



---

# Annual Report 2010

---

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Chairperson’s report .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Background .....	6
1.2	Mission, values and strategic priorities.....	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Citizens Information – the three channels.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Citizens Information Services.....	9
2.2	citizensinformation.ie.....	16
2.3	Citizens Information Phone Service .....	17
<b>3</b>	<b>The Money Advice and Budgeting Service.....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1	The Citizens Information Board and MABS .....	21
3.2	Structure of MABS .....	22
3.3	Service demand and statistics .....	23
3.4	Service delivery and developments .....	25
<b>4</b>	<b>Building an advocacy service.....</b>	<b>28</b>
4.1	New National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities .....	29
<b>5</b>	<b>Supporting information provision.....</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1	Training services.....	30
5.2	Training resources.....	33
5.3	Publications.....	34
5.4	Assist Ireland .....	36
5.5	Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS).....	37
<b>6</b>	<b>Social policy .....</b>	<b>38</b>
6.1	Social policy evidence from CISs.....	38
6.2	Policy submissions in 2010.....	40
<b>7</b>	<b>Organisational supports .....</b>	<b>43</b>
7.1	Information and Communications Technology .....	43
7.2	Human Resources and administration .....	43
7.3	Energy usage in 2010.....	45

## Appendices

<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Customer Service Charter .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>Organisational chart.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>Citizens Information Board Offices .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>Board members .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b>	<b>Financial Statements: Year ended 31/12/10 .....</b>	<b>53</b>
	Board members and other information .....	54
	Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General .....	55
	Statement on Internal Financial Control .....	56
	Statement of Board's Responsibilities .....	58
	Statement of Accounting Policies .....	59
	Income and Expenditure Account.....	62
	Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses .....	63
	Balance Sheet.....	64
	Cash Flow Statement .....	65
	Notes to the Financial Statements.....	66



## 1 Chairperson's report

During 2010, a difficult year for many, and an exceptionally difficult year for those who lost their jobs, the services provided by the Citizens Information Board (CIB) helped a very large number of people – more than 4.5 million people visited our websites, the Citizens Information Service and the Citizens Information Phone Service answered over a million queries and over 25,000 people got help with problem debt from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

Our priority is to respond to the needs of the public. In the current challenging economic circumstances it is more important than ever to respond to the real needs of citizens – both to respond effectively to these needs – and to make sure that we are making the best use possible of the resources available. For example, our [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) website was developed in conjunction with MABS with a very small budget and launched in 2010. It has become a major information source for people in mortgage arrears and other difficulties. It was identified as a key portal for information on mortgage debt in the report of the Expert Group on Mortgage Arrears and is now referenced by many mortgage providers in their online and printed material. [Keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) has since been nominated for a World Summit Award as the best e-content example in e-Government from Ireland. It is an example of how an apparently small initiative can, if it meets the real needs of the public, take on a much larger role.

2010 was the first full year of delivering the MABS service under CIB. Demand for the service has increased significantly (new clients to the service increased by 13.4% in 2010) and MABS companies report that new clients are presenting with substantial and increasingly more complex debts. During the year CIB worked with MABS to address the issue of long waiting times for the service. Urgent cases were prioritised and many clients were directed to the helpline and website for initial support with their query. I also welcome the accreditation of the MABS helpline with the Helplines Association Quality Standard. During the year there was increased collaboration between MABS and CISs – including joint projects, cross-referral systems and sharing premises. I would like to acknowledge the work of all the staff involved.

Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service play an increasingly important role as the interface between the citizen and state services, helping vulnerable customers and advocating on behalf of those who are challenged by the complexity of negotiating the system and the delays exacerbated by the increase in demand. I would like to acknowledge the work of the staff and volunteers who deal every

day with difficult and upsetting cases and who do so with dedication and empathy. I would also like to recognise the work of volunteers throughout the network of Citizens Information Services. During the year a new Volunteer Recognition Programme was launched which acknowledges their contribution and dedication – many have given over 20 years of service.

I am particularly glad to welcome the establishment of the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities. In October 2010, the then Minister for Social Protection, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD announced that this new National Advocacy Service would be set up under the Citizens Information Board. The new Service will provide independent, representative advocacy services giving a voice to people with disabilities who are isolated or who are living in residential institutions and who cannot represent themselves. The five regional teams will be managed by Citizens Information Services in Dublin, Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Advocacy team in CIB and of the 46 pilot advocacy projects that have paved the way for this new Service.

I would also like to note the work in 2010 which resulted in very substantial changes to the structure of CIB and how it carries out its work – in particular how it supports its delivery partners. This refocusing of the organisation was carried out specifically to meet the needs of the organisation's customers. These include the ability to respond rapidly to emerging issues, to oversee consistent and high quality services and to ensure that value for money is delivered for both the public and the State. I would like to acknowledge the work of the staff of CIB and their flexibility and co-operation during the restructuring.

I would like to thank two former Ministers, Mary Hanafin and Éamon Ó'Cuív TD, for their support for the organisation and welcome the new Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD. I would also like to express appreciation for the support of the new Secretary General of Department of Social Protection, Niamh O'Donoghue and her staff. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my colleagues on the Board of CIB. Finally, I would also like to thank the Chief Executive, Tony McQuinn.



Sylda Langford  
Chairperson

## Introduction

This report to the Minister for Social Protection details the Citizens Information Board's activities for the calendar year 2010.

### 1.1 Background

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice (including money and budgeting advice) and advocacy services to members of the public on a wide range of public and social services. Since July 2009 the Board has had responsibility for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

The main functions of the Citizens Information Board, as defined in the Comhairle Act 2000, the Citizens Information Act 2007 and the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008 are to:

- Ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services
- Assist and support individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options
- Promote greater accessibility, co-ordination and public awareness of social services
- Support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services
- Support the provision of, or directly provide, advocacy services for people with disabilities
- Support the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

The Citizens Information Board delivers on this remit through direct provision, by supporting a network of delivery partners and by funding targeted projects. We deliver information directly to the public via the web ([citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), microsites, [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie)), periodicals (for example, *Relate*, our monthly journal) and other publications. The Citizens Information Board provides direct funding and core developmental supports to its delivery partners which include:

- The network of Citizens Information Services (CISs)
- The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)
- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
- The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)

## 1.2 Mission, values and strategic priorities

The Citizens Information Board's mission is

"To ensure that individuals have easy access to impartial and independent information, advice and advocacy and budgeting services on a confidential basis so that they can identify their needs and access their entitlements."

To achieve this mission, the Citizens Information Board is guided by the following principles and values:

- Access to information is a basic right of all individuals
- Independent, impartial information assists people to access state services
- Information, advice and advocacy services should be of a high quality and developed in consultation with customers
- Each staff member's contribution is of value to implementing the Citizens Information Board's mission
- There is a commitment to partnership with voluntary and statutory service providers in the provision of information, advice and advocacy services

### Strategic priorities

The Citizens Information Board's commitment is that people will receive independent, reliable information, advice and advocacy wherever they are located in Ireland and in a way that suits their needs. To do this the Citizens Information Board's 2009-2012 Citizens Information Strategic Plan – *Pathways to Services: Putting Citizens at the Centre* sets out five citizen-centred strategic priorities:

#### Strategic Priority 1:

To ensure that we deliver seamless access to information, advice and advocacy services across all delivery channels to meet citizens' needs.

#### Strategic Priority 2:

To ensure that our service users receive consistently high quality services that meet their individual needs and requirements.

#### Strategic Priority 3:

To serve as a pivotal and trusted intermediary between citizens and public services.

#### Strategic Priority 4:

To lead the development of the MABS as a vibrant, responsive and innovative service



**Strategic Priority 5:**

To ensure that we are organised to deliver quality services to our clients, with clear referral pathways between channels while demonstrating value for money





## 2 Citizens Information – the three channels

The Citizens Information Board supports the delivery of information through three channels: online, telephone and face-to-face. The public can access integrated information directly through the Citizens Information website. The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a telephone service and the nationwide network of Citizens Information Services (CISs) provides the face-to-face service. These three channels are key to ensuring that the public have access to information, advice and advocacy services.

### 2.1 Citizens Information Services

The 42 Citizens Information Services (CISs) around the State deliver information on public and social services. All CISs offer a drop-in service where callers can meet information providers face-to-face. Outreach and mobile services also deliver information to citizens who might not otherwise be able to access it. For example, CISs provide outreach service in residential institutions, hospitals, prisons and remote locations.

Each CIS is established as a limited company with a voluntary board of management that includes CIS volunteers, representatives from local community and voluntary organisations and representatives of the statutory sector. Each CIS covers a geographical area, either countywide or part of an urban area, and delivers its services through a number of Citizens Information Centres (CICs) and outreaches. All 42 CISs are supported and funded by the Citizens Information Board.

### Staffing and funding

The total grant allocation to CISs in 2010 was €12,551,175.

In 2010, CISs delivered service from 257 locations nationwide. These locations cover full-time services (55), part-time services (57) and fixed outreach locations (145).

There is a total of 272 paid staff (192.2 whole-time equivalent posts) in Citizens Information Services. Paid staff are listed below as whole-time equivalents with their roles within the CIS.

Development Manager	42
Information Officer	107

Administrator	23
Other	4.2

In addition, 16 Disability Advocates were employed within the Disability Advocacy pilot programme; these posts have now transferred to the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities.

## Volunteers and scheme workers

In 2010, 1,175 volunteers contributed to the work of CISs (113.86 whole-time equivalent posts). There are 190 employment scheme workers employed in the network of CISs. This represents 104.29 whole-time equivalent posts.

The majority of scheme workers involved in CISs are with Community Employment Schemes (164). There are 13 Job Initiative workers, eight Rural Social Scheme workers, one Community and Social Scheme worker and four workers from other schemes.

## Service demand and statistics

- CISs handled 990,626 queries from the public in 2010. This is an increase of 2% over 2009.
- Callers to CISs numbered 666,837. (This is a decrease of 3% over the January to December 2009 period<sup>1</sup>.)
- 72% of callers contacted the Citizens Information Service in person; 27% by telephone and 1% by email.
- Time spent with callers ranged from less than 10 minutes for 51% of callers; 11-20 minutes for 38% of callers; 21-40 minutes for 9% and 41 minutes plus with 2% of callers.
- 60% of callers to CISs were female, 40% male.
- 72% of callers (477,686) disclosed their age. Of these 55% were in the 26-45 age group; 29% in the 46-65 age group; 9% were 66 years or over and 7% were 25 years or under.
- 60% of callers disclosed their nationality. Of these 79% were Irish; 6% Polish; 2% from the U.K. and 12% other (EU and non-EU countries).
- The Social Welfare category accounted for 47% of all queries, 3% higher than the same period in 2009.

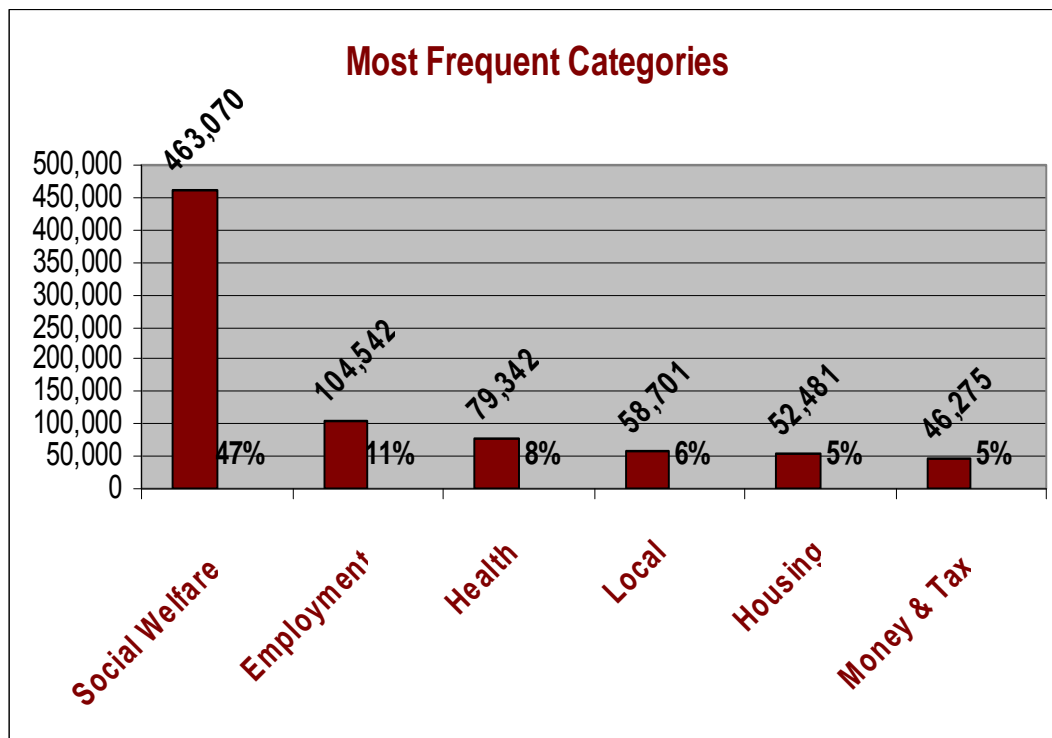
---

<sup>1</sup> The adverse weather conditions at the end of 2010 also resulted in early closure of services and prevented customers from accessing services.

