

# Citizens Information Services

Supporting Our Clients  
A Year in Review **2025**

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The right to reliable information is a fundamental element of any society committed to the principles of equality, respect, inclusion and human dignity. Indeed, the right to accurate, accessible information is inseparable from the right to participate fully in society.

Former President Michael D. Higgins

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## Foreword: Chairperson of CIS Employer Group

As Chairperson of the Employer Group Executive, I welcome this report. 2025 was an auspicious year, the year in which the service celebrated fifty years in business and the National Citizens Information Services Strategy 2025-2027 was launched.

The report gives very valuable insight into the work carried out by the service throughout the year, the number of clients and queries assisted through the various service channels and the positive outcomes achieved. The positive experience of clients aligns with the vision, mission and values of the CIS Network to work towards a society where everyone can access free, impartial and up to date information and advocacy to secure their rights and entitlements.

There was a very positive response to the customer satisfaction survey with ninety seven percent of respondents pleased to recommend the service to others. This is at a time when there is an ongoing strong demand for the service with much of the demand related to complex cases, and when government services are moving online and queries are becoming more varied.

I am delighted the report references one of the highlights of 2025 when the Minister for Social Protection, Dara Calleary, TD, launched the Citizens Information National Strategy, 2025-2027: Connecting Citizens; the strategy is guided by four pillars and commits to enhancing in-person services whilst supporting clients to access services online.

I am very pleased to note that Citizens Information Services continue to build local and national connections and the report outlines in detail the number and type of engagement, particularly the response to challenges in working with vulnerable and hard to reach groups. Another impactful initiative was the Digital Help Service which was piloted in seventy centres in response to the growth in online government services and was designed to support older people who may experience social exclusion.

I would like to thank the staff for their trojan work, the Boards of Management and the staff of Citizens Information Board who all contribute to the success of the service and leads to a very satisfied clientele.



Anne Drury  
Chairperson of the CIS Employer Group Executive



# Foreword: Senior Manager Citizens Information Board

I am pleased to introduce Supporting Our Clients – A Year in Review 2025, which highlights the vital work of Citizens Information Services (CIS) across Ireland over the past year.

From my perspective in the Citizens Information Board (CIB), which funds and supports these services, it is clear just how vital CIS is in helping people access clear, impartial information and navigate increasingly complex systems. In 2025, CIS supported over 384,000 people and responded to more than 700,000 queries, reflecting the strong demand for clear, accessible and impartial information. Behind these numbers are people who were looking for reassurance, clarity and guidance—often at difficult or uncertain times. CIS clients consistently say that the service helps them navigate challenges and make informed decisions. As services become more complex and increasingly digital, the CIS role in providing trusted guidance, advocacy and reassurance has never been more important.

CIS also continues to have a strong and meaningful presence within local communities. Through outreach, partnerships and community engagement, the service reaches people where they are—particularly those who may be vulnerable or excluded—ensuring that access to information and support is as inclusive as possible.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication of CIS staff and volunteers. Their commitment to delivering a compassionate, professional, and people-centred service is at the heart of the service. Whether supporting clients face-to-face, assisting with digital access, or providing advocacy in complex cases, their work makes a real difference to people's lives every day.

The year 2025 marks a special milestone—50 years of Citizens Information Services. It is an opportunity to reflect with pride on what has been achieved, while also looking ahead. As CIS moves forward with its new strategy, Connecting Citizens 2025–2027, the service remains focused on ensuring that everyone can access the information and support they need, in a way that works for them. It reaffirms a commitment to maintaining strong in-person services while adapting to an increasingly digital landscape, ensuring that no one is left behind.

I look forward to seeing this important work continue to develop in the years ahead.



Rachel Downes  
Senior Manager  
Citizens Information Board



## Citizens Information Board

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body that supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services. Under the remit of the Department of Social Protection, CIB funds and supports 22 service delivery companies including 8 Citizens Information Services. These eight Citizens Information Services provide a network of independent, local Citizens Information Centres (CICs) around the country. CIB provides these frontline services with a suite of technical, operational, and information resources to facilitate delivery of information, advice and advocacy.



