



# Annual Report 2024



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

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



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# 2024 in Numbers

## citizensinformation.ie website



**10,083,881**

users visited  
citizensinformation.ie\*



**33,755,795**

page views



At the end of 2024,  
citizensinformation.ie held

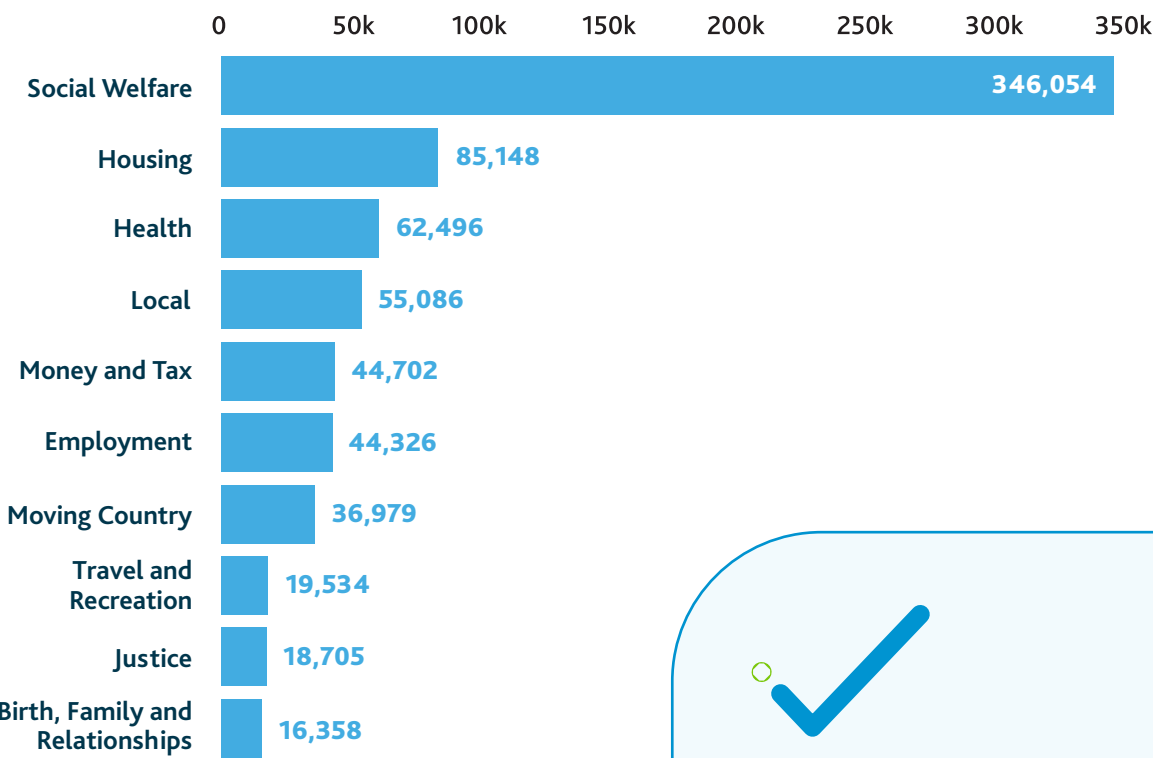
**1,431**

content pages

\* citizensinformation.ie website statistics are gathered using Google Analytics (GA4) and only capture users who accepted cookies when browsing the website.

# Citizens Information Service (CIS)

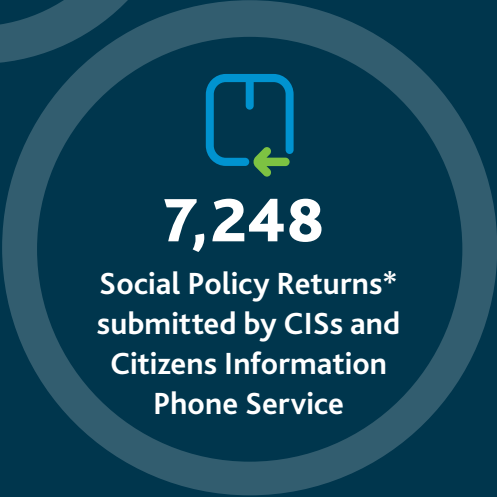
Top 10 CIS Query Categories in 2024



767,168

Queries answered by  
Citizens Information Service

# People Helped by Citizens Information Service



\*When an Information Officer feels that a client is experiencing a particular difficulty in trying to access social or public services, they submit an anonymised short narrative on the issue to Citizens Information Board. This is referred to as a Social Policy Return.