## Query topics

Each query handled by CIS information providers is entered in the Oyster electronic data collection system in a specific category. There are 16 main categories. These mirror the categories on the citizensinformation.ie website, for example Birth, Family and Relationships, Consumer Affairs, Employment, Social Welfare, Education and Training, Money and Tax. Each category has a number of sub-categories. For example, the main category 'Employment' includes sub-categories such as Employment Rights and Conditions, Migrant Workers, Retirement, Equality in Work and Employment and Disability.

Social Welfare is by far the most frequently presented query category and accounts for 47% of all queries handled by CISs. This is followed by Employment Rights (11%), Health (8%), Local Issues (6%), Housing and Money and Tax (both 5%).



## Volunteering in Citizens Information Services

In 2010, 1,175 people volunteered their time and expertise to Citizens Information Services. This equates to 113.86 whole time equivalent posts. While the overall number of volunteers in CISs remained static, many CISs recruited new volunteers during the year. Kilkenny CIS has seen a 30% increase in the number of volunteers following the

completion of training by 14 volunteers in that Service. Meeting the increasingly complex needs of customers requires a high level of training and skills development. CISs provide induction training for volunteers and many volunteers take part in the accredited Information Providers Programme (see also page 27 below). A Volunteer Resource Manual provides support to CISs in building volunteer involvement.

In 2010 the Citizens Information Board worked with representatives of the National Association of CISs (NACIS) to agree an awards system for long-serving volunteers. This Volunteer Recognition Programme was inaugurated in 2010 with an event in Croke Park. Volunteers who had given over 20 years' service received a certificate and a commemorative bowl from the then Minister for Social Protection, Éamon Ó Cuív TD.

Speaking at the event, Mr Tony McQuinn, Chief Executive, Citizens Information Board said: *"Volunteers have played an essential part in the development of Citizens Information Services and continue to be integral to the delivery of this community based service. They bring commitment, life experience and a vast range of skills to their role."*

## **Research report: Volunteering in Citizens Information Services**

In 2009 the Citizens Information Board commissioned research on the role and contribution of volunteers in CISs, focusing primarily on volunteers in day-to-day service delivery. The research was conducted during 2009 by the Centre for Non-Profit Management at Trinity College Dublin. The report found that was a deep commitment on the part of the volunteers and staff of CISs to the provision of a quality information and advice service. There was clear support from the Citizens Information Board for the on-going contribution of volunteers to the local delivery of a citizens' information and advice service and recognition of the value and effectiveness of a mixed volunteer and paid model of service. The report was launched at the volunteer recognition event in Croke Park. A project team with representatives from the National Association of Citizens Information Services and CIB has been formed to review the recommendations of the report and develop a National Strategy on Volunteers in CISs.

## **Service delivery and developments**

**In January** staff from Clondalkin Citizens Information Service attended the President's Forum, Resilience in Tough Times – Civic Society's Response, held in Aras an Uachtarain. The invitation to this event followed a visit by President McAleese to the service in Clondalkin.

**In March** the then Minister of Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin TD launched the new Dungarvan Citizens Information Centre at Scanlon's Yard. She acknowledged the

service that has been given to the public since the centre was established in Dungarvan in 1982 and paid tribute to the ethos of volunteerism and active citizenship.

**In April** the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Emer Costello launched Dublin City North East Citizens Information Service at Killarney Court, Buckingham Street Upper, Dublin 1. This new service serves local residents in the Gardiner St, Sherriff St and Summerhill catchment areas.

**In May** the then Minister for Social Protection, Éamon Ó Cuív TD opened new premises for the Meath Citizens Information Service (CIS) and Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) in 1 Canon Row, Navan.

**In May and November** 156 adult learners from Citizens Information Services around Ireland received FETAC Certificates on completion of the Information Providers Programme (IPP). During the year five Information Provider Programmes (IPP) were delivered in Taught, Distance Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning formats.

**In September** Naas CIC moved to new premises just across the road from its former residence in 10 Basin Street. Also in September the Citizens Information stand had over 500 visitors at the 2010 National and European Ploughing Championship in Athy, Co. Kildare. Queries from the public were wide ranging with topics such as pension entitlements and means testing for farm assist payments proving popular. Numbers attending the Championships this year were up on last year, from 190,000 in 2009 to over 200,000.

During the year CISs worked in collaboration with a variety of organisations. For example:

- **Mayo CIS** made contact with all Transition Year Coordinators in the County highlighting the Resource Pack for transition year students and the availability of CIS personnel to support the delivery of the module within schools.
- **Laois CIS** has become involved in a project with the cancer support centre, Cuisle, which aims to help newly diagnosed cancer patients and their families.
- **Westmeath CIS** is involved in an interagency group which aims to respond to the needs of people living in RAPID areas. This CIS also took the lead role in organising a project aimed at providing support to those who were self-employed and now have no work.
- **Cork CIS** is working with SECAD (South East Cork Area Development Ltd.) on supports required by carers and West Cork CIS participates on the Board of West Cork Carers Support Group and also provided information sessions to members of the group.

- **Tallaght CIS** is updating its community directory. The directory is sponsored by Salesforce, an IT company, and the CIS has been given access to office space and computer support by the South County Dublin Volunteer Centre. **Wicklow CIS** helped launch a Community Directory website during the year.
- **Donegal CIS** are working with the Donegal County Development Board on initiatives for the unemployed and are taking part in a conference called *Making the Future Happen*.
- **Louth CIS** are working with Pobail in Drogheda in the *Combating Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion* Conference. **Louth CIS** also helped compile a “*Living in Louth Information Guide*”
- **Fingal CIS** are involved with the Fingal County Council who are launching a booklet listing all the local service providers who can help the newly unemployed. They are also involved in the new Poverty Profile for Fingal which identifies those at risk and is helping to identify key actions for improvement.

## Joint work with MABS

There were 4,327 referrals of CIS customers to MABS between January and December 2010. This is a 69% increase in such referrals over the same period in 2009. There were MABS representatives on the Boards of 20 CISs in 2010.

Wicklow CIS reported three joint projects with MABS. These initiatives include both MABS and the CIS jointly visiting Shelton Abbey prison; working to set up an outreach for Travellers and working jointly with drug users and their families.

Leitrim CIS has an email referral system in place with its local MABS Company. In addition to project work, CISs collaborate with MABS companies through referral of customers. Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown CIS and Dun Laoghaire MABS share office accommodation and work closely together to provide an integrated service to their clients.

## Other specialist services in CISs

Many CISs offer a range of services to their clients, for example, free legal advice clinics provided by FLAC or local solicitors; financial advice provided by CAVA; taxation; services to immigrants and employment clinics. Some CISs are co-located with other service providers, in particular MABS. Other CISs have clinics for Consumer Advice, the Equality Authority, Office of the Ombudsman and Threshold. The Citizens Information Board also gives financial support to a range of national and voluntary organisations that provide information in specialised areas.

**DeafHear.ie** provides an information service for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)** operates a free and confidential legal advice service in CISs around the country.

**The Integration Centre** operates a range of clinics in the Dublin and Galway areas, several in conjunction with CISs, and receives financial support from the Citizens Information Board.

**The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)** provides specialist support to CISs in relation to immigration.

**Treoir** provides specialist support to CISs on services for unmarried parents and their children.

**Inclusion Ireland** provides a query back-up service to CISs in the area of intellectual disability. It provides copies of Inclusion Ireland publications to CISs – in particular, accessible publications for people with learning difficulties.

## Advocacy in Citizens Information Services

One of the main ways in which the Citizens Information Board supports advocacy services to the general public is through the network of Citizens Information Services, where information providers advocate for their clients in relation to difficulties with access to social welfare, housing, health and employment.

Information providers support their clients to act on their own behalf wherever possible (self-advocacy). They also advocate on behalf of clients – for example, contacting and negotiating with a third party or attending meetings, hearings and appeals.

In 2010, there were 32,051 queries which required advocacy as a response. In general advocacy involves follow-up and on-going work with the caller. This case study is an example of advocacy in action: A client was in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance. He had applied for Disability Allowance but this was disallowed. An information provider assisted with the appeal against the decision. This included writing letters to the client's doctor looking for a report; speaking to the Social Welfare Officer on several occasions; accompanying the client to the appeal hearing; and helping the client with articulating his evidence since he has extreme difficulty speaking in public.

During 2010, the Oyster data collection system was extended to include electronic advocacy case management and a training plan for CIS staff was developed and rolled out.

To support the development of advocacy in CISs and in line with the commitment to improve access to mainstream services for people with disabilities, funding was sanctioned at the end of 2010 to support five Advocacy Support Workers in the CIS network. These Advocacy Support Workers will be responsible for building the advocacy capacity and skills of Information officers in Citizens Information Services for both the general public, and people with disabilities. Advocacy Support Workers will also link with the specialist National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (see page 25) to refer people with disabilities between the mainstream and specialist services. It is expected these posts will be filled by the beginning of the third quarter 2011.

## **2.2 *citizensinformation.ie***

The [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website is designed to provide public service information for Ireland. It provides details on rights and entitlements for the general public and also acts as the primary information source for Information Providers in Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service, as well as providing useful information for officers in the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and other organisations.

In 2010 [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) recorded more than 4.5m users and more than 27m page downloads. In October 2010 work began with the Department of Finance to rebuild [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) on Department of Finance infrastructure. The new website went live in November and is now both quicker and more flexible technically. Work is underway on the development of a version of the website optimised for mobile phones and other handheld devices. [Citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) won the “Most Useful Website” category of the 2010 Irish Web Awards.

Our users had a particular focus on social welfare and health benefits information in 2010. Content development during the year was spread right across the website, and included new information on starting a business, on the civil partnership scheme, on employment rights, on consumer debt, on schemes from the Department of Social Protection, Health Service Executive and FÁS and on visa procedures for emigrants to EEA and non-EEA countries.

During the year CIB continued to syndicate social welfare information from [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) to the website of the Department of Social Protection, [welfare.ie](http://welfare.ie).



## Database of addresses

The Department of Finance is currently examining ways to enhance CIB's database of more than 8,000 public service addresses. In 2010 the "Find a Centre" feature was launched on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) to provide contact and mapping details for each Citizens Information Centre.

## Microsites

[Losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) recorded 57,877 users in 2010 and more than 261,000 page downloads. The [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) initiative was awarded a Taoiseach's Award for Public Service Excellence in February 2010. The Taoiseach's Awards are designed to showcase and celebrate public service projects that make a particular difference to the way the citizen can avail of services. The site was also shortlisted for an Irish eGovernment Award 2010.

[Keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) was developed in conjunction with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) in late 2009 and was launched in early 2010. The site recorded 26,777 users in 2010 and more than 129,000 page downloads. The development and promotion of [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) was one of the key information recommendations in the report of the Expert Group on Mortgage Arrears and the site is now referenced by many mortgage providers in their online and printed material. [Keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) was nominated for a World Summit Award as the best e-content example in e-Government from Ireland.

During 2010, CapGemini undertook their most recent review of European eGovernment on behalf of the European Commission. This report focused on the 'life event' model in online Government services. Ireland was ranked first in Europe and the report singled out both [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) and [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) for particular mention.

## Social networking

During 2010 our twitter feed ([twitter.com/citizensinfo](https://twitter.com/citizensinfo)) continued to grow and passed 1,000 'followers' in March 2011. CIB contributions to bulletin board websites ([boards.ie](http://boards.ie), [askaboutmoney.com](http://askaboutmoney.com)) record an approximate average of 550 views each.

## 2.3 Citizens Information Phone Service

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. This national telephone helpline provides a comprehensive and

confidential information service. The telephone service is provided Monday to Friday from 9am to 9pm on lo-call 1890 777 121<sup>2</sup>.

## Staffing and funding

CIPS receives 100% of its funding from the Citizens Information Board (CIB). CIPS operational grant in 2010 was €1,389,627.

CIPS is staffed by a Manager, two Team Supervisors, twenty Information Officers (six of whom are part-time, 17 whole time equivalent posts), one Senior Administrator and two part-time Administrators.

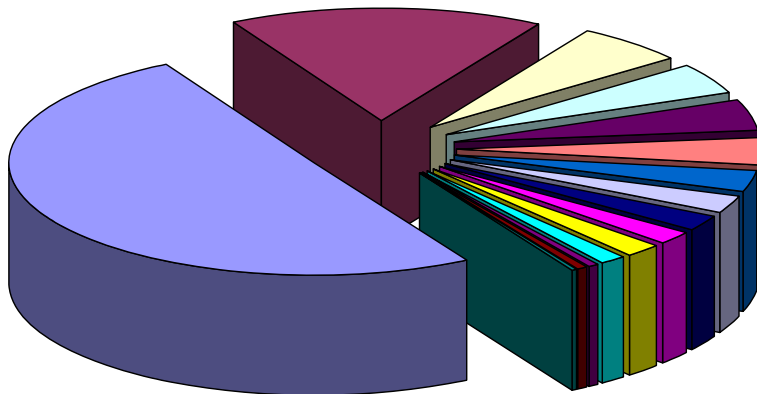
## Service demand and statistics

CIPS responded to a high level of customer calls during the year and reported an increase in complex queries – mirroring feedback from CISs query statistics. In 2010, CIPS responded to 144,513 requests for information and advice from the public, of which 143,793 were telephone queries, 665 emails, 44 text (sms) and 11 Live Advisor (web chat).