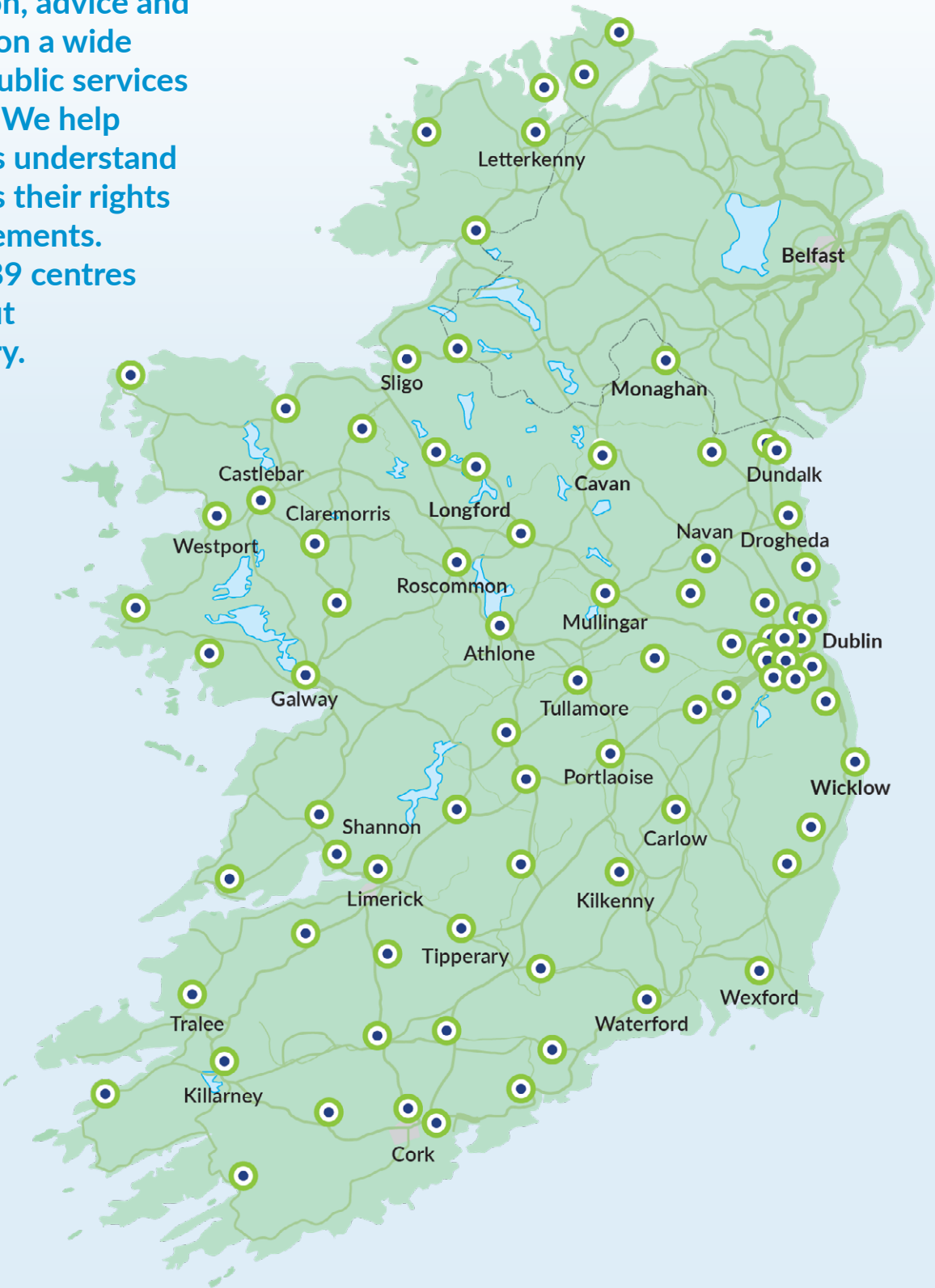
I just wanted to take a moment to thank you sincerely for your guidance and support over the past while.

Your advice and the information you provided were incredibly helpful in clarifying my position and navigating the process with more confidence. It made a real difference in helping me make informed decisions at each stage, particularly around the exit negotiations, where your last piece of advice helped me achieve a better outcome in the end.

The process is now complete, and everything has been finalised, so I wanted to say a genuine thank you for the time and care you put into helping me – I truly appreciated it.

Client of Dublin South Citizens Information Service

Citizens Information is a trusted provider of free, impartial, confidential information, advice and advocacy on a wide range of public services in Ireland. We help individuals understand and access their rights and entitlements. We have 89 centres throughout the country.



# The Client Experience

Citizens Information continued to experience strong demand during 2025, supporting over **384,000** people across a wide range of issues. Migration, increasing housing pressures, digitalisation of public services and growing levels of complexity meant many people relied on the service to understand their options, access their entitlements and make informed decisions.

The service demonstrated high levels of effectiveness throughout the year, with client feedback consistently highlighting the value of accessible, independent and person-centred support. Client feedback also pointed to a service that **provided reassurance, clarity and understanding, helped to navigate complex circumstances, reduced stress, gave confidence and promoted empowerment.**

“

I was very upset by the circumstances. I felt unable to challenge the decision emotionally at the time. The Information Officer did this with me - **guiding me throughout the process and doing a lot of the work on my behalf.** I was struggling at the time.

“

Great service. I recently turned 66 & I've read online about my entitlements but some of it confusing to read. When I went to CIC it was **explained to me so easily.** I was given all the forms & sent some off the next day. Gave me confidence.

93% of respondents (8,732 people) felt that their **query was fully answered** after their visit to the CIC.

97% of respondents (9,152 people) felt that they were **listened to.**

“

You **gave me hope** when I had none. You helped me greatly. You knew the information and you minded us/ my family.

“

I felt **supported** through whole process and was made to feel my case was very important to CIS as it was to me.

