out in section 5(5)(n) of the Act:

Transparency criteria

Information must be published on the public body's website setting out the following information:

1. Name of Chairperson together with details of his or her employing organisation;
2. Names of Members together with details of their employing organisation¹;
3. Whether any non-public servant members were previously designated public officials;
4. Terms of reference of the group;
5. Agenda of each meeting;
6. Minutes of each meeting;
7. Expected timeframe for the group to conclude its work;
8. Reporting arrangements.

This information should be in a prominent place on the website of public bodies and should be easily accessible.

In addition, the Chairperson of the Group is responsible for overseeing and conducting the work of the Group in a manner which ensures that the Group operates in a manner fully in accordance with its terms of reference and in the public interest.

The Chairperson will include with the final or annual report of the Group a statement confirming its compliance with the Transparency Code.

Sub-groups

The requirements of the Transparency Code also apply to sub-groups of the principal group where the membership of the sub-group consists of at least one Designated Public Official and at least one person from outside of the public service.

Timeliness of Publication:

Ideally the information should be published in as timely a fashion as possible, having regard to the public interest in safeguarding the integrity of the deliberative process.

¹ Alternatively, if the Chairperson or member is representing a group of stakeholders, this should be stated. If the Chairperson is appointed in a personal capacity rather than as a representative of an organisation this should also be stated.

All groups should publish information about their membership, terms of reference, expected timeframe and reporting arrangements on their establishment. Groups in existence prior to 1st September 2015 (commencement day for the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015) should now proceed to publish this information.

At a minimum, thereafter the information on the public bodies' website must be updated at least every 4 months with details of agendas, minutes, etc. in relation to each such group.

This timeframe is in line with the transparency requirements under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 for persons who are engaging in lobbying communications. A return must be submitted every four months in respect of such activity.'

Appendix B

The following is an extract from the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015. The Full Act can be found on www.irishstatutebook.ie

'Designated public officials

6. (1) The following are designated public officials:

- (a) Ministers of the Government and Ministers of State;
- (b) other members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann;
- (c) members of the European Parliament for constituencies in the State;
- (d) members of local authorities;
- (e) special advisers appointed under section 11 of the Public Service Management Act 1997;
- (f) public servants of a prescribed description;
- (g) any other prescribed office holders or description of persons.

(2) The Minister may prescribe descriptions of public servants under subsection (1)(f) by reference to their roles, levels of remuneration, grades or similar factors.'