The pie-chart below categorises customer enquiries according to the standard call categorisation system used across the Citizens Information network, which reflects the way in which information is organised on the [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website:

---

<sup>2</sup> CIPS also advertises a landline number – (021) 4521600 – in view of the relatively high cost of ‘1890’ numbers to people ringing from mobile telephones.



■ Social Welfare (50.4%)
■ Employment (16.6%)
□ Consumer Affairs (5.8%)
□ Money and Tax (4.6%)
■ Health (4.3%)
□ Housing (3.9%)
■ Justice (3.1%)
□ Education and Training (2.6%)
■ Birth Family & Relationship (2.3%)
■ Local (2.0%)
■ Travel and Recreation (1.8%)
■ Moving Country (1.6%)
■ Death and Bereavement (0.4%)
■ Environment (0.4%)
■ Government in Ireland (0.4%)

## Service delivery and developments

CIPS uses an integrated information system that provides sophisticated call queuing and answering systems and detailed information on overall service activity and performance. This enables the service to carry out systematic quality assurance (QA) by analysing a sample of recorded calls from each Information Officer.

This analysis is used to identify staff training needs and customer care competencies, and subsequently to deliver coaching and training responses.

## Social policy

As a national service with such a large volume of customer calls, CIPS is very well placed to contribute to policy change, by communicating the concerns of its customers about their experiences of services. A brief social policy report is generated each time a CIPS Information Officer identifies an issue that he/she feels should be drawn to the attention of public policy makers and those who have responsibility for the administration of services. CIPS submitted 105 Social Policy returns to CIB in 2010 (see Chapter 6).

## Live advisor redevelopment



The Live Advisor ‘web-chat’ service aimed at people with hearing and speech difficulties was redeveloped in late November 2009. A targeted promotional campaign has been developed for the re-launch of Live Advisor in early 2011 and it is anticipated that the number of Live Advisor interactions will increase substantially during 2011 from the very low level of 11 interactions during 2010, when this facility was effectively dormant, awaiting redevelopment.

## 3 The Money Advice and Budgeting Service

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) was assigned responsibility for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) with effect from 13 July 2009. MABS provides a free, confidential, non-judgemental and independent service countrywide for people with debt problems or over-indebtedness. MABS emphasises practical, budget-based measures to help people with debt difficulties. Its target group is low income families and individuals identified as having problems with debt and money lending. MABS also provides education on budgeting and money management in the local community. Relevant statutory and voluntary agencies play a prominent role in the voluntary management of MABS companies locally.

Demand for the service provided by MABS has increased significantly (new clients to the service increased by 13.4% in 2010) and MABS companies report that new clients are presenting with substantial and increasingly more complex debts. MABS has also been working intensively on policy initiatives related to debt management, tackling mortgage debt and arrears.

### 3.1 The Citizens Information Board and MABS

Under Part 4 of the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008, the Citizens Information Board is responsible for:

- Providing national leadership and direction for MABS and securing its future development
- Securing and consolidating the continued involvement of the voluntary and community sector in the provision of a MABS service which is responsive to the needs of local communities
- Providing for sound corporate governance, customer service and financial accountability across the organisational structure of MABS
- Enhancing policy development and strategic planning for MABS as a key publicly funded service for people on low incomes who seek assistance in managing debt problems
- Ensuring that services are provided, in particular, for people on low incomes who are, or who are at risk of becoming, over indebted and socially excluded
- Promoting and developing education in respect of money management

The Citizens Information Board worked closely with MABS companies during the year, building relationships locally and supporting companies with a range of issues. Under the Citizens Information Board's strategic plan *Pathways to Services 2009-2012* there is a commitment to gathering detailed information on the structures and policies in each of the MABS companies. As part of this process, a project was undertaken to gather basic information in areas including governance, financial management, human resources policies and procedures, and organisational and premises management across the network. A detailed analysis of this information began in late 2010.

### **3.2 Structure of MABS**

The MABS service is delivered in three ways:

- On its website ([mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie))
- Via the MABS Helpline (1890 283 438)
- Face-to-face with trained Money Advisers in offices nationwide

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is made up of a network of 53 companies (which include 51 local companies and 2 national companies, MABSndI and National Traveller MABS). Many of the local companies also offer outreach services to clients who cannot access the main offices easily.

Each MABS service is run by a company limited by guarantee. Each company is an independent legal entity with a board of directors drawn from local voluntary and statutory services and community groups. MABS National Development Limited (MABSndI) is a central technical support service which provides support with technical casework, money management education, social policy issues and training to MABS companies. MABSndI also manages the MABS national telephone helpline and website and the MABSIS client information system and responds to media queries on money and debt management. National Traveller MABS was established in 2005 following a pilot project. It advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalised groups) to help them access legal and affordable savings and credit.

### **Staffing and funding**

The total budget provision for MABS in 2010 was €18,222,634. In 2010, CIB introduced a new financial reporting system to MABS. Training was provided for all 53 MABS companies and financial reporting under the new system started at the end of June 2010.

At the end of 2010 MABS companies employed 277 people (in 235 whole-time equivalent posts). Staff roles include Money Advice Co-ordinator, Money Advisers and Administrators. The figure for total staff includes the 19 temporary Money Adviser posts

which were sanctioned in August 2009. These posts were approved for a 2-year period and contract terms will expire between September and December 2011.

### 3.3 Service demand and statistics

Statistics are provided under four main headings:

- Active clients – on the last day of the month/quarter
- New clients – cumulative to date for the year
- Helpline clients – cumulative to date for the year
- Information only<sup>3</sup> clients – cumulative to date for the year

The total number of new clients seen by MABS up to the end of December 2010 was 21,653, an increase of 13.4% on the figure for 2009.

Year	New clients	Increase
2006	11,630	
2007	12,433	6.9%
2008	16,600	33.5%
2009	19,094	15%
2010	21,653	13.4%

The total number of clients seeking information only from MABS in 2010 was 3,621 which is a decrease of 6.4% on the number for 2009. However, the number of Information Only clients in 2009 was exceptionally high at 3,868 which was an increase of 58% on 2008.

Year	Information Requests	Increase/Decrease
2006	2,874	
2007	2,673	-7%
2008	2,441	-8.7%
2009	3,868	58%
2010	3,621	- 6.4%

Year	Active Clients	Increase/Decrease
------	----------------	-------------------

<sup>3</sup> MABS clients are divided into three categories:

- Special Account - a bill paying/saving facility operated through MABS in partnership with credit unions.
- Budget Negotiable - MABS cases that require negotiation, but not the use of Special Account.
- Information only - MABS cases that do not require negotiation or the use of Special Account.

2006	14,707	
2007	19,178	30%
2008	25,269	32%
2009	30,598	21%
2010	24,755	- 19%

In April 2010 internal processes identified a problem in the statistical reporting system (known as MABSIS) used by the nationwide network of MABS offices to record numbers of active MABS clients. Following identification of the issue and ongoing work across the MABS companies in closing off individual cases, there was a significant revision and correction downwards of the Active Client numbers from April 2010. Following this issue an independent audit of the MABSIS system was carried out and it was found to be robust.

## Coping with demand

MABS has operated a lo-call national helpline since late 2007 and call volumes have grown considerably since it was established. Over 90% of callers to the Helpline find that their money management and budgeting issues can be resolved with a helpline adviser. The Helpline can also support people who are waiting for a scheduled appointment with a MABS office.

All MABS companies operate an appointment scheduling system for clients. All clients for the face-to-face service are assessed and those with urgent difficulties are prioritised for attention and are dealt with promptly. Less urgent cases may be referred to the MABS Helpline and to the MABS website.

With increased numbers seeking the services of MABS, the length of time people have to wait for an appointment with a Money Adviser has also increased. During 2010, CIB worked with MABS companies to establish the waiting times in each company. MABS companies now forward directly to CIB a quarterly report on the numbers waiting for their appointment and how long they have been waiting. On 31 December, 2010 from first point of contact to first appointment with a money advisor the average national waiting time was **5 weeks**.

During the waiting period, clients are assessed and those in need of immediate help are given a priority appointment. Others are provided with assisted self-help to ensure that they have taken steps to assess their situation. If appropriate these clients are supported to take holding action with their creditors. New initiatives to improve service delivery and reduce waiting times, including a streamlined client assessment procedure, are currently being developed.



All MABS staff receive regular and ongoing training on all aspects of money advice and debt via a structured annual training programme, which addresses, income maximisation, credit and the law, dealing with creditors, education and prevention etc. Based on this programme, work progressed during 2010 to develop a recognised accredited training programme for MABS money advice staff.

### **3.4 Service delivery and developments**

A number of services moved premises in 2010:

- Athlone MABS moved to new shared premises with Athlone CIS, continuing the existing close relationship between both companies.
- Meath MABS completed their move to shared premises with Meath CIS in April.
- The new full-time sub-office for South Galway MABS in Loughrea was officially opened in May.
- Dun Laoghaire MABS completed the planned move to shared premises with Dun Laoghaire CIS in August.

In addition CIB worked closely with other companies who were actively investigating new premises, or who were engaged in changes to existing premises. These include Arklow, Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Dublin 10 & 20, Dundalk, Kerry, North Cork, North Donegal, North Galway, Limerick, South Mayo and Wexford. In all of these engagements, the possibility of joint initiatives with the local CIS or the CIB regionally formed a key part of the initial considerations and planning.

### **Money Counts**

St. John of God Carmona Services and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) launched a new on-line money management training programme for people with intellectual disability in 2010. MoneyCounts ([moneycounts.ie](http://moneycounts.ie)) was devised in response to an identified gap in financial literacy amongst people with intellectual disabilities and other vulnerable groups. MoneyCounts received the St. John of God national award for innovation and best practice in Ireland and was then selected as the overall St. John of God winner worldwide.

### **Helpline accreditation**

Following a rigorous assessment process the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) Helpline became the second helpline in Ireland to be accredited under The Helplines Association (THA) Quality Standard. The THA Quality Standard examines the accessibility and quality of helplines and involves system reviews, quality evidence procedures and a site inspection by a Helpline Association Quality Assessor. The

Helplines Association was set up in 1997 and has more than 500 members across the UK and Ireland.

The MABS helpline 1890 283 438 operates from 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. The helpline is a free, confidential and independent service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

## **CIB/MABS Conference**

The main theme of the conference *MABS - A Responsive Service in a Changing Environment* explored the challenges in providing a high quality service at a time when demand and personal debt continue to rise steadily. The keynote speaker, the Honourable Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness, President of the Law Reform Commission, highlighted the importance of reform in Irish law on debt enforcement.

## **National Traveller MABS**

MABS National Traveller MABS, established in 2005, advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalized groups) empowering them to access legal and affordable savings and credit.

Key work areas in 2010 for National Traveller MABS included work on a major three-year report on *Issues facing Travellers in accessing and using MABS* and other financial services. This is expected to be finalised by mid 2011. Separately, a key piece of research on *Debt and Dying within the Traveller Community* is at final draft stage. The website, [ntmabs.org](http://ntmabs.org) has been updated, making it more accessible. Tharrie Times is now available online along with other NTMABS publications.

## **Publications**

MABS provides a suite of self-help materials for the public, clients and other key agencies. During 2010 MABS produced guides on *Budgeting for Back to School Costs*, *Mortgage Arrears*, *Bankruptcy* and a publication explaining the work of MABS for creditors and debt collection agencies. MABS also produced a spending diary for teenagers in association with North Cork MABS and a Mallow secondary school. MABS's Transition Year money management programme *Get Smart with Your Money* (produced with the National Consumer Association) continued to be available in 2010. EuroWatchers, a home money management programme for adults at basic education, is delivered through the VECs.

As part of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)

MABS produced a calendar/planner which can be used by families to budget and plan their household expenditure over a 15 month period. This will be made available again in 2011. MABS also contributed to research conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions, *Managing Household Debts in the EU* (June 2010).

## Policy and research work

MABSndI made two presentations to the Expert Group on Mortgage Arrears and participated on the Law Reform Commission's Working Group which prepared the Interim Report on Personal Debt Management and Debt Enforcement (May 2010). MABSndI was a participant on the Department of Finance's Steering Group on Financial Inclusion. MABS is also represented on the HSE's Working Group on Elder Abuse. Work has been ongoing with the Irish Banking Federation to implement the IBF/MABS protocol for dealing with clients in debt difficulties and arrears. Similar protocols are being developed with other groups including credit unions and energy providers and MABS personnel meet regularly with personnel in all of the major creditor organisations to address and work to resolve issues relevant to the MABS client group. A range of submissions were made in 2010 response to calls for submissions by relevant bodies.

North Cork MABS produce their 'Costs of School' survey every year, providing insight into the true cost of schooling facing families.

## 4 Building an advocacy service

Over the last ten years CIB has worked to develop advocacy services for the public in general and for people with disabilities in particular. This process has involved a two pronged approach:

- Building advocacy capacity and skills in Citizens Information Services to deliver advocacy to all citizens, most frequently in the employment and social welfare areas.
- Setting up advocacy services for people with disabilities. This involved the development and roll-out of 46 independent pilot projects for people with disabilities between 2005 and 2010.

These 46 projects formed the pilot advocacy programme for people with disabilities, which assisted many people to access their entitlements, obtain a fair hearing, live independently in their communities and make changes in their lives. Round Table Mediation and Training evaluated this programme during 2009. Their evaluation report was completed in February 2010.