## Citizens Information Service Advocacy



**4,322**

New Short-Term  
Advocacy Cases



**672**

Advocacy cases  
were open as of  
31 December 2024



**1,517**

New Long-Term  
Advocacy Cases

## Citizens Information Phone Service



The Citizens Information  
Phone Service (CIPS) answered

**128,059**  
calls



**1,926**

CIPS webchats  
answered

## Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)



**16,556**

New MABS Clients



Dedicated Mortgage Arrears  
(DMA) Support:

**2,083**

new borrowers received  
assistance from a  
DMA Adviser.



**23,525**

MABS Helpline Calls



**2,846**

applications were received  
from the public for energy  
hardship funding

## National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS)



3,166

new NAS initial queries



884

new NAS empowerment cases



375

new NAS representative cases

All contacts to NAS begin as an initial enquiry. A certain amount of these will progress to an Empowerment case and of these a sub set will need representation by an Advocate and progress to a Representative case.

## Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)



10,217

appointments provided by SLIS's Irish Remote Interpreting Service



432

people availed of the Irish Sign Language Voucher Scheme

## Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters



119

Irish Sign Language interpreters registered at the end of 2024

# Chair Introduction

Catherine Heaney,  
Chair



I am pleased to present the Citizens Information Board's Annual Report for 2024. This year marked the first full year of implementation of our 2023–2026 strategy, during which we made significant progress in strengthening governance and oversight, developing meaningful impact metrics, and advancing our new Digital Strategy. It is heartening to see our strategic vision taking shape and beginning to positively influence the services we provide.





## The Board and its committees met an impressive 37 times, providing essential oversight and strategic direction.

One distinguishing feature of high-performing boards is to continually review strategy against the external environment. Before my appointment as Chair, I addressed the Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, highlighting the critical role of CIB as a trusted source of information in an era increasingly shaped by misinformation and disinformation.

While these concerns were already evident in 2021, they have only intensified. Today, organisations like CIB must remain agile and vigilant to ensure that information gaps do not emerge. The urgency of this challenge is underscored by a 2024 Reuters report, which found that 71% of respondents are concerned about distinguishing real from false content online. The rise of generative AI, evolving platform algorithms, and shifts in public discourse are all contributing to a broader erosion of trust.

In response, the Board has identified misinformation and disinformation as a key strategic priority. We welcome the

commitment in the new Programme for Government to counter disinformation through regulation and support for trusted information sources. This is further reinforced by the recently launched National Counter Disinformation Strategy. In 2024, citizensinformation.ie recorded over 10 million unique users—clear evidence of its enduring relevance and trustworthiness.

While we continue to champion access to reliable information, we are also acutely aware of the economic uncertainty facing many in 2025. The Citizens Information Services and MABS companies remain steadfast in their role as a vital safety net for individuals and families across Ireland.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and insight throughout the year. The Board and its committees met an impressive 37 times, providing essential oversight and strategic direction. I would especially like to acknowledge Mary Doyle for her valuable contributions during her term,

which concluded in April 2024, and to warmly welcome Orlagh Nevin and Patrick Gibbons, who joined the Board in April and June respectively. We are also fortunate to benefit from the expertise of external committee members, whose contributions I deeply appreciate.

I would like to extend our gratitude to Heather Humphreys for her steadfast support of CIB and our funded services during her tenure as Minister for Social Protection. We wish her every success in the future. I also warmly welcome Dara Calleary TD as the new Minister and look forward to working closely with him. My thanks also go to the Department of Social Protection officials, whose support was instrumental in navigating complex industrial relations matters during the year.