“

I had felt overwhelmed with forms regarding qualifying for a widows pension I was at breaking point so it was lovely to have someone **get me over that last hurdle.**



It's such a really great service and especially when you can have a **face-to-face conversation** and explain what information you are looking for.

93% of respondents (8,761 people) agreed that they **felt better after using the CIC.**



My visit with the Information Officer was very informative, she provided several options to all my enquiries .... therefore, allowing me to **make informative decisions** going forward .... I would highly recommend the service.

97% of respondents (9,144 people) would **recommend the service to others.**



The Information Officer was very helpful and listened to what I had to say. Gave me the information needed to sort my problem. **My mind is at ease now.** He also included the contact link and advised on how to word what I needed to ask.

98% of respondents (9,228 people) felt that the service was **confidential.**

98% of respondents (9,211 people) found that staff were **friendly and welcoming.**

98% of respondents (9,170 people) were **happy the service provided.**



I went in slightly traumatised after death of my husband - needing advice and help going forward. **All my questions were answered simply and explained easily.**

# Our Service Delivery Channels



## FACE-TO-FACE SERVICES



### Drop-in

The CIS opens at advertised times to provide a face-to-face service to the client with an Information Officer without the need for an appointment



### Appointment

Where necessary the CIS schedules a face-to-face appointment for the client with an Information Officer



### Reception Service

The CIS opens Reception at advertised times, for the client to call in to get simple information, booklets, application forms and details on CIC service options



### Virtual Service

The CIS provides a face-to-face virtual service to the client via video link



### Digital Help Service

The CIS provides face-to-face support to the client to conduct their business digitally with state agencies



### Form Filling

The CIS may provide face-to-face assistance to clients with form filling, at a designated time



### Outreach

The CIS provides a face-to-face service to the client from a location which is not CIC



### Community Education/ Training

The CIS provides public information sessions to community groups in-person or virtually



## NON FACE-TO-FACE SERVICES



### Telephone

The CIS provides a service by telephone to the client at advertised times. Where an Information Officer is not available, the CIS calls the client back within a prescribed timeframe



### Email/Letter

The CIS responds to client email/letter queries within a prescribed timeframe



### Messaging Service

The CIS may provide a service to the client via messaging service

## 2025 in Numbers



**384,091** Callers



**708,862** Queries



**OVER  
1 MILLION** Recorded  
actions



**23,024** Hours logged on  
Advocacy Cases

# What did people need help with?

The most common area of enquiry remained Social Welfare, accounting for almost half of all queries received. Housing continued to be a significant issue, reflecting ongoing pressures in accessing social and affordable housing. Demand relating to health, taxation, employment rights and migration also remained high, demonstrating the broad range of issues for which people rely on Citizens Information.



## Social Welfare

315,200 queries (44%)

**Top issues:** Disability and illness payments, pensions, carers' supports, family payments, supplementary welfare and unemployment supports.

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## Housing

82,209 queries (12%).

**Top issues:** Applying for local authority / social housing and Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), housing grants, private renting, evictions, RTB issues, rent reviews, repairs and deposits.

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## Health

51,513 queries (7%).

**Top issues:** Medical Cards, GP visit cards and the Fair Deal Scheme.

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## Money and Tax

47,635 queries (7%).

**Top issues:** Income tax credits and reliefs, Revenue Online and Local Property Tax.

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## Employment

39,265 queries (6%).

**Top issues:** Employment rights, contracts, leave, sick pay, dismissal, redundancy and equality issues.

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## Moving Country

38,364 queries (5%).

**Top issues:** Irish citizenship, residence permits, visas and supports for asylum seekers and refugees.

## How did we help?

Clients require different levels of support depending on their circumstances. While many people need information about their rights and entitlements, others require more detailed assistance to navigate systems, complete applications and resolve problems. In 2025 we helped people with the following ways...



*Bongsi Mafu*  
Information Officer North Dublin CIS

| How we helped people                                                     | Actions | Queries |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Provided general information                                             | 244,755 | 35%     |
| Clarified rules and eligibility criteria based on personal circumstances | 209,410 | 30%     |
| Explored possible options, benefits or entitlements                      | 181,908 | 26%     |
| Explained application process                                            | 88,906  | 13%     |
| Helped fill out forms                                                    | 59,940  | 8%      |
| Provided information or form at reception desk                           | 53,818  | 8%      |
| Explained means test/income thresholds                                   | 46,847  | 7%      |
| Helped compile supporting documentation                                  | 44,441  | 6%      |
| Signposted person to another service                                     | 43,140  | 6%      |
| Calculated amount of benefit/tax entitlement                             | 31,189  | 4%      |
| Helped with online access                                                | 29,082  | 4%      |
| Explained correspondence received by people                              | 28,051  | 4%      |
| Made enquiry phone calls on behalf of people                             | 19,020  | 3%      |
| Helped people write letters or emails                                    | 8,695   | 1%      |
| Advised on claim status or appeals/review process                        | 5,657   | 1%      |

## Advocacy support

For people experiencing complex or difficult circumstances, information alone is not always enough. Advocacy support helps people navigate systems, challenge decisions and secure outcomes that may otherwise be difficult to achieve independently.