They concluded that the pilot projects had developed advocacy services on the ground in a relatively short space of time, built up important partnerships and stakeholder relationships and achieved measurable outcomes for people with disabilities. Their research also pointed to some weaknesses in the structure of the programme which led them to recommend structural change.

The evaluators proposed a newly restructured National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) which would allow for the development of a service with consistent national standards and national promotion. This NAS could engage with more residential institutions and develop a high-standard specialised service for a broader group of vulnerable people with disabilities who cannot self-advocate, while supporting others to use mainstream services.

A seamless service, with ease of referral, which will provide people with the service most suited to their needs, has a number of elements:

- Self-advocacy support, empowering individuals to advocate on their own behalf armed with appropriate, accurate, up-to-date information.



- Mainstream advocacy in the CIS for anyone who needs support in their dealings with public bodies and in reviews, appeals and tribunals, including many people with disabilities.
- Advocacy specifically for people with disabilities who present with more complex cases and for those who are isolated, in residential services, with limited communication and who cannot self-refer.

## **4.1 New National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities**

In October 2010, the then Minister for Social Protection, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD announced that a new National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities would be set up under the Citizens Information Board. The new Service would provide independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities. The Service will be regionally structured; with five regional teams replacing the existing pilot projects which have provided assistance to more than 5,000 people with disabilities over the pilot period. The five regional teams will be managed by Citizens Information Services in Dublin, Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim.

Following the Minister's announcement, CIB moved to recruit five managers for the new service and, through Transfer of Undertakings regulations, recruiting seven senior advocates and twenty eight advocates. Each regional team is made up of a manager, one or two senior advocates, a team of advocates who are located across the region.

### **Speaking up for Advocacy**

*Speaking up for Advocacy* is an occasional newsletter published by the Citizens Information Board. The newsletter discusses advocacy issues and details projects and research relating to advocacy. In 2010 *Speaking up for Advocacy* was issued in June.



## 5 Supporting information provision

The Citizens Information Board provides information directly to the public through its website [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) and the [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) and [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) microsites.

The Citizens Information Board fulfils its mandate to deliver information, advice and advocacy services through its delivery partners: the network of Citizen Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service. The Board's role in the delivery of information is mainly concerned with supporting and providing services to these organisations. These supports include corporate governance, legal and human resources (HR) support, information publications, training and customer service, advocacy and accessibility, and central support on information and communications technology (ICT). In 2010 a MABS transition unit supported MABSndI and the network of MABS offices nationwide.

In particular the Citizens Information Board offers support in relation to organisational development, company law requirements, strategic planning, budget plans, financial reporting, HR management, premises issues and monitoring and evaluation of service delivery. Citizens Information Board provides boards with resource materials and guidelines such as handbooks for employers and staff, and a *Volunteer Resource Pack*.

### 5.1 Training services

The Citizens Information Board provides training services nationwide to Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and other voluntary and statutory bodies to enhance their information-provision capabilities. The Customer Service and Training team focuses on establishing standards in training design, delivery and content while regional training executives within the Citizens Information Board's regions are responsible for the delivery of training nationwide.

#### National Calendar of Training Events

In 2010, the Citizens Information Board delivered 74 courses in over 31 locations throughout the country. More than 1,100 people attended the training events representing Citizens Information Services and other voluntary and statutory organisations.

The National Training Programme consists of five regional training programmes and one central programme delivering training on information, interpersonal skills, legal, and

management and organisational skills. With the introduction of the Fair Deal Nursing Home Support Scheme at the end of 2009, two briefing days were organised early in 2010. New courses on the training calendar for 2010 included Assisting Clients with Legal Queries During the Economic Downturn, Emigration, Developing an Effective Staff Supervision System, Social Welfare Appeals/Advocacy Training Workshop, Introduction to Mediation/Advocacy Training Workshop, Illness Payments – Disability Allowance/Illness Benefit/Invalidity Pension + Work, Training and Educational Options, Interviewing In-Depth for Information Providers, Customer Service Skills for Frontline Staff, Negotiation Skills, Communications Skills in an Information Giving Context

## **Training on Electronic Case Management System**

Following the introduction of the new advocacy case management system to the CISs training for CISs on the new system was provided. Workshops for development managers were held mid-year while training sessions for CIS staff were delivered in late 2010. The training covered the changes to the Oyster Query Recording System and the new Advocacy Infonet (formerly Advocacy Sharepoint Resource) as well as [advocacycase.ie](http://advocacycase.ie) – the new advocacy case management system.

## **Minding Self: Serving Others**

In response to needs of staff a support programme entitled ‘Minding Self; Serving Others’ was developed in 2009. The programme was developed by CIB and aims to help CIS information providers to cope in a more challenging work environment while continuing to deliver a quality service. The programme assists CIS information providers to develop skills in managing themselves and their workload. To date 30 CISs have applied and been approved for the programme. Some development managers have organised an annual programme for their staff.

## **Effective Governance Training for Boards**

In 2010, a joint working group representing CIB and MABSndI organised joint training events for members of boards of CIS and MABS. The purpose of the one-day events was to provide members of boards with increased understanding and awareness of their roles and responsibilities as board members. Two events have been held in Athlone and Dublin in September with 60 participants from CIS and MABS in attendance.

## **Information Providers Programme**

The aim of the Information Providers Programme (IPP) is to equip information providers with the knowledge, skill and attitude to provide free, impartial, confidential and non-judgemental information, advice and advocacy on public and social service queries to the

public with regard to their rights and entitlements. CIB delivers and offers accreditation for Programmes delivered in taught, distance learning and recognition of prior learning formats. A FETAC component certificate is awarded to successful learners who complete assessments in line with the two locally devised modules Information, Advice and Advocacy Practice L32072 and Social and Civil Information L32073. These modules are accredited by FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) at level 6 on the NFQ.

Ceremonies were held in May and November for the presentation of the FETAC Certificates to successful graduates of the Programme. In total 156 learners completed the Programme in 2010. Accreditation serves two important functions by promoting quality assurance for information, advice and advocacy services delivered by Citizens Information Services, Citizens Information Phone Service and community and voluntary organisations and gives official recognition to the competencies of Information Providers

Five additional Information Provider Programmes are currently in delivery. Over 175 learners are expected to graduate from the programme in 2011.

## **FETAC Common Award System Standards Development Group**

CIB are the lead organisation in a Standards Development Group (SDG) under FETAC's Common Awards System who is working towards developing a new full award for the information sector. This involves reviewing and developing the existing FETAC modules for the Information Providers Programme - L32072 Information Advice and Advocacy Practice and L32073 Social and Civil Information.

The terms of reference for the SDG required consulting widely with organisations in the sector including Citizens Information Services, Money Advice and Budgeting Service, the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Irish Wheelchair Association, the Institute of Public Administration, the Northside Community Law Centre and The Carers Association.

## **Advocacy Practice Programme**

The Advocacy Practice Programme, certified by the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), involves learners attending 8 individual training days on different advocacy related topic areas including employment law, equality, social welfare, health and disability, immigration, housing. There is a particular focus on skill development in advocating, negotiating, case work and report writing. To achieve the DIT Continuous Professional Development Certificate with 10 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits, recognised at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), the learners are also required to complete two 3,500 word



assignments relating to their experience of advocacy work. A further programme commenced for 25 learners in Regions 1, 2 & 5 in 2010.

In September 2010 the Board of CIB approved additional funding of €10,000 for training to support the Advocacy Support Programme. This funding was for an additional Advocacy Practice Programme, regional advocacy workshops and the development and delivery of a Management of Advocacy Programme.

## 5.2 Training resources

### Induction Training Programme in the Citizens Information Service

The Training service updated the Induction Training Programme for new staff and volunteers in the Citizens Information Service with accompanying PowerPoint presentations. This training pack has been developed for use by Development Managers at local level to support a structured and consistent induction to the work of the Service. The pack was distributed to all CISs in hard and soft copy.

This pack covers:

- Introduction to the Centre and the work of a volunteer
- CIB and its relationship with the CIS
- Information sources: websites and publications
- Communicating effectively as an Information Provider
- Introduction to social welfare /other relevant 'information' topics.

### Supporting Volunteering

The Citizens Information Board strategy commits it to developing guidelines on the support of volunteering. To highlight the value of volunteers and to promote best practice in relation to the management of volunteers, the Board has produced an information pack *Managing Volunteers: a Good Practice Guide*. This draws on the experience of more than twenty organisations from around the country who contributed to its content, format and development.

### Schools resource pack

A new schools resource pack *Rights and Entitlements for Young People* was launched in May 2010 by the Citizens Information Board (CIB). This is designed to make students aware of their rights and entitlements and shows them how to access information using the internet. The pack was developed as a flexible 8 to 10 week programme aimed at Transition Year students. However, it can also be used for students in Leaving Cert Applied, Leaving Cert Vocational Programme and in less formal settings such as Youth Services.

In 2010 over 1,300 copies of the pack and 3,000 student packs were distributed. Feedback on the pack has been very positive.

## The group insurance scheme

The Citizens Information Board Group Insurance Scheme, established in 1981, offers voluntary organisations a range of insurance cover through its group insurance scheme, underwritten by Allianz Ireland plc. It is a competitive scheme that is customised to suit the needs of its 300+ member organisations. Any voluntary group involved in the provision of social services is eligible to join the scheme.

## Customer Service

The Customer Service Working Group SWG continued to meet throughout 2010. The work of the group included the finalisation of the new Customer Service Charter and Customer Service Action Plan. The Customer Service Comments and Complaints Procedures were updated and made more accessible on the website.

## 5.3 Publications

The Citizens Information Board publishes a wide range of publications and other resources to ensure that the public and information givers have access to accurate, up to date and comprehensive information on rights and entitlements. We also publish advocacy, research and social policy reports highlighting issues of concern to users of social services.

### Wallcharts and leaflets

The three information wallcharts were published early in the year. The *Benefits and Taxes 2010* leaflet and wallchart summarise benefits in 2010 with comprehensive tables of rates and income thresholds. *Entitlements for People with Disabilities 2010* brings together benefits and services for people with disabilities. *Entitlements for Older People 2010* covers pensions and the full range of entitlements for older people.

The Benefits and Taxes leaflet and the three wallcharts are available in Citizens Information Centres. The leaflet and wallcharts are widely distributed to other service providers and information providers for display in public offices.

Two new leaflets were published to accompany the new [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) website and a revised edition of the *Have you lost your job?* leaflet which accompanies the [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) website was published. The School leavers leaflet was also published in May.

## Employment Rights Explained

The 2010 edition of *Employment Rights Explained* brings together information from different government departments and agencies to cover the full range of employment rights including leave from work, privacy at work, health and safety and equality at work. In response to the rise in unemployment and redundancy queries we expanded the sections on dismissal and redundancy to cover new questions on pay cuts, reductions in working hours and the Redundancy Payments Scheme. The 2010 edition also includes a new section summarising the responsibilities of employers.

## Entitlements for people with disabilities

The Citizens Information Board has a particular remit to help people with disabilities identify and understand their needs and options. In 2010 it published a new edition of *Entitlements for People with Disabilities* and a new booklet, *Entitlements for children with disabilities*. This booklet covers the role of public social services as well as the voluntary sector, explains how services are delivered and outlines the roles and function of people on the ground – from public health nurses and occupational therapists to Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) and resource teachers.

Topics covered include health services, payments, tax credits and reliefs, education, working and caring, travel, assistive technologies, housing grants, children's rights, and how to enforce them. There was very substantial demand for this booklet during 2010.

## Relate and EU Supplement

*Relate* is the Citizens Information Board's monthly journal covering legislation and developments in the broad social services and social policy areas. Thirteen issues of *Relate* were published in 2010 – including a special issue on mortgage problems and an extended edition on debt, explaining relevant legal procedures and reviewing recent policy developments.

During the year *Relate* also covered supports for self-employed people; mental health services, PRSI contributions and the Civil Partnership legislation. The *EU Supplement* was published quarterly during the year. It covers significant EU developments in the broad areas of social policy, consumer policy and citizens' rights.

## EU leaflets

A series of eight leaflets which provide comprehensive information about the EU to people living in Ireland were published jointly by the Citizens Information Board and the European Commission Representation in Ireland.

The leaflets explain how the EU works, how decisions are made, your rights as an EU citizen and how these rights can be enforced. They also explain the rights of people who move within the EU and those who move to Ireland.

## Distribution

All Citizens Information Board publications are widely distributed to a range of organisations and individuals as well as the network of Citizens Information Services. These include government departments and statutory agencies, MABS offices, local social welfare offices and health offices, all TDs and Senators, the voluntary and community sector, local area partnerships and other local networks. PDF versions of all publications are available on [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

## 5.4 Assist Ireland

One of the Citizens Information Board's strategic priorities is to enhance the accessibility of information, advice and advocacy services with particular reference to vulnerable groups and those most in need.

The [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) website provides information on assistive technology (aids and appliances) for older people and people with disabilities in Ireland. The website has a large 'Products Directory', containing details of over 7,000 products designed to help people live independently and listing all known Irish suppliers for each product. The 'Products Directory' is constantly changing as new products are added and older information is reviewed in order to keep [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) up-to-date.

[Assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) also has an extensive 'Information Section' that provides general information on assistive technology. This section details the type of assistive technology that is most relevant in a particular context, for example, Assistive Technology in Communication, Education and Employment. This area of [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) was reviewed and updated in 2010 to include details of new developments in Assistive Technology.