At the close of 2024, approximately 170 directors served on the boards of CIB-funded companies. Volunteerism has always been central to our service model, and I

want to take this opportunity to formally recognise the invaluable contributions of these volunteer directors. Alongside the continued efforts of staff, volunteer service providers and scheme workers, their generous giving of their time, energy and expertise allowed the network to assist many hundreds of thousands of people last year.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Citizens Information Board. Their enthusiasm for our strategy and their dedication to delivering new initiatives have been truly commendable. I wish our new Chief Executive, Graham Long, every success in the years ahead. With the right foundations in place, I am confident that CIB is well-positioned to thrive.



**Catherine Heaney,**  
Chair

**Alongside the continued efforts of staff, volunteer service providers and scheme workers, their generous giving of their time, energy and expertise allowed the network to assist many hundreds of thousands of people last year.**

# CEO Foreword

Graham Long,  
Chief Executive  
Designate



This Annual Report offers the clearest evidence yet that the Citizens Information Board is delivering on its strategy and advancing our shared vision: an Ireland where everyone has seamless access to trusted, independent information, advice, and advocacy. While 2024 brought its share of challenges—particularly in engaging on industrial relations—the progress made on key strategic initiatives is both tangible and impactful.

One standout example is the development of our new Digital Strategy. This initiative has been shaped by the collective input of our entire network of funded companies and nearly one thousand members of the public. It is designed to empower the workforce, enhance face-to-face services, and harness CIB's access to data to generate insights that benefit both our operations and wider society.

Our Compliance and Reporting Division has expanded its monitoring and analytical capabilities, while the Standards and Development Division has worked closely with the Service Delivery Companies to begin to measure the significant impact of our work across more than 200 locations nationwide. At the same time, we continue to strengthen our ICT infrastructure, including the rollout of next-generation software across our three call centres—CIPS, MABS, and NAS—as well as supporting over one thousand staff and volunteers.

As we enter the final year of our 2023–2026 corporate strategy, our focus is shifting toward the next strategic phase—one that will centre firmly on service delivery. This is an exciting and pivotal moment for the organisation, as we look at the service delivery models and resources that will make our services available and sustainable into the future. Most importantly, it provides the frame to continue to keep clients as the core focus of all our work.

In 2025, following a period in the acting role, I was honoured to be appointed Chief Executive of the Citizens Information Board. I would like to sincerely thank the staff of CIB and all those involved in the Service Delivery Companies for their dedication and support throughout 2024. I am grateful to the Department of Social Protection for their invaluable assistance over the past year. Finally, I wish to thank the Board of CIB for the trust they have placed in me. With the Board's support, I look forward to leading the organisation through the next chapter.



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**Graham Long,**  
Chief Executive Designate

**Our focus is shifting  
toward the next  
strategic phase—  
one that will  
centre firmly on  
service delivery.**

# About Citizens Information Board

## Who We Are

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) supports the provision of information, advice, money advice and advocacy services for the public. Established under the Comhairle Act 2000, CIB comes within the remit of the Department of Social Protection. CIB's legislative mandate includes ensuring that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services and providing feedback on social policy.

CIB provides a number of services directly to the public, including [citizensinformation.ie](https://citizensinformation.ie) and [mabs.ie](https://mabs.ie). Other services are provided to the public by the companies funded by CIB, known as Service Delivery Companies.

### CIB funds twenty-two Service Delivery Companies:

- Eight regional Citizens Information Services (CIS) : Dublin South CIS, North Dublin CIS, South Leinster CIS, North Leinster CIS, North Connacht & Ulster CIS, South Connacht CIS, North Munster CIS, South Munster CIS.
- Eight regional Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) : North Dublin MABS, Dublin South MABS, South Leinster MABS, North Leinster MABS, North Connacht & Ulster MABS, South Connacht MABS, North Munster MABS, South Munster MABS.
- National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS)
- Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)
- MABS Support
- National Traveller MABS (NT MABS)
- Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)
- Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI)

CIB provides oversight and infrastructure for the Service Delivery Companies, including Information and Communication Technology support. In turn, the Service Delivery Companies provide frontline services, and it is their interaction with members of the public that sees CIB's legislative mandate come to life.