An advocacy case is opened when someone needs formal or ongoing support for a complex issue. In 2025, we provided advocacy support for 9,913 queries (up 129% from 2024, largely due to a pilot that tested revised recording practices), of which 1,638 required long-term advocacy support over an average of 8 months per case. We spent a total of 23,024 hours on this work, including the 1,105 existing advocacy cases open at the start of the year.

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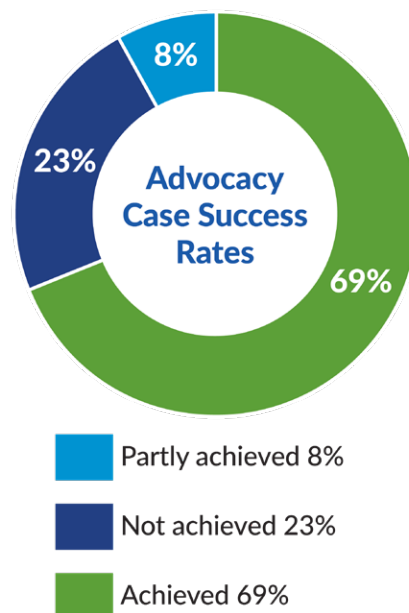
I was delighted with the outcome. It means an extra €30 a week and for me as an OAP that is a lot of money. It will help me pay a bill.

### Success rates:

Of the 1,784 advocacy cases closed in 2025, CIS helped secure successful outcomes in 69% of cases, with a further 8% achieving partial success, highlighting the effectiveness of our support in resolving complex issues.

### Our interventions included:

- 970 social welfare appeals submitted
- 139 direct negotiations with employers, landlords or local authorities
- 60 oral hearings attended:
  - 28 Workplace Relations Commission hearings
  - 13 Social Welfare Appeals Office hearings
  - 10 Residential Tenancies Board adjudication hearings
  - 7 Residential Tenancies Board tribunal hearings
  - 1 Labour Court hearing
  - 1 Workplace Relations Commission Equal Status adjudication hearing



“

I was completely lost when I met the Information Officer as I was getting nowhere with my Invalidity Pension. She was absolutely brilliant and she was very understanding. She explained everything that she was doing so I could understand and always kept in contact with me through phone calls and emails. I would definitely have been lost without her. She is very intelligent and very friendly. I never felt small around her.

# Advocacy Case Studies

## Pregnant worker wins discrimination case

### Issue:

A woman sought support from the CIS after she was dismissed from her job while pregnant. After informing her employer of her pregnancy, she requested a health and safety assessment of her workload to help protect her and her baby's wellbeing, but this was not carried out. When a new manager started, she was called to a performance review where concerns about her work were raised. Her work was then monitored more closely, and she was later dismissed.

### Actions:

The CIS supported the client to bring a discrimination complaint under the Employment Equality Acts to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The case argued that the client's dismissal was linked to her pregnancy and highlighted her employer's failure to carry out a health and safety assessment and to provide written reasons for her dismissal that were unrelated to her pregnancy.

### Outcome:

The WRC found that the client's dismissal was discriminatory and awarded her over €10,000 in compensation.

Source: South Leinster CIS.

## Homeless refugee secures emergency accommodation

### Issue:

A recognised refugee sought support from the CIS after becoming homeless. The International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) gave him five days' notice to leave his accommodation and relocate to Mullingar. Unable to relocate because he worked in Dublin, he spent the following three weeks sleeping in a friend's car. He contacted Homeless Services but received no response.

### Actions:

The CIS worked with the client over several months to seek emergency accommodation. The client was eventually registered as homeless and approved for the Homeless Housing Assistance Payment but was not offered emergency accommodation. The CIS sought a written decision explaining the refusal, including through a request under the Freedom of Information Act, but the reasons for the decision remained unclear. After repeated efforts to obtain a response, the CIS indicated that it would make a formal complaint. Homeless Services subsequently arranged a further interview with the client.

### Outcome:

The client was offered emergency accommodation after the interview and moved into a hostel later that day.

Source: North Dublin CIS.

## €26,000 social welfare overpayment cancelled

### Issue:

A client sought support from the CIS after being notified of a €26,000 social welfare overpayment. He had been in receipt of Invalidity Pension since 2012 and applied for Partial Capacity Benefit in 2018 when he returned to work. However, his application was never fully processed and he remained on Invalidity Pension while under the impression that he was receiving Partial Capacity Benefit. The client had informed the Department when he returned to work in 2018, but not when he started working again in 2021.

The client was diagnosed with anxiety and depression and has some learning and literacy difficulties. He had a social worker at that time and was reliant on them for support with applications and correspondence with the Department.

### Actions:

The CIS requested a revised decision under section 301 of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act 2005 on several grounds, including the client's vulnerability and his reliance on his social worker when dealing with correspondence from the Department. When this was unsuccessful, the CIS appealed the decision on the client's behalf. The client's social worker also provided a letter of support.

### Outcome:

The appeal was successful and the €26,000 overpayment was cancelled.

Source: Dublin South CIS.