The Information section of the website contains over 30 information sheets to help people understand the many different types of equipment available and what to consider when choosing it such as 'Choosing a Shower and Accessories' or 'Choosing Equipment to Get Up and Down Stairs'. These information sheets are very popular with the public and health care professionals.

In 2010 [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) recorded 322,000 unique users to the site and the [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) support service dealt with over 2,000 queries.

## **5.5 Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)**

SLIS was established in April 2007 under the remit of the Citizens Information Board (CIB) to develop high-quality sign language interpreting services between Irish Sign Language (ISL) and spoken English and to promote the provision of interpreting services to the Deaf Community, public and private services and the general public. Since then SLIS has operated a national booking service and an emergency service. SLIS has also supported an accreditation process for interpreters.

Recently the agency has adopted a new strategic plan, which focuses on:

- Promoting and advocating for the right to high quality interpreting services – particularly in relation to the interaction of deaf people with State agencies and services
- Promoting best practice in the field of sign language interpreting
- Advocating quality standards among interpreters and their client organisations
- Introduction of new technologies with the potential to improve the quality of interaction for deaf people

During 2010, in partnership with the Irish Deaf Society and DeafHear, SLIS established a remote interpreting pilot project. The pilot project is paving the way for an internet-based interpreting service where the interpreter uses webcam to interpret between the Deaf client and the service provider. The interpreter works from a dedicated call centre and responds to interpreting requests in real time via the internet. This creates an opportunity to provide parity of access to public and social services for the Deaf community on the same basis as that of the hearing community. This facility is not intended to replace face-to-face interpreting but to complement it and to expand the options of interpretation available to the Deaf community.

During 2010, SLIS facilitated over 1,700 bookings for sign language interpreting. Medical, legal and educational interpreting are most in demand.

## 6 Social policy

The Citizens Information Board's social policy work aims to highlight the concerns of users to those who provide services and in turn encourage improvements and developments in service provision and service delivery.

Policy submissions draw largely on information in cases with social policy implications highlighted by the Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and the pilot Disability Advocacy Projects. By drawing attention to customer service issues, trends and emerging issues, as well as anomalies and gaps in service provision they highlight the extent to which current social policies and services are meeting users' needs.

### 6.1 Social policy evidence from CISs

Citizens Information Services deal with nearly a million queries from the public in a year. A sample of indicative cases that highlight social policy issues and clients' experiences of public services are returned by information staff to the Citizens Information Board's social policy unit. Evidence from these cases is used to highlight social policy issues in submissions to government and other bodies. Over the course of the year issues relating to public and social services, including lack of access to services, gaps in service coverage, information deficits and benefit traps were highlighted. Problems experienced by clients in financial difficulties as a result of the recession are an on-going concern. The chart below shows the categories under which the social policy issues were recorded.

#### Category of Returns 2010 (%)

Social Welfare 61%  
Employment 11%  
Health 7%  
Housing 5%  
Education and Training 3%  
Money and Tax 4%  
Consumer Affairs 2%  
Moving Country 2%  
Other 5%

Overall, some 2,700 cases were documented by CISs and the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS). Issues in relation to social welfare showed the highest number of returns (61%). This category is up 5% on last year, while the employment category, which mainly covers employment rights and conditions, redundancies and enforcement issues,

is down 5% on 2009. Under the Social Welfare category, 22% of these relate to Family and Children – including Child Benefit, One Parent Family Payments and Family Income Supplement (FIS). Thirteen percent (13%) relate to Supplementary Welfare Schemes – including Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement and 13% relate to social welfare payments for unemployed people – Jobseeker’s Allowance and Jobseeker’s Benefit.

Almost a quarter of issues overall related to delays processing applications for benefits or waiting for appeals to be heard. This is an indication of the numbers applying and the strain services were under meeting the increased demand. A further 19% of issues concerned information deficits across a broad spectrum of service delivery where people were not provided with sufficient information at the point of access to a service or had difficulties obtaining details on the progress of their application. Sometimes a lack of awareness by the public about schemes and benefits was the problem. Difficulties contacting departments were also reported. A lack of enforcement of employment rights was manifest in a number of redundancy cases dealt with by CISs.

Issues highlighted are recorded in the Social Policy Quarterly Reports for 2010 on [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie). CIB referenced many of these in submissions to government and in its pre-budget submission. In 2011 CIB intends to build its capacity for social policy work to become a pivotal intermediary. CIB has commissioned a review of its social policy feedback processes, that is, the structures and mechanisms in place for the provision of evidence-based feedback to Government on people’s experience of social services. A core element of the Board’s strategy is learning from client experiences to produce objective, fact-based evidence in order to help public sector bodies. The purpose of the Review is to identify how the data available from CISs, CIPS and other delivery partners can be maximised to provide quality evidence-based policy feedback to Government.

## **Supports for social policy at a local level - Dealing with Debt**

At a seminar on debt, organised by the Bray Area Partnership Information Givers Network and funded by CIB through its Social Policy Grants Scheme, local groups in Bray dealing with debt issues came together to share their experiences. Having looked at the issues facing people in debt, some practical solutions on how to manage debt and how to deal with the courts and money lenders were explored. One of the outcomes of the seminar was the need to create better awareness within the local community of the supports available to people, including MABS, CISs, the Credit Union and free legal advice and counselling services, so that people do not feel they are alone or have to carry their debt burden by themselves.

MABSndI and Waterford MABS in conjunction with CIB has also commenced research into mortgage debt. The main focus of the research is on documenting the difficulties that MABS clients are experiencing in relation to mortgage arrears using a case study approach. The research is also exploring the application of options for the resolution of mortgage debt difficulties to identify best practice to be utilised by money advisers.

## **6.2 Policy submissions in 2010**

A number of policy submissions were made in 2010 drawing on feedback from the national network of Citizens Information Services and CIPS. These submissions highlighted on-going issues with public services and income support schemes experienced by users of these services.

### **Pre-Budget Submission**

This submission drew on the experience of CISOs, CIPS and MABS which clearly reflected the current economic environment and the increasing number of clients who require additional support from the State. Based on experiences of clients using information and advice services and the issues emerging from feedback, the CIB submitted that the welfare support needs of individual citizens need to be met in the short-term while simultaneously developing strong proactive job creation programmes. Concerns identified by the Board to be addressed in the budget included: support for existing jobs; activation measures; skills programmes for the unemployed; greater flexibility in combining welfare payments; rationalisation of welfare to work schemes and better structuring of the training, benefits and income support schemes including simplification of criteria for access to schemes, targeting of unemployed people who are particularly affected under current provisions – self-employed and atypical workers and innovative responses to the problem of indebtedness.

### **Mortgage Interest Supplement Review**

A number of issues raised by Citizens Information Services were communicated in a submission to the Department of Social and Family Affairs' Review Group of the administration of the Mortgage Interest Supplement (MIS) payment which provides temporary relief to those in financial difficulties by covering the interest part of their mortgage payment. The review group included representatives from the Department of Finance, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of the Financial Regulator. Issues raised included assistance being restricted to those who work less than 30 hours a week regardless of their income and people being refused MIS since their income at the time they took out the mortgage would not have been within standard guidelines for the size of the mortgage they took.



## **Submission on Mental Capacity Legislation**

The protection of vulnerable adults requires the enactment of Mental Capacity legislation as well as a range of other measures. The CIB called for the proposed legislation to be introduced and enacted as quickly as possible in keeping with human rights principles and a life-cycle approach to disability. The submission argued for a coherent approach to all protective measures and made suggestions about how other measures can operate in tandem with the implementation of the scheme of guardianship proposed. The CIB has experience of the difficulties faced by people with impaired capacity from its involvement in advocacy work. Most people with disabilities have capacity and are able to manage their affairs and decisions on the same basis as others. However, there are groups who are in need of protection; older adults with diminished capacity who are in residential care or being cared for at home; adults with intellectual disabilities who are in residential care or are being cared for at home and people with mental health difficulties who have episodes of incapacity. The presumption of capacity is an essential component of any rights-based legislative provisions.

## **Safer Better Healthcare**

As part of a national consultation process, a CIB Submission on Draft National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare was made to the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). The national standards are designed to be applicable to all healthcare services, excluding mental health. The CIB Submission emphasises the need for the Standards to aim towards achieving quality of care in community settings as well as in hospitals and to provide for a continuum of provision between hospital and the community. Over 8% of queries to CIS's are health service related which represented nearly 80,000 queries in 2010. The development of National Standards provides an opportunity for health service providers to look at the delivery of integrated health services (hospital and community-based) to vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities and more dependent older people. The Submission highlighted a number of areas including the requirement for distinct standards in the delivery of personal social services and the need for a stronger partnership approach between service users and healthcare providers in delivering quality healthcare.

## **Government Departments: Statements of Strategy 2011-2013**

A recurring theme highlighted in feedback from information, advice and advocacy services on client experiences of public services is an administrative or communication difficulty relating to one or more Government Departments or agencies. The CIB believes that Strategy Statements offer a valuable and timely opportunity to copper-fasten Government policy on developing citizen-centred services in accordance with its Transforming Public Services Programme. The increasing number of people who require additional support from the State puts significant pressure on the income support and social services systems. This Submission dealt primarily with the delivery of public

social services in accordance with the CIB's own remit and focused on the need for an integrated and citizen-centred delivery of these services.

## **Submission on Code of Practice on the Mental Health Act**

In response to the development of a Code of Practice on the Mental Health Act 2001 by the Mental Health Commission, the Citizens Information Board identified two aspects of provision that need to be enshrined in the Code – information and advocacy. Information should be comprehensive and transparent and delivered in a manner that promotes autonomy, while being sensitive to the need to protect privacy. In terms of advocacy, guidance should be provided on how people with mental health difficulties can access independent advocacy. The particular needs of people transferring out of hospital into community and young people transferring from children's services to adult services were identified in the submission.

## **Pathways research**

CIB commissioned research in 2010 which focused on clients' experience of pathways to public services, from the first steps of seeking information about services and entitlements throughout the entire application process. The purpose of the research is to look at how pathways to services operate in practice for their users and to consider how the CIB and its service delivery partners can best assist people to access their rights and entitlements to public and social services. The researchers have carried out in-depth telephone interviews with a sample of clients of CISs to document their specific needs, how public services are responding, what income supports and interventions are available, their experience of pathways to accessing services and navigating their way round and the role of intermediaries in assisting them. The research tracked the progression of these clients to see how they negotiate with public services and what the ultimate outcome is for individual clients. This type of research underpins a commitment within the CIB strategy to develop our approach to learning from client experiences to produce objective, fact-based evidence. The study also includes interviews with key public service provider departments and agencies.



## 7 Organisational supports

### **7.1 Information and Communications Technology**

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) service is responsible for implementing the Citizens Information Board's ICT strategy together with managing and supporting the day-to-day operational needs of the Citizens Information Board, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, Citizens Information Services, the Citizens Information Phone Service and the Sign Language Interpreting Service.

In 2010 we continued to build on our three-year strategy. The focus in year two was the evaluation and consolidation of ICT Infrastructure across our partner networks. This programme of work looked at upgrading the numerous disparate delivery partner independent networks into a larger more centralised and resilient network. The proof of concept pilot, which began in late 2010, has already proved to be very successful in highlighting benefits and areas where significant savings can be made.

This year also saw the development of an electronic workspace where staff could share information, ideas and documents easily. This new portal, which was named Connect, has provided a platform to which we can easily add in functionality over time.

In the area of procurement, CIB continued to avail of a number of ICT Framework agreements brokered through the Department of Finance, which maximise volume discounts for non-commercial public sector bodies. Through these, we have made significant savings in the procurement of PCs, notebook computers and in the delivery of mobile and data services.

### **7.2 Human Resources and administration**

#### **Organisation review**

An organisation review began in December 2009. The purpose of the review was to look at staff structures in the context of the new strategy and the assignment of responsibility for MABS to the Citizens Information Board. A considerable effort was expended in 2010 in negotiating and agreeing the details of the proposed new organisational

structures. A positive engagement between management and unions resulted in an agreed process for the structure and redeployment of staff which came into effect on April 4 2011.

## Training

Five staff members were approved for the refund of fees scheme in 2010 with 26 staff attending one or more short courses.

## Partnership

The Citizens Information Board's Partnership process brings together management, unions and staff to consult and work together on issues that affect the working of the organisation. Partnership aims to foster joint ownership of the Citizens Information Board's objectives and commits all partners to improving the quality and efficiency of services.

The Partnership Steering Group dealt with a number of important issues during the year. A confidential disclosures policy was developed and approved by the group in keeping with the requirements for state bodies under the Department of Finance Code of Practice. The group also provided insightful and useful feedback on a range of other documents and policies developed by management including the Citizens Information Board Action Plan developed under the Croke Park Agreement and the HR Strategy. Partnership continues to allow for a formalised consultation between staff, unions and management and to work on the basis of consensus decision making.

## Official Languages Act

Information on the CIB Irish language scheme is available on both the internet and in the staff resource pack. All content on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) and [losingyourhome.ie](http://losingyourhome.ie) is in Irish. The new microsite, [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie), is also fully bilingual.