## Our Vision



An Ireland where everyone has seamless access to a trusted, independent source of information, advice and advocacy.

## Our Mission



To enable the delivery of quality information, advice and advocacy services to the public, based on a foundation of strong governance, systems and standards.

## Our Values



### Availability

We will support service development and delivery so that trusted information, advice and advocacy is available to the public in formats that meet their needs. In doing so, we will be strongly guided by our Public Sector Duty requirements, ensuring that those who need most support are prioritised.

We will collaborate with the Department of Social Protection, the Service Delivery Companies, users and other organisations to design accessible, seamless services.



### Sustainability

We will consider sustainability in all of our decision making and in our ways of working, ensuring that CIB-funded services are resilient and fit-for-purpose in the long-term.

Sustainability will be considered in respect of our workplace, the environment, funding, and, crucially, in how services are delivered to the public.



### Accountability

We will operate strong systems of governance and oversight to drive performance. We will use public funds prudently to deliver positive outcomes for the public.

We will work with the Department of Social Protection, the Service Delivery Companies and other organisations to ensure that trusted information, advice and advocacy is available to the public in a timely and accessible way.

## Board Members

Citizens Information Board members are appointed by the Minister for Social Protection. Members' terms are for a period of five years. The recruitment process for Board members is overseen by [stateboards.ie](https://stateboards.ie)