## Bereaved husband secures refund after prolonged efforts to close wife's account

### Issue:

A bereaved husband sought support from the CIS after unsuccessfully trying to close his late wife's phone, television and broadband account. Although he had repeatedly informed the service provider of her death, he was told they could not speak to him because he was not the account holder. As a result, he continued to be charged €232 per month for the service.

### Actions:

The CIS contacted the service provider on the client's behalf. The provider initially refused to engage because neither the client nor the CIS was the account holder. The CIS explained that the account holder was deceased and pointed out that payments continued to be taken from the client's account despite him having no contract with the provider, indicating that a complaint to ComReg might be necessary. The matter was then escalated to a supervisor. Given the client's recent bereavement, the CIS also requested a goodwill gesture from the provider.

### Outcome:

The service provider transferred the account into the client's name and refunded €1,540 in overcharges. Following the CIS's request, the provider also offered three months' free service worth €696 as a goodwill gesture.

Source: South Connacht CIS.

## Woman awarded €48,000 after workplace sexual harassment and discrimination

### Issue:

A woman sought support from the CIS after experiencing sexual harassment, gender discrimination, bullying and victimisation in the workplace over a number of years. Although an initial complaint eventually resulted in the dismissal of one employee, further incidents occurred after she returned to work. When she raised additional concerns, her complaints were not upheld and she was threatened with disciplinary action. The ongoing treatment had a significant impact on her mental health and resulted in extended periods of sick leave.

### Actions:

The CIS assessed the case and identified merit in pursuing a complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The CIS gathered and reviewed evidence, supported the client in obtaining medical evidence, and submitted a WRC complaint on the grounds of sexual harassment, discrimination and victimisation. The CIS also advised the client to seek legal advice regarding a potential personal injury claim. Detailed written submissions were prepared, and the CIS successfully applied for the client's anonymity to be protected during the proceedings. The CIS represented the client during a number of contested WRC hearings.

### Outcome:

The WRC found in favour of the client and awarded €48,000 in compensation. The client was delighted with the outcome and felt as though she was vindicated and someone had heard her story.

Source: North Connacht and Ulster CIS.

## Mother and children approved for housing support after repeated refusals

### Issue:

A mother of three sought support from the CIS after being refused social housing support. She was separated from her husband and living with her children in a damp house that was due to be sold, placing them at risk of homelessness. Although she had inherited a lump sum several years earlier, she explained that the money had been used to support her family and invest in her husband's business, which later failed. Despite evidence that the money was no longer available, her local authority assessed her as still having that money and refused her application.

### Actions:

The CIS supported the client to submit a fresh application for social housing support. During the case, it emerged that she may have been subjected to coercive control by her husband, and the CIS obtained supporting evidence from a local domestic violence service. The CIS prepared a detailed submission with extensive supporting documentation on the client's behalf. When the application was refused again, the CIS continued to advocate for the client and engaged with the local authority, which agreed to carry out an internal review.



I finally had someone on my team ... It gave me hope and helped me stay focused on my goal ... thank you for your dedication, kindness and perseverance - you truly made a lasting difference in our lives.

### Outcome:

The client was approved for the Housing Assistance Payment and added to the social housing waiting list.

Source: South Munster CIS.

## Homeless young woman awarded Disability Allowance

### Issue:

A young woman living in homeless accommodation sought support from the CIS after her application for Disability Allowance was refused. A key worker in homeless services had helped her with the application. She had experienced poor mental health since her teens and had recently been diagnosed with a severe mental illness, which was included in her application. However, the application was refused due to insufficient evidence.

### Actions:

The CIS supported the client to appeal the decision and apply for Supplementary Welfare Allowance. The CIS requested her file under the Freedom of Information Act and helped her gather additional evidence, including letters from her GP and mental health team, as well as a psychologist's report. The CIS prepared and submitted the appeal on the client's behalf.

### Outcome:

The appeal was successful and the client was awarded Disability Allowance.

Source: North Munster CIS.

## Grandmother secures €53,000 in Guardian's Payment arrears

### Issue:

A grandmother sought support from the CIS after her application for Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory) was refused. She had been the legal guardian of her grandchild since 2017 and had cared for the child since birth. Earlier applications had been refused due to questions about maintenance payments from the child's mother and difficulties obtaining information from the client. The client believed language barriers and communication difficulties had contributed to the Department's decisions.

### Actions:

The CIS obtained and reviewed the client's file under the Freedom of Information Act and identified grounds to challenge the decisions. The CIS requested a review of an earlier refusal and repeatedly contacted the Department for a decision over an extended period. When the review was unsuccessful, the CIS submitted an appeal on the client's behalf. This was partially successful and the payment was awarded from November 2023. The CIS then requested a further review of the client's entitlement date to secure additional arrears and provided additional supporting information.

### Outcome:

The Department revised the decision and backdated the client's entitlement to August 2019. As a result, she received over €53,000 in arrears. The client was very satisfied with the outcome and thankful for the support she received.

Source: North Connacht and Ulster CIS.