An email address, [eolas@ciboard.ie](mailto:eolas@ciboard.ie), is in place for Irish language queries. Irish Language awareness is included in the staff induction checklist. A three-page reference document of useful phrases for CIB staff was produced and made available over the intranet. A reception manual incorporating instructions on handling Irish Language calls has been compiled. Two staff were supported to attend a one week residential Irish course in the Gaeltacht in 2010. The number of staff with an advanced level of proficiency is currently five. The number of calls received through Irish remains very low.

## 7.3 Energy usage in 2010

Under S.I. 542 of 2009, public sector organisations are required to report annually on their energy usage and actions they propose to take to reduce consumption.

### Overview of energy usage in 2010

Heating and lighting of CIB premises accounts for the main energy usage in the organisation. Office equipment usage and in particular ICT equipment also accounts for a proportion of our energy consumption. CIB has already introduced a number of energy efficient initiatives over recent years. These include

- Virtualised computer servers saving energy on usage and cooling costs
- Fitted motion activated lights in our head office.
- Programmed office equipment to revert to sleep-mode during periods of non-usage.
- CIB supports the bike purchase scheme.
- CIB support centralised purchase of commuter tickets.

In 2010, throughout its 15 premises, CIB consumed the following energy

- 360 MWh of Electricity
- 9253 M3 of Gas

### Actions planned for 2011

In 2011 we intend to further improve our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Remove 1 in every 3 fluorescent tubes in our head office (Townsend Street)
- Fit thermostats to our radiators where possible.
- Have an Energy Awareness session for each service team. This will include reminders to staff to switch PCs to power-save mode after a shorter time of non-use, shut down of PCs at night and weekends etc.
- Commit to purchase energy efficient office equipment as far as possible.

## Appendix 1 Customer Service Charter

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 (1890 777 121) and the network of Citizens Information Services. We are responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and provide advocacy services for people with disabilities. We put the citizen at the centre of everything we do and this Charter sets out the principles that underpin our services.

We are committed to...

### 1. Clear, comprehensive and accurate information

**We will provide clear and detailed information about public and social services to help you identify your needs and access your entitlements.**

The public can obtain information face-to-face in Citizens Information Services, on the telephone from the Citizens Information Phone Service and online from the [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website. In addition, the Citizens Information Board provides FETAC-accredited training programmes. Accredited training for information providers helps to ensure quality in information provision. The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) provides money advice and budgeting services to people with problem debt.

### 2. Prompt, courteous and efficient responses

**We will be responsive to your needs and we will deliver our services sensitively and efficiently.**

The Customer Service Action Plan and the Customer Communications and Customer Complaints Procedures set out principles of good communications practice that staff are reminded to adhere to in their dealings with customers – including timeliness of response to written, telephone and other communications. The Citizens Information Board provides extended telephone cover (including lunchtime) so that its switchboard remains open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. The Citizens Information Phone Service provides service from 9am to 9pm.

### 3. Equality and diversity

**We will respect diversity and ensure your right to equal treatment.**

In 2010, the Citizens Information Board worked with other agencies to ensure that information reached a range of customer groups including older people, people with disabilities, lone parents, migrants and migrant workers.

### 4. Choice

**We will plan and deliver our services so you can access them in the way that suits you best.**

Customers can access Citizens Information services in a variety of ways – online, by telephone and face-to-face. The MABS service is delivered in three ways:

- On its website ([mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie))
- Via the MABS Helpline (1890 283 438 9 am-8 pm Monday to Friday)
- Face-to-face with trained Money Advisers in offices nationwide.

The Citizens Information Board also published a range of printed materials in 2010 (see page 30 above).

### 5. Access

**We will ensure that all our services and offices are fully accessible.**

Contact our Access officer, Helen LaHert at the address below or [accessofficer@ciboard.ie](mailto:accessofficer@ciboard.ie).

The Citizens Information Board occupies fully accessible offices in George's Quay House, Townsend Street, Dublin 2. All regional offices and Citizens Information Centres meet service delivery accessibility standards. The Citizens Information website has been designed to be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities using assistive technology software such as screen readers. The [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website complies with the WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, as developed by the World Wide Web Consortium. The corporate website ([citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie)) also meets the guidelines.

### 6. Official languages

**We will provide our services through Irish and/or bilingually where required.**



Information on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) and [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) is available in English and Irish with some documents also available in other languages (French, Polish, and Romanian).

The Citizens Information Board has an Irish Language Scheme in accordance with Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003. The Act aims to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. See also Official Languages Act on page 40 above.

## 7. Consultation and evaluation

**We will consult with you to establish your needs when developing, delivering and evaluating our services.**

Joint working groups consisting of representatives from the Citizens Information Board and Citizens Information Services worked together in 2010 on a range of issues related to the development of the network and the delivery of services on the ground.

## 8. Internal customers

**We will support our staff to ensure that they provide an excellent service to one another and to you.**

The Partnership approach is used within the Citizens Information Board as a forum for consultation and discussion in relation to the Citizens Information Board's business and how it is carried out.

## 9. Co-ordination

**We will work closely with other organisations to deliver citizen-focused public services.**

The Citizens Information Board works closely with its key delivery partners (CISs, CIPS and MABS) and stakeholders across the public and voluntary sector including the Department of Social Protection to deliver citizen-focused public services.

The Citizens Information Board adds value to the provision of information on civil and social services through its integrated approach. This approach involves sourcing and integrating relevant information from a wide range of providers and sources, and making the information available in an independent and impartial manner.



The Citizens Information website, the three-channel strategy of information provision, and the development of the Assist Ireland website and associated telephone helpline are all examples of the integration of information and the publication of this information in accessible forms.

## 10. Appeals

**We will maintain an accessible and transparent appeal and review system where appropriate.**

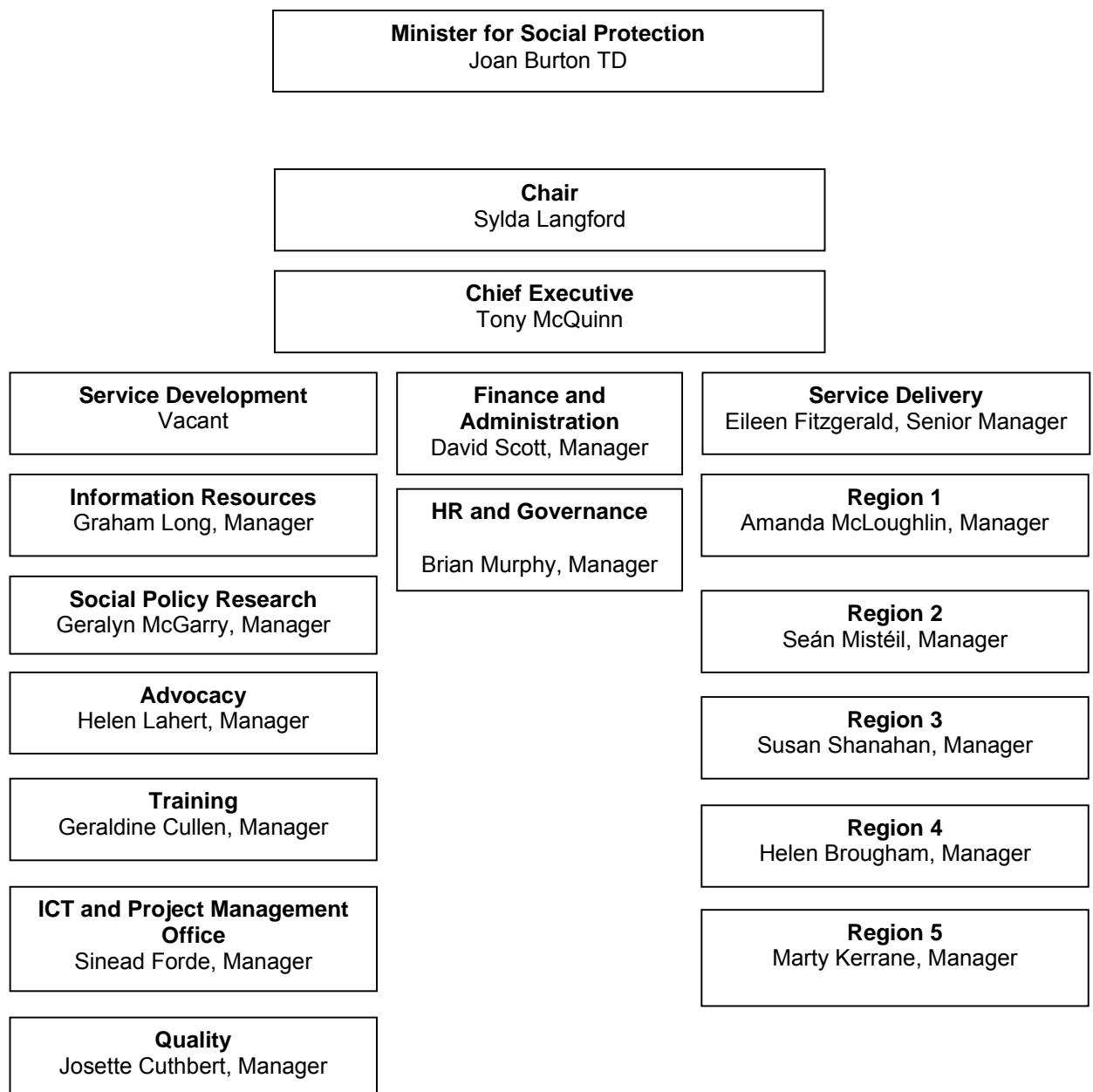
A Customer Service Officer is in place. No complaints were received in 2010.

## 11. Comments and complaints

We want to provide the best service possible to you and welcome all comments on our services. Contact our Customer Services Officer, Shona Bannon at the address below or [commentsandcomplaints@ciboard.ie](mailto:commentsandcomplaints@ciboard.ie)



## Appendix 2 Organisational chart



## Appendix 3 Citizens Information Board Offices

### Head Office

George's Quay House  
43 Townsend Street  
Dublin 2  
Telephone: +353 761 079 000

### Dublin 7

Park House,  
191-193 North Circular Road  
Dublin 7  
Telephone: +353 761 079 580

### Cavan

Elm House, Elm Bank  
Cootehill Road  
Cavan  
Telephone: +353 761 079 540

### Dundalk

4 Adelphi Court, Long Walk  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth  
Telephone: +353 761 075 958

### Tallaght

Hainault House, The Square  
Tallaght  
Dublin 24  
Telephone: +353 761 079 600

### Tullamore

c/o Offaly Citizens Information Service  
Bridge Centre  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly  
Telephone: +353 761 076 295

### Kilkenny

4 The Parade  
Kilkenny  
Telephone: +353 761 079 620

### Waterford

14 Gladstone Street, Waterford  
Telephone: +353 761 079 570

### Limerick

6th Floor, River Court Business Centre  
Cornmarket Square  
Limerick  
Telephone: +353 761 079 530

### Cork

101 North Main Street, Cork  
Telephone: +353 761 079 640

### Castlebar

Mill Lane, Castlebar, Co. Mayo  
Telephone: +353 761 079 500

### Letterkenny

Port Road, Letterkenny  
Co. Donegal  
Telephone: +353 761 079 520

### Galway

4th Floor Dockgate, Merchants Road  
Galway  
Telephone: +353 761 079 660

### Sligo

1st Floor, Harbour View House  
16 Holborn Street  
Sligo  
Telephone: +353 761 079 550

## Appendix 4 Board members

- Daragh O'Connor (appointed September 2007)
- Margaret Zheng (appointed September 2007)
- Laurie Cearr (appointed March 2007)
- Patricia Walsh (appointed March 2007)
- Sylva Langford (appointed March 2010)
- Michael Butler (appointed March 2010)
- Martin Naughton (appointed March 2010)
- Josephine Henry (appointed March 2010)
- Noeline Blackwell (appointed March 2010)
- Pat Fitzpatrick (appointed March 2010)
- Michael McGuane (appointed March 2010)
- John Sheehy (appointed March 2010)
- Sandra Ronayne (appointed March 2010)
- Sean Sweeney (appointed December 2010)
- Eugene McErlean (appointed September 2011)
- Stuart Stamp (appointed March 2010, term ended September 2010)
- Michael Healy-Rae (appointed April 2009, term ended July 2011)

### Audit Committee

- Sylva Langford
- Daragh O'Connor
- Martin Naughton
- Michael Butler
- Noeline Blackwell
- Josephine Henry
- Pat Fitzpatrick

### Finance Committee

- Sylva Langford
- Daragh O'Connor
- Martin Naughton
- Michael Butler
- Noeline Blackwell
- Michael McGuane
- John Sheehy



---

**Appendix 5 Financial Statements: Year ended  
31/12/10**



## ***Board members and other information***

<b>Board members:</b>	Daragh O'Connor Margaret Zheng Laurie Cearr Patricia Walsh Sylda Langford Michael Butler Martin Naughton Josephine Henry Noeline Blackwell Pat Fitzpatrick Michael McGuane John Sheehy Sandra Ronayne Sean Sweeney Eugene McErlean Stuart Stamp  Michael Healy-Rae	(appointed September 2007) (appointed September 2007) (appointed March 2007) (appointed March 2007) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed March 2010) (appointed December 2010) (appointed September 2011) (appointed March 2010, term ended September 2010)  (appointed April 2009, term ended July 2011)
<b>Address:</b>	Georges's Quay House 43 Townsend Street Dublin 2	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Brian Murphy	
<b>Solicitors:</b>	Mason Hayes and Curran South Bank House Barrow Street, Dublin 4  Kilcullen and Associates 183 Lower Rathmines Road Dublin 6	
<b>Bankers:</b>	AIB Bankcentre Branch P.O. Box 1121 Ballsbridge, Dublin 4	
<b>Auditors:</b>	Comptroller and Auditor General Treasury Block Dublin Castle, Dublin 2	



## Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General



Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

### Citizens Information Board

I have audited the financial statements of the Citizens Information Board for the year ended 31 December 2010 under the Comhairle Act 2000. The financial statements, which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein, comprise the Statement of Accounting Policies, the Income and Expenditure Account, the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

#### Responsibilities of the Members of the Board

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, for ensuring that they give a true and fair view of the state of the Board's affairs and of its income and expenditure, and for ensuring the regularity of transactions.

#### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements and report on them in accordance with applicable law.

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation.

My audit is carried out in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and in compliance with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

#### Scope of Audit of the Financial Statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of

- whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances, and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed
- the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made in the preparation of the financial statements, and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I also seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit.

In addition, I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my report.

#### Opinion on the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the financial statements, which have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, give a true and fair view of the state of the Board's affairs at 31 December 2010 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Citizens Information Board. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

#### Matters on which I Report by Exception

I report by exception if

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- my audit noted any material instance where moneys have not been applied for the purposes intended or where the transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them, or
- the information given in the Board's Annual Report for the year for which the financial statements are prepared is not consistent with the financial statements, or
- the Statement on Internal Financial Control does not reflect the Board's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, or
- I find there are other material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I have nothing to report in regard to those matters upon which reporting is by exception.

John Buckley  
Comptroller and Auditor General

15 December 2011

## **Statement on Internal Financial Control**

### **Responsibility for System of Internal Financial Control**

On behalf of the members of the Board of the Citizens Information Board I acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated.

The system can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely period.

### **Key Control Procedures**

The Board has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by

- Clearly defining management responsibilities;
- Establishing formal procedures for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

The Board has established processes to identify and evaluate business risks by:

- Identifying the nature, extent and financial implications of risks facing the Board including the extent and
- categories which it regards as acceptable;
- Assessing the likelihood of identified risks occurring;
- Assessing the Board's ability to manage and mitigate the risks that do occur; and
- Assessing the costs of particular controls relative to the benefit obtained

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- A comprehensive budgeting system with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Board;
- Regular reviews by the Board with periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance
- against forecasts;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance.

The Citizens Information Board has an internal audit function as defined in the Board's Charter for Internal Audit, which operates in accordance with the Framework Code of Best Practice set out in the Code of Practice on the Governance of State Bodies. The work of the internal audit function is informed by analysis of the risk to which the body is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risk and the internal audit plans have been endorsed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board. At least quarterly the Internal Auditor provides the Board with a report of internal audit activity. The report includes the Internal Auditor's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal financial control.



The Board's monitoring of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the Audit Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor, the executive managers within the Citizens Information Board who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the financial control framework, and comments made by the Comptroller and Auditor General in his management letter or other reports.

### Annual Review of Controls

I confirm that for the year ended 31 December 2010 the Board conducted a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial controls.

Signed on behalf of the Board,



.....

Chairperson  
Board of the Citizens Information Board

Date: **02/12/2011**

## **Statement of Board's Responsibilities**

The Comhairle Act 2000, Section 22 (4a), requires the Board of the Citizens Information Board to prepare financial statements in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Social Protection with the consent of the Minister for Finance. In preparing those financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Citizens Information Board will continue in operation; and
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Board confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Board and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 22 of the Act. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

*Josephine Henry* ..... Board Member  
*Michael P. Rutter* ..... Board Member

## **Statement of Accounting Policies**

### **1. Basis of Accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis, except as stated below, under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice. Financial reporting standards recommended by the recognised accounting bodies have been adopted as they become applicable. The unit of currency in which the financial statements are denominated is the Euro.

Part 4 of the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008, amended the Comhairle Act 2000 (as amended by the Citizens Information Act 2007) to extend the functions of the Citizens Information Board to include the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and related responsibilities. These include promoting and developing the MABS, providing information about the service and providing public education about money management. Provision was also made for the Citizens Information Board to compile data, undertake research and provide advice and information to the Minister for Social Protection in relation to the MABS. The assignment of these responsibilities took effect from 13 July 2009.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is delivered through independent companies who operate under an agreement with the Citizens Information Board and the relationship of principal and agent does not apply. Consequently, the assets and liabilities of these companies are not included in the financial statements. The use and disposal of assets funded by the Citizens Information Board are subject to restrictions set out in the agreement. The financial statements include expenditure incurred in funding the companies during the year.

### **2. Accounting Period**

The Financial Statements cover the period 1 January to 31 December 2010.

### **3. Income Recognition**

State grants are accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

### **4. Fixed Assets and Depreciation**

(i) Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, except where a revaluation has taken place. Assets that have been revalued are stated at valuation less accumulated depreciation.



(ii) Fixed assets are depreciated at annual rates estimated to write off the assets over their useful lives. Depreciation is charged at half the annual rate in year of purchase. Depreciation is at the following rates:

Computer Equipment	Straight-line	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %
Office Equipment	Straight-line	20%
Office Furniture	Straight-line	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
Vehicles	Straight-line	25%
Premises	Depreciated according to the Economic life of each property	

(iii) The Board has the policy of revaluing its owned Premises Assets every five years. A valuation on the basis of Economic Use Value at 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 was carried out by an independent firm of property consultants.

(iv) Where an asset has been revalued the depreciation charge is based on the revalued amount and the remaining useful economic life of the asset.

(v) The gain or loss arising on the disposal or retirement of a fixed asset is determined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the carrying amount of the asset and is recognised in the income statement.

## 5. Pensions

A superannuation scheme under Section 15 of the Comhairle Act 2000 is in the course of preparation. At present staff of the Citizens Information Board who were formerly staff of the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB) who retire receive superannuation benefits under the terms of the Local Government Superannuation Scheme; staff who were formerly staff of the National Social Service Board (NSSB) receive benefits under the terms of the Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme; and staff who have been employed by the Citizens Information Board subsequent to its establishment and who retire receive benefits in line with the terms of the Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme.

These schemes are defined benefit pension schemes which are funded annually on a pay as you go basis from monies available to the Board, including monies provided by the Department of Social Protection and from contributions from staff salaries

Pension costs reflect pension benefits earned by employees in the period and are shown net of staff pension contributions which are retained by the Citizens Information Board. An amount corresponding to the pension charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable, and offset by grants received in the year to discharge pension payments.

Actuarial gains or losses arising on scheme liabilities are reflected in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Social Protection.

Pension liabilities represent the present value of future pension payments earned by staff to date. Deferred pension funding represents the corresponding asset to be recovered in future periods from the Department of Social Protection.

## **6. Capital Account**

The Capital Account represents:

- (i) the unamortised value of income used to finance fixed assets; and
- (ii) The unamortised surplus arising on the revaluation of fixed assets.

## **7. Leased Assets**

- (a) Finance Leases

Where an asset was acquired under a finance lease, the capital element of the asset has been included in fixed assets and depreciated over the life of the asset and the outstanding capital element of the leasing obligations was included in creditors. The interest element is written off over the primary period of the lease.

- (b) Operating Leases

Rental payments under operating leases have been dealt with in the income and expenditure account as incurred.

## Income and Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31 December 2010

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>Income</b>			
State Grants	1	44,985,924	28,005,211
Other Income	2	338,973	334,211
Net Deferred Funding for Pensions	19 (c)	1,794,000	1,947,000
		-----	-----
Transfer from Capital Account	18	47,118,897	30,286,422
		336,489	551,529
		-----	-----
		<b>47,455,386</b>	<b>30,837,951</b>
		-----	-----
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Salaries	3	5,645,981	5,786,266
Board Members' Fees and Expenses	4	76,853	59,422
Pension Costs	19 (a)	1,767,000	1,658,000
Administration Costs	5	2,487,409	2,803,602
Regional Services	7	14,804,113	14,668,056
Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)	8	18,223,724	599,014
Information Production	9	40,309	61,162
Information Publications and Social Policy	10	446,827	391,087
Information and Communications Technology	11	825,489	789,485
Advocacy and Support Services (Disability)	12	3,034,799	3,217,963
Customer Service and Training	13	216,102	120,648
		-----	-----
		<b>47,568,606</b>	<b>30,154,705</b>
		=====	=====
(Deficit) / Surplus for the Year		(113,220)	683,246
Surplus at 1 January		913,847	230,601
		-----	-----
Surplus at 31 December		800,627	913,847
		=====	=====

The results for the period relate to continuing operations.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

 ..... Board Member  
 ..... Board Member

## Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses

	Note	€	2010 €	€	2009 €
(Deficit) / Surplus for the Year			(113,220)		683,246
Unrealised Surplus on Revaluation of Land and Buildings					
Actuarial Gain on Pension Liabilities	19 (b), (				
i. Experience Gain / (Loss) on Pension Liabilities		2,092,000		185,000	
ii. Changes in Assumptions underlying Present Values		3,348,000		508,000	
iii. Actuarial Gain / (Loss) on Pension Liabilities			5,440,000		693,000
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding	19 (b), (		(5,440,000)		(693,000)
Total Recognised Gains / (Losses) for the year			<b>(113,220)</b>		<b>683,246</b>

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

 ..... Board Member  
 ..... Board Member

## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2010

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>14</b>	9,023,485 =====	9,359,974 =====
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors and Prepayments	<b>16</b>	571,227	462,071
Bank and Cash on Hand		496,564	774,920
		----- 1,067,791 -----	----- 1,236,991 -----
Current Liabilities			
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due within One Year	<b>17</b>	(267,164) -----	(323,144) -----
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		800,627	913,847
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities Before Pensions</b>		<b>9,824,112</b>	<b>10,273,821</b>
Deferred Pension Funding	<b>19 (c)</b>	19,839,000	23,485,000
Pension Liabilities	<b>19 (d)</b>	(19,839,000)	(23,485,000)
		----- <b>9,824,112</b> =====	----- <b>10,273,821</b> =====
<b>Represented by</b>			
Capital Account	<b>18</b>	9,023,485	9,359,974
Income and Expenditure Account		800,627	913,847
		----- <b>9,824,112</b> =====	----- <b>10,273,821</b> =====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

 ..... Board Member  
 ..... Board Member





## Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2010

Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>Reconciliation of Surplus for the Period to Net Cash From Operating Activities</b>		
Surplus for the year	(113,220)	683,246
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	(336,489)	(551,529)
Depreciation	352,248	588,435
(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors	(109,156)	(36,709)
(Decrease) / Increase in Creditors	(55,980)	(90,790)
	-----	-----
<b>Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities</b>	<b>(262,597)</b>	<b>592,653</b>
	=====	=====
 Cash Flow Statement		
Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities	(262,597)	592,653
Capital Expenditure: Acquisitions	(15,759)	(36,906)
	-----	-----
<b>Increase / (Decrease) in Cash for the Year</b>	<b>(278,356)</b>	<b>555,747</b>
	=====	=====
 Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movement in Net Funds		
Movement in Net Funds for the Year	(278,356)	555,747
Net Funds at 1 January	774,920	219,173
	-----	-----
<b>Net Funds at 31 December</b>	<b>496,564</b>	<b>774,920</b>
	=====	=====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

 ..... Board Member  
 ..... Board Member

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2010

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>1. State Grants</b>			
Grant to Citizens Information Board		44,985,924	28,005,211
		<b>44,985,924</b>	<b>28,005,211</b>
<b>2. Other Income</b>			
The Health Service Executive – Contribution to Integrated Information Services		128,258	126,554
Sales of Information Material		9,281	12,185
Training Fees		4,600	21,290
Premises Rental and Services		2,540	2,540
Reimbursement of Staff Secondments		92,548	121,166
Other Income		101,746	50,476
		<b>338,973</b>	<b>334,211</b>
<b>3. Salaries †</b>			
Management Services		1,120,574	1,165,311
Information and Communication Technology		348,083	359,352
Information Production		422,611	399,501
Information Publications and Social Policy		376,382	552,149
Advocacy and Accessibility		371,785	253,634
Customer Service and Training		383,013	418,999
Regional Services		2,360,939	2,529,101
Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) · Transition Unit		262,594	108,219
		<b>5,645,981</b>	<b>5,786,266</b>

† The average number of staff employed by the Citizens Information Board in the period was 85.6 (2009, 88). In addition 4 staff were seconded to the Board from the Department of Social Protection in 2010. €288,270 was deducted from staff by way of pension levy and was paid over to the Department of Social Protection.

## 4. Board Members' Fees and Chief Executive's Remuneration

	Number of meetings attended*	2010	
		Fees €	Expenses €
Daragh O'Connor	6/6	-	-
Margaret Zheng	6/6	5,985	-
Laurie Cearr	5/6	5,985	-
Patricia Walsh	4/6	5,985	-
Sylda Langford (Chair)	6/6	7,453	-
Michael Butler	5/6	4,968	-
Martin Naughton	6/6	4,968	-
Josephine Henry	6/6	4,968	-
Noeline Blackwell	6/6	-	-
Pat Fitzpatrick	4/6	4,968	603
Michael McGuane	6/6	4,968	1,286
John Sheehy	6/6	4,968	1,858
Sandra Ronayne	4/6	4,968	-
Sean Sweeney	-/-	-	-
Eugene McErlean	-/-	-	-
Stuart Stamp	4/5	3,394	-
Michael Healy-Rae	6/6	5,985	3,543
		<b>69,563</b>	<b>7,290</b>

\* The first meeting of the year was held in April 2010.

