

# Ireland Fund Services

IN FOCUS 2020



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# Consistent client experience across jurisdictions

Interview with Liam McHugh & Paul Whelan

As managers continue to look for opportunity beyond their domestic borders, their need for service providers who provide a consistent experience across jurisdictions becomes more pronounced. Further, having that experience tailored to their unique needs is held in even higher esteem.

The fund administration space in Ireland has experienced much consolidation in the past few years. Several smaller to medium providers have been sold to either larger banking groups or private equity groups. This has left a dearth of independently owned players in the market.

Liam McHugh, managing director of fund administration, CSC, remarks: "Right now, the fund administration space is ever changing due to the significant amount of M&A activity in recent years. This has created a gap in the market for a independently owned company such as CSC. The fact that we have been independently owned for over 120 years will give us a significant advantage as we build our global offering at a time when many of our competitors are considering selling as private equity backers look to realise their investments."

Paul Whelan, managing director of depositary services, CSC, adds: "The consolidation means less opportunity for clients. It fosters a lack of diversity and competition among providers. We see an opportunity to provide a bespoke, flexible solution for asset managers - not only large groups but also smaller and more medium sized firms. We have

the size and the expertise to meet the requirements of small and medium managers across jurisdictions in Europe.

CSC, a global provider of business, legal, tax, and digital brand services, expanded its Fund Services into Ireland in April this year. Clients can now access the firm's suite of Fund Administration and Capital Markets services with a pending application for Depositary services in Ireland.

McHugh discusses the move: "In the US we service numerous alternative asset managers, many of whom have made or are looking to make investments in Europe or further afield. We want to be in a position to provide our clients with a global offering in key jurisdictions."

CSC chose Ireland as it is a key global fund domicile which is home to a significant percentage of global fund administration services. "As we continue to build our global footprint, with live fund administration teams in the US, the Netherlands and Asia, the next logical step was for us to expand our presence in Europe through adding offices in Ireland and Luxembourg. We see Ireland as a key jurisdiction for our global growth which will support our clients as they launch structures in this jurisdiction and beyond," McHugh adds.

## Integrated management structure

Whelan outlines some of the benefits clients enjoy as a result of the firm's expansion: "We have an integrated management structure across Europe which allows our clients

to experience the same level of service and operating model across jurisdictions.

“The experience for the client in Ireland will be the same as the experience in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the US or Singapore. Therefore, clients with funds in multiple jurisdictions will be able to avail of a single point of contact for the entire relationship. They don’t have to deal with multiple people in the different locations.”

Whelan says clients like this single point of contact: “They like having someone who has a holistic understanding of their investment strategy and fund structure.”

The CSC model is very client centric in that every client is provided with the same level of service regardless of size. “We’re not implementing a tiered model when servicing clients. We are interested in building a partnership with our clients; we grow as they grow so they can see us as an extension of their operational teams,” Whelan emphasises.

He explains how the firm works with clients to understand their internal operational infrastructure and investment strategy. The depositary model is then designed to fit seamlessly into the manager’s existing model. Whelan notes: “We don’t force a fixed or rigid depositary model on our clients which would require them to adapt their processes to meet our needs. It’s bespoke and that’s important. The bigger bank depositaries tend to have a very rigid fixed process which managers need to fit into. For example, if there is something a manager doesn’t have, they will be forced go and get it which adds to their cost and creates operational inefficiency.”

CSC’s operating model leads to a seamless decision-making process. Client facing professionals do not have to navigate through multiple layers of management for a decision to be made. They have the authority to make a decision and respond to clients swiftly.

This has also helped in the current Covid-19 scenario. McHugh notes:



**Liam McHugh**  
Managing Director, Fund Administration, CSC



Liam McHugh is the managing director of Fund Administration for CSC Global Financial Markets. He is responsible for building the European regional fund administration offering and liaising with CSC teams across Asia-Pacific and the United States.

Liam relocated to Dublin in 2020 from our Singapore office where he served as managing director for Fund Administration for the APAC region. Prior to joining CSC, Liam served as regional head of operations at Apex Fund Services, following the acquisition of Equinox Alternative Investment Services, where he previously served as regional CEO for Asia. Liam is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, having qualified in 2007 in Ireland, and he served as vice chairman of the Singapore Fund Administration Association from 2015 to 2017. Liam holds a bachelor of business studies (specialising in finance) from Dublin City University.

“We strive to meet our client demands by ensuring a consistently high level of responsiveness. With people working from home, there have been additional challenges but key to every client is our ability to respond to their queries in a timely manner, whether that’s by telephone, email or via our portal.”

He also points out the firm’s focus on technology in recent years: “We have built a strong technology team which has supported us in releasing our client portal and deploying other technology solutions to help us provide superior service to our clients, we are focused on supporting our clients’ and their investors’ needs through bespoke and flexible reporting solutions capable of evolving with regulatory changes.”

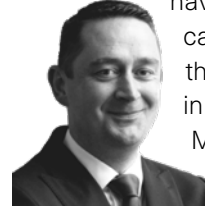
**Plans for Europe**

CSC Global’s fund administration plan for Ireland is quite simple. “We are building our operational centre of excellence in Ireland, where we service clients in this time zone to the highest of standards. We have no plans to outsource any aspects of the work as we want to be able to ensure the high-quality level of service to our clients,” McHugh states.

Having received regulatory approval to complete the acquisition of TCS in The Netherlands in Q1 2020, CSC received its Irish fund administration license shortly thereafter.

In the second quarter of 2020, CSC also submitted an application to the CSSF in Luxembourg to extend its PSF license to incorporate fund administration and depositary services, which should be processed over the coming six to nine months.

“All going to plan, within the next 12 months, CSC will have fund administration and depositary capabilities in Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – three key jurisdictions in Europe, a lot done, a lot more to do!” McHugh finishes. ■



**Paul Whelan**  
Managing Director, Depositary, CSC



Paul Whelan is the managing director of Depositary Services for CSC Global Financial Markets (GFM), establishing CSC’s Depositary services in Ireland, designing and launching complementary product offerings in all European locations, including Luxembourg and the Netherlands, as well as liaising with clients in the US as they look to invest in Europe.

Previously, Paul served as managing director and global head of Depositary and Custody services at the European Depositary Bank and prior to that, at Deutsche Bank as head of depositary services. Paul is a seasoned leader whose wealth of experience and technical expertise from over 20 years in the funds industry will play a key role in shaping the vision and future of CSC’s Fund Services business. Paul is a graduate of Dublin City University where he received a Bachelor of Business Studies, specialising in finance.