## Worker wins redundancy case at Labour Court

### Issue:

A worker sought support from the CIS after her employer refused her claim for a statutory redundancy payment. She had worked for the employer for over 20 years and had been placed on lay-off during the Covid-19 pandemic. The employer argued that she had retired or resigned voluntarily and therefore was not entitled to redundancy. The employer also stated that, because she worked on fixed-term contracts and was routinely laid off for part of each year, she did not satisfy the requirement of 104 weeks' continuous employment needed to qualify for redundancy.

### Actions:

The CIS supported the client to pursue her redundancy claim and obtained evidence, including employment and PRSI records, to support her case. When the employer failed to respond to a Data Access Request for the client's employment records, the CIS helped the client make a complaint to the Data Protection Commission. The CIS also attempted to resolve the matter directly with the employer, but no agreement was reached. A claim was then submitted to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The CIS prepared detailed submissions and represented the client at the WRC hearing, where the claim was successful. When the employer appealed the WRC decision, the CIS prepared a further submission and represented the client at the Labour Court hearing.

### Outcome:

The Labour Court found in favour of the client and upheld her entitlement to a statutory redundancy payment.

Source: North Leinster CIS.

## Tenants awarded over €7,000 in landlord dispute

### Issue:

A couple sought support from the CIS after their former landlord refused to return their security deposit. During discussions, further issues emerged. The couple said the landlord had charged additional cash payments on top of their rent, failed to carry out repairs that they had to pay for themselves, did not reimburse rent paid after HAP was backdated, and increased the rent in breach of Rent Pressure Zone rules. They were later served with a termination notice when they could no longer afford the additional payments.

### Actions :

The CIS submitted the complaints to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) and represented them at the adjudication hearing. The adjudicator found that the landlord had overcharged rent through an invalid rent review and ordered repayments for rent and repair costs. However, the claim for the return of the security deposit was not upheld. When the landlord appealed the decision to an RTB tribunal, the CIS continued to represent the couple.

### Outcome:

The tribunal upheld the tenants' complaint for the return of their deposit and found in their favour regarding the invalid rent review and rent overpayments. The couple were awarded a total of over €7,000.

Source: Dublin South CIS.

# Supporting Citizens - Perspectives from Staff and Volunteers

In 2025, Citizens Information Services were provided by 130.87 full-time equivalent Information Officers working nationally across 89 Citizens Information Centres. Their work was supported by 173 scheme workers and 180 volunteers.

Information Officers continue to play a vital role in helping people understand their rights and entitlements, access supports and navigate challenging circumstances. The experiences outlined below provide insight into the evolving nature of client needs and the impact that trusted, independent information and advocacy can have on people's lives.

## My experience as a CIS Information Officer



Manus Reid has been an Information Officer for 9 years and is based in Donegal CIC, a geographically dispersed area close to the border, where he engages in a lot of cross border work.



Aurelia Bodrug has been an Information Officer for 20 years and is based in Dublin South Central, mainly working in the Liberties CIC. This is a truly urban location, where she works with a multicultural client base. By speaking several languages, she can assist clients who may otherwise struggle to access public services and information.

Manus and Aurelia highlighted the complexity of their role particularly as services move online and client needs become more varied. They also talked about the immense satisfaction they get from their role and the positive impact their work has on the people they support.

### “ Manus

Along the border, the queries are getting far more complicated and taking longer to resolve....we see a constant stream of cross-border workers and retired frontier workers navigating two different jurisdictions.

### “ Aurelia

Many government services are now online, which can be difficult for clients who have limited digital skills. As a result I now spend more time helping people to navigate online systems and complete digital applications.

## Manus: Supporting a Client with Complex Cross-Border Entitlements

I assisted a client who was a frontier worker, living in Co. Donegal and working part-time across the border in Co. Tyrone. Her partner was not working as he had spent the last few years looking after a relative. The family was in receipt of Child Benefit, Carers Allowance, Fuel Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance for their child. Her partner could no longer carry out this caring role as he had become ill. The client applied for Universal Credit in the six counties and added her partner and child to the claim. DSP stopped all Irish benefits and the claim for Universal Credit in the north was denied. This meant they only had part-time earnings. I successfully appealed, had all Irish benefits re-instated and the Universal Credit decision overturned in the six counties.

## Aurelia: Supporting a Family to access Social Welfare and Housing Supports

Recently, I assisted a client who had become unwell, was no longer able to work and was at risk of losing their accommodation. The family was surviving on what savings they had and their partner's income. English was not their first language, so the client was finding it difficult to understand the social welfare system. The client has been on sick leave for the past 7 months without any pay as they did not know what to do.

I helped the client to apply for Illness Benefit with backdated pay and the Rent Supplement. I contacted relevant services on their behalf, such as the Government Departments, their Landlord and GP to obtain a cover letter and Medical Certificates for the Illness Benefit Section. I assisted with completing online applications and gathering supporting documentation. Within a short period, the client began receiving a Social Welfare Payment – Illness Benefit and avoided becoming homeless.

I also assisted with applications for Social Housing and the Housing Assistance Payment. The Family is currently being assessed for Social Housing with the view of applying for Housing Assistance Payment.