The Chief Executive received salary payments of €116,300. No bonus payments were made in the year. The Chief Executive also received an amount of €532.61 in respect of travel and subsistence. The Chief Executive is a member of an unfunded defined benefit public sector scheme and his pension entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements in the public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme.

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>5. Administration Costs</b>			
Accommodation and Establishment	6	1,450,364	1,422,264
Travel and Subsistence		154,360	145,800
Stationery and Office Supplies		47,187	83,368
Postage and Telephone		200,585	210,764
Consultancy and Reports		77,113	126,654
Public Relations		27,500	23,342

# Annual Report 2010

Seminars and Meetings	22,821	22,026
Insurance	75,902	83,107
Board Publications and Miscellaneous	10,457	26,731
Affiliation Fees	18,882	18,043
External Audit Fees	13,630	13,630
Internal Audit Fees	11,320	15,449
Bad Debts	8,285	5,763
Depreciation	352,248	588,435
Interest and Charges	868	609
Other	15,887	17,617
	-----	-----
	<b>2,487,409</b>	<b>2,803,602</b>
	-----	-----
<b>6. Accommodation and Establishment</b>		
Rent and Rates	1,237,731	1,216,069
Light and Heat	76,528	82,624
Maintenance and Security	131,514	119,964
Archiving	4,591	3,607
	-----	-----
	<b>1,450,364</b>	<b>1,422,264</b>
	-----	-----
<b>7. Regional Services</b>		
(i) Citizens Information Grants		
Dublin North and North East Region	3,105,482	3,177,761
Dublin West and Midlands Region	3,338,267	3,235,231
Dublin South and South Eastern Region	2,108,315	2,045,702
Southern and Mid Western Region	2,034,056	2,010,937
West and North Western Region	2,250,056	2,150,002
(ii) Central Support to CISs		
Conferences, Seminars and Meetings	17,725	26,618
Materials, Support and Evaluation	1,520	2,977
Advertising and Promotion	147,136	139,859
Citizens Information Rebranding	-	115
Network Support	63,310	28,353
(iii) Citizens Information Phone Service	1,389,627	1,316,970
(iv) Mobile Units	26,850	32,359
(v) Advocacy Development	37,949	264,430
(vi) Information Development	96,500	97,826
(vii) Integrated Information Services Development	53,218	46,554
(viii) Regional Training Development	97,861	89,477
(ix) Cross Border Projects	-	2,885
(x) Volunteer Recognition Programme	36,241	-
	-----	-----
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>Note</b>		

## 8. Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

(i) MABS Grants		
Dublin North and North East Region	2,679,079	74,287
Dublin West and Midlands Region	3,212,950	99,267
Dublin South and South Eastern Region	3,257,748	107,774
Southern and Mid Western Region	4,845,476	77,056
West and North Western Region	4,099,130	138,226
(ii) Central Support to MABS		
Advertising and Promotion	80,585	99,752
MABS NEC/NMF	12,429	1,200
Establishment costs	-	1,452
MABS National Conference	15,184	-
Network Support	21,143	-
	<b>18,223,724</b>	<b>599,014</b>

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) expended a total amount of €110,000 in 2010 settling a claim brought by a former employee against one of the bodies funded and supported by the CIB. The precise terms of this settlement are subject to a confidential settlement agreement.

## 9. Information Production

Online Information Content	7,260	5,848
Online Information – Translations	20,884	39,195
CIB Website Development	7,311	11,465
Public Relations, Promotion and Advertising	854	654
Database Development	4,000	4,000
	<b>40,309</b>	<b>61,162</b>

## 10. Information Publications and Social Policy

Publication Grants	26,235	19,999
Publications	226,870	195,559
Information Initiatives	29,983	47,295
Miscellaneous	10,069	8,953
Disability and Information Research	52,102	29,273
Research Support	53,955	62,116
Social Policy Grants and Reports	47,613	27,892
	<b>446,827</b>	<b>391,087</b>

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>11. Information and Communication Technology</b>			
Citizens Information Website		54,482	55,928
Citizens Information Services		150,504	50,178
Support and Management Services		620,503	683,379
		825,489	789,485
<b>12. Advocacy and Support Services (Disability)</b>			
Grant Support for Community & Voluntary Sector		2,087,938	2,642,790
National Advocacy Service*		504,347	
Sign Language Interpreting Service		283,197	288,355
Consultancy, Research and Development		82,994	188,404
Access Service Development & Research		76,323	98,414
		3,034,799	3,217,963

\* The National Advocacy Service (NAS) provides independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities. It is organised and managed on a regional basis by five Citizens Information Services and is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. The new Service has taken over the work of the 46 pilot advocacy projects under the Community & Voluntary Sector Advocacy programme. Arising from the implementation of new staffing structures as a result of the establishment of the NAS there were 8 redundancies, requiring total additional funding of €15,000.

	Note	2010 €	2009 €
<b>13. Customer Service and Training</b>			
Training Resources		36,378	52,391
Training Services		36,706	38,633
Staff Training		29,312	29,624
Advocacy Training		113,706	-
		216,102	120,648

# Annual Report 2010

14. Fixed Assets	Premises		Motor Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Office Furniture	Total
	Owned	Leasehold					
<b>Cost / Revaluation</b>	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Balance at 1 January 2010	6,265,000	3,523,465	171,405	2,045,172	695,297	937,482	13,637,821
Additions	-	-	-	3,187	-	12,572	15,759
Disposals	-	-	-	(11,440)	-	-	(11,440)
<b>Balance at 31 December 2010</b>	<b>6,265,000</b>	<b>3,523,465</b>	<b>171,405</b>	<b>2,036,919</b>	<b>695,297</b>	<b>950,054</b>	<b>13,642,140</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>							
Balance at 1 January 2010	292,183	472,222	162,562	2,029,478	687,706	633,696	4,277,847
Charge for the year	149,321	112,432	2,526	16,226	7,089	64,654	352,248
Disposals during the year	-	-	-	(11,440)	-	-	(11,440)
<b>Balance at 31 December 2010</b>	<b>441,504</b>	<b>584,654</b>	<b>165,088</b>	<b>2,034,264</b>	<b>694,795</b>	<b>698,350</b>	<b>4,618,655</b>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	<b>5,823,496</b>	<b>2,938,811</b>	<b>6,317</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>251,704</b>	<b>9,023,485</b>
Balance at 31 December 2009	5,972,817	3,051,243	8,843	15,694	7,591	303,786	9,359,974

- i. The Board has a policy of revaluing its owned Premises Assets every five years. A valuation was carried out by Lisney, an independent firm of property consultants, at 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 and this resulted in the property being revalued in the books of the Board from €4.461m to €6.265m. The property was valued on an open market basis. The historical cost of the property is €6.779m. The Board are aware of the current developments in the property market and are keeping the matter under review.
- ii. The Board are not aware of any material change in value and their valuations have not been updated.

## 15. Property

### a) Freehold Land and Buildings

The Citizens Information Board owns Land and Buildings at the following locations:

Location	Net Book Value as at 31.12.10 €
Cork	1,119,130
Dublin	4,178,570
Letterkenny	195,444
Sligo	95,977
Tralee	234,375
	<b>5,823,496</b>
	=====

### b) Leasehold Property

The Citizens Information Board leases office space at the following locations:

Location	Expiry Date	Break Clause	Annual Premium €
<b>Head Office - Dublin</b>			
43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2	2032	2013	681,197
<b>Regional Offices</b>			
Castlebar	2012	-	12,348
Cavan – Elm House	2015	-	11,773
Cavan – Magnet House	2028	2013	22,855
Dundalk – Anne Street	2018	-	10,794
Dundalk – Long Walk	2011	2011	3,380
Dundalk – Long Walk	2029	2014	50,400
Galway	2025	2015	39,400
Kilkenny	2050	-	40
Limerick	2011	2011	14,201
Sligo	2011	-	12,500
Tallaght	2019	-	89,495
Waterford	2028	2013	62,500
			<b>1,010,883</b>
			=====



# Annual Report 2010



	Note	2010 €		2009 €
<b>16. Debtors and Prepayments</b>				
Debtors				
Trade Debtors		1,596		43,992
Other Debtors		59,749		34,221
		-----		-----
		61,345		78,213
Prepayments		509,882		383,858
		-----		-----
		<b>571,227</b>		<b>462,071</b>
		=====		=====
<b>17. Creditors and Accruals</b>				
PAYE and PRSI Creditors		126,333		120,784
Trade Creditors		133,950		202,360
Other Creditors		6,881		-
		-----		-----
		<b>267,164</b>		<b>323,144</b>
		=====		=====
<b>18. Capital Account</b>				
		€	€	€
Balance at 1 January			9,359,974	9,911,503
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account: Capital Expenditure in the year	14	15,759		36,906
Released on Disposal of Fixed Assets	14	-		-
Amortisation in line with Asset depreciation	14	(352,248)	(336,489)	(588,435)
		-----		-----
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>			<b>9,023,485</b>	<b>9,359,974</b>
			=====	=====

## 19. Pension Costs

### (a) Analysis of Total Pension Costs Charged to Expenditure

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	€	€
Current Service Cost	948,000	960,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities	1,448,000	1,313,000
Employee Contributions	(629,000)	(615,000)
	-----	-----
	<b>1,767,000</b>	<b>1,658,000</b>
	=====	=====

### (b) Movement in Pension Liability during the financial year

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	€	€
Pension Liability at 1 January	23,485,000	22,234,000
Current Service Cost	948,000	960,000
Other Finance Income (Interest Costs)	1,448,000	1,313,000
Actuarial (Gain) / Loss	(5,440,000)	(693,000)
Pensions Paid in the Year	(602,000)	(329,000)
	-----	-----
<b>Pension Liability at 31 December</b>	<b>19,839,000</b>	<b>23,485,000</b>
	=====	=====

### (c) Deferred Funding Asset for Pensions

The Board recognises these amounts as an asset corresponding to the unfunded deferred liability for pensions on the basis of the set of assumptions described above and a number of past events. These events include the statutory basis for the establishment of the superannuation schemes, and the policy and practice currently in place in relation to funding public service pensions including contributions by employees and the annual estimates process. The Board has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet such sums in accordance with current practice. The deferred funding asset for pensions as at 31 December 2010 amounted to €19.839m (2009, €23.485m).

#### Net Deferred Funding for Pensions in year

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	€	€
Funding Recoverable in Respect of Current Year Pension Costs	2,396,000	2,273,000
State Grant Applied to Pay Pensioners	(602,000)	(326,000)
	-----	-----
	<b>1,794,000</b>	<b>1,947,000</b>
	=====	=====

(d) The Citizens Information Board operates a defined benefit superannuation scheme for staff. The results set out below are based on an actuarial valuation of the liabilities in respect of the Citizens Information Board staff as at 31 December 2010. This valuation was carried out by an independent actuary using the projected unit method.

The financial assumptions used to calculate scheme liabilities for the purpose of the FRS 17 were as follows:

Assumption	2010	2009
Discount rate	5.50%	6.00%
Salary increase assumption	Nil	3.50%
Pension increase assumption	Nil	3.50%
Price inflation	2.00%	2.00%
Member age 65 (male current life expectancy)*	22.8 years	21.6 years
Member age 65 (female current life expectancy)*	24.5 years	24.7 years
Member age 40 (male life expectancy at age 65)*	25.1 years	22.7 years
Member age 40 (female life expectancy at age 65)*	27.0 years	25.8 years

\* Life expectancy from age 65 for members retiring in either 2030 or 2050 are as for 2010.

On the basis of these assumptions, and using the projected unit method prescribed in FRS 17, the value of the accrued liabilities in respect of Citizens Information Board staff at 31 December 2010 was estimated at €19.839m (compared with €23.485m as at 31 December 2009).

## (e) History of experience gains and losses

	2010	2009
Experience Gains / Losses on Scheme Liabilities	€	€
Amount	2,092,000	185,000
Percentage of the Present Value of Scheme Liabilities	10.5%	0.79%
Total Amount Recognised in Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses		
Amount	5,440,000	693,000
Percentage of the Present Value of Scheme Liabilities	27.2%	0.3%
Cumulative Actuarial Gain / Loss	4,503,000	(937,000)

\*\* 2009 comparatives have been re-analysed.

## 20. Commitments

### (a) The Operating Lease

The Board had leasing commitments payable in the next twelve months and under the leasehold interest of premises as follows:

	2010 €	2009 €
Lease of Office Accommodation		
Expiring after one year and before five years	54,202	39,325
Expiring after 5 years	956,681	1,00,188
	-----	-----
	<b>1,010,883</b>	<b>1,039,513</b>
	=====	=====

### (b) Grant Funding

The Board had funding commitments under its grant funding schemes as follows:

	2010 €	2009 €
Grant Support for Community & Voluntary Sector Advc	42,309	2,283,250
	-----	-----
	<b>42,309</b>	<b>2,283,250</b>
	=====	=====

## 21. Approval of Financial Statements

The Board of the Citizens Information Board approved these Financial Statements on

Date: **02/12/2011**