**CIS Information Officers are supported by 173 scheme staff and 180 volunteers.**

Mick Rowan has been a volunteer with Cork City Centre CIC for 13 years. Mick provided this insight into his work as a CIC volunteer.

### My role

"I volunteer with Citizens Information, as an Information Provider in Cork city centre. I provide one day's service per week as an Information Provider when I help clients by:

- Assisting with applications for Social Housing.
- Estimating pension entitlements and assisting clients to apply.
- Assisting with online applications for European Health Insurance Card.
- Advising clients on various types of Social Welfare entitlements.
- Getting updates for clients regarding ongoing applications for services by contacting various government departments.



### Trends over the years

The most significant change I have seen over the last thirteen years has been the profile of clients, brought about by the changing nature of Irish society. This has introduced new and more complex information provision requirements relating to Residency, Work Permits, Visas, Housing and Employment issues.

The move of services from paper based to digital formats requires more support from the CIS due to lack of digital literacy and language barriers.

The need to assist clients in successfully navigating complex government systems to achieve their entitlements is greater than ever, and essential to their welfare.

### Personal satisfaction

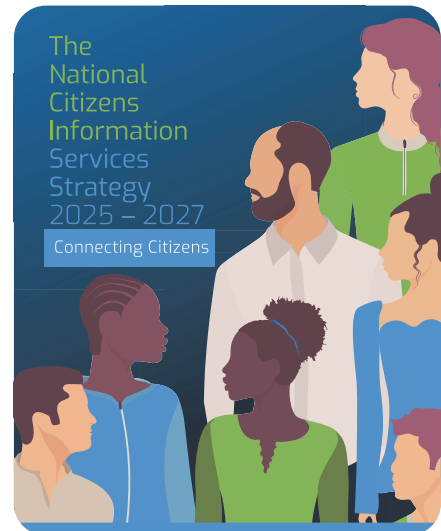
The greatest satisfaction that any Information Provider gets is having the privilege of being able to help a client to improve or achieve something in their life circumstances.

# Launch of Citizens Information Service Strategic Plan

## Connecting Citizens – Citizens Information Service National Strategy (2025 – 2027)

Minister for Social Protection, Dara Calleary TD launched the new Citizens Information Service National Strategy 2025 – 2027 ‘Connecting Citizens’ at an event in Buswell’s Hotel, Dublin on 12 November 2025. Key stakeholders and representatives from across the network were in attendance.

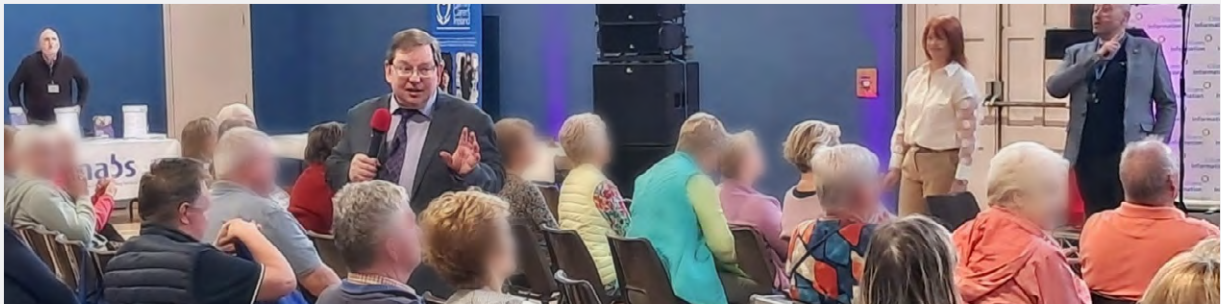
The Strategy sets out CIS’s focus on strengthening in-person services while supporting clients to access increasingly digital systems, reflecting the growing complexity of services and the evolving role of CIS.



Graham Long, Chief Executive Officer CIB; Darren Ryan, Regional Manager North Munster CIS; Susan Ryan, Regional Manager South Leinster CIS; Minister for Social Protection, Dara Calleary TD; Martin Quinn, Chair North Munster CIS; Diarmaid O'Sullivan, Regional Manager South Connacht CIS.

## Building Connections

In 2025, Citizens Information Services continued to build connections through community outreaches and collaboration with other services. They also engaged with initiatives that support access to information.



Staff from Roscommon CIC present a public information event on state pensions and other entitlements in Kilbride, County Roscommon. MABS also attended this event to provide information of planning budgets.



Limerick CIC Information Officers Andrei Strok, Ron Collins and Nan Li at the Cappamore Agricultural show.



Eadaoin O'Reilly with Mary Dunne, Development Manager Finglas/Ballymun/Cabra, North Dublin Citizens Information Service providing an information stand at the Out of Blue information event in RDS.

“

Literacy is more than reading and writing—it's about making sense of the world around you. We're proud to stand together to make it more accessible.

Martina Cronin, Development Manager Wicklow, is a representative on the Regional Adult Literacy Coalition for Wicklow and a Literacy Champion for the area.



Information Officers Malissa Gwaltney and Josephine Gibbons with staff from Donegal ETB, Donegal County Council and Donegal Local Development Company.

## Building Trust within the Community



Staff from North Dublin CIS and Dublin South CIS meet with MABS staff from their regions to look at strengthening working relationships for the benefit of clients.



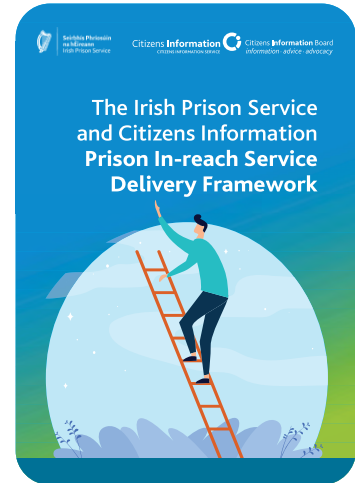
North Leinster CIS worked with the Irish Hospice Foundation, Kildare Age Friendly, Decision Support Service and Legal Aid Board to deliver the Putting Your Affairs in Order event in Kildare.

## Access to Information

Everyone should be able to access information, advice and advocacy regardless of their circumstances. Outreaches to groups such as prisoners and disability groups ensure that those who may not be able to call to CIC offices can access the service.

Throughout 2025 the CIS in-reach prison service met with 738 clients, dealt with 2,169 queries and worked on 130 advocacy cases. The most common areas dealt with when delivering prison in-reach include renewal of driving licence and passport, applying for state pension and liaising with financial institutions to cancel a direct debit or open a bank account for a specific purpose.

Also, initiatives within the office help to support clients with particular needs. These initiatives include:



### Age-friendly clinics

Which prioritise older clients by providing magnifying readers, designated seating with arm rests in reception area and adequate and clear signage.

### Literacy friendly environments

Where staff are trained to use Plain English and know where to signpost clients with unmet literacy needs.



### The Digital Help Service

Which assists clients, in a face-to-face setting, to access government platforms, set up user accounts and conduct business with state agencies through online portals. This initiative started as a pilot in 2024 and has now secured funding from the Hi Digital Fund to mainstream the DHS. This funding, along with funding from CIB, will enable CIS to support and empower older adults to engage digitally with government services.

“

Receiving this funding means that a Digital Help Service will be rolled out across 70 Citizens Information Centres (CIC) across Ireland, resulting in meaningful help for older people struggling to access their online government services. This help will be available in people's local communities from trained Information Officers in a safe and confidential face to face setting.

Susan Ryan, Regional Manager South Leinster CIS.



Awardees of the Hi Digital Fund with Minister Jerry Buttimer, Liz Roche Head of Vodafone Foundation and Deirdre Morell CEO at Hi Digital Fund launch.

## Use of the JustAMinute (JAM) cards

This allows those with communication difficulties to request a moment of patience where they need it.

## Hosting services

Hosting other specialist services such as FLAC, Threshold, Ombudsman's Office and Women's Aid makes these services available to the public in easy-to-reach, central locations.



## Celebrating 50 Years: Making a Difference

Citizens Information Services celebrated 50 years of providing free, confidential information, advice and advocacy, marking five decades since the first 25 centres were registered on 8th July 1975. Former president Michael D. Higgins congratulated all those associated with Citizens Information on the milestone of 50 years dedicated to public service. The former president acknowledged the vital role Citizens Information has played in helping generations of individuals and families in accessing trusted information on their rights and entitlements. He also acknowledged the “important role that Citizens Information has played, and continues to play, in fostering an inclusive, informed, and participative Republic.”

This reflects the role CIS plays every day in helping people access information, understand their rights and take the next step with confidence.

As part of a national celebration of 50 years of Citizens Information events were held across Ireland.



Presentation to the Chair of SMCIS, Ger Curtin by the Lord Mayor of Cork, Fergal Dennehy, at the Civic Reception to celebrate 50 years of Citizens Information in Cork City. The photograph includes guests, board members, Cork City wide staff and volunteers, past and present, along with council representatives and dignitaries. The photograph was provided by the City Council.



Staff from Limerick CIC celebrate 50th anniversary.



Regional Management Team from North Leinster CIS celebrates 50th anniversary.



Staff from Crumlin CIC celebrate 50th anniversary.



Celebrating 50 years of Citizens Information in Youghal.



Staff from Cork City North CIC celebrate 50th anniversary.

## Access Citizens Information by:



### Website

[citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)



### Phone

0818 07 4000 - Mon to Fri, 9am - 8pm



### Drop in

Nationwide to Citizens Information Centres

## Citizens **Information**

The Citizens Information Board provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), the Citizens Information Phone Service and the network of Citizens Information Services. It is responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities, the Sign Language Interpreting Service and the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters.

### Citizens Information Board

Ground Floor, George's Quay House  
43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2, D02 VK65

**telephone:** 0818 07 9000

**email:** [info@ciboard.ie](mailto:info@ciboard.ie)

**website:** [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie)



Citizens **Information** Board  
*information · advice · advocacy*