**Catherine Heaney, Chair**  
Appointed 7 July 2021



**Teresa Blake**  
Appointed 11 December 2020



**Claire Byrne**  
Appointed 14 September 2022



**Mary P Corcoran**  
Appointed 12 October 2023



**Catriona Curtis**  
Appointed 12 October 2023



**Mary Dorgan**  
Appointed 12 October 2023



**Patrick Gibbons**  
Appointed 17 June 2024



**Sarah Harte**  
Appointed 14 September 2022



**Stephen Lycett**  
Appointed 3 April 2023



**Orlagh Nevin**  
Appointed 29 April 2024



**Brid O'Donovan**  
Appointed 14 September 2022



**Ian Power**  
Appointed 15 June 2016



**Seán Sheridan**  
Appointed 17 November 2015



**Seamus Smith**  
Appointed 14 September 2022



**Fiona Ward**  
Appointed 12 October 2023



# Organisation Chart



**Chair**  
Catherine Heaney



**Chief Executive Designate**  
Graham Long



**Head of Division,  
Corporate Services**  
(Acting) Caroline Mitchell

**Corporate Services Manager**  
(Acting) Stephanie Coleman

**Finance Manager**  
Gary Watters

**Currently Vacant**  
HR & Governance Manager

**David Gilmartin**  
Data Protection Officer



**Head of Division  
Standards & Development**  
Rachel Downes

**eLearning Manager**  
Enda Connolly

**Standards &  
Development Manager**  
Mary Lyne

**Advocacy Standards &  
Development Manager**  
Susan Shanahan



**Head of Division  
Compliance & Reporting**  
Carmel Beirne

**Operational Compliance &  
Reporting Manager**  
Claire Kellegher

**Financial Compliance &  
Reporting Manager**  
James McColgan

**Communications Manager**  
**Abhaile/ MABS**  
Bobby Barbour



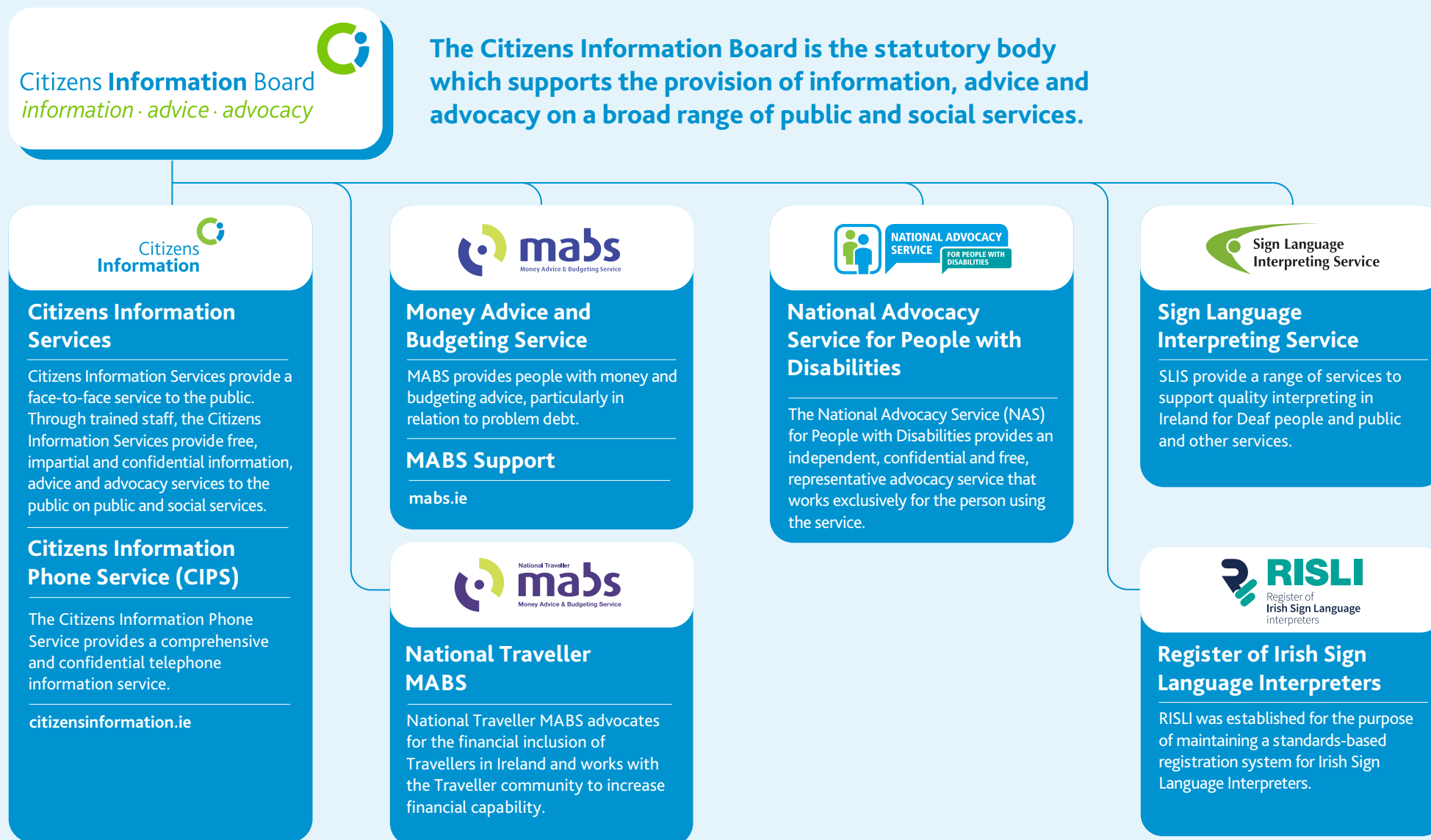
**Head of Division  
ICT Digital & Data**  
Elsa Flanagan

**Digital Content Manager**  
Cathy Gerrard

**Data & Research Manager**  
Rose Morris

**ICT Manager**  
David Dunne

# CIB Structure Chart



# CIB's strategy

The Citizens Information Board's (CIB) staff members, supported by the Board of CIB, are at the core of ensuring the successful achievement of the CIB strategy. In turn, the support of the Board members, staff and volunteers of the Service Delivery Companies is essential to the successful delivery of the initiatives in this strategy.



## Strategic Objective 1:

# Service Accessibility and Delivery

**Increase accessibility of Citizens Information Board services for everyone.**

Objective one of the strategy aims to adapt service channels to expand access and meet the needs of service users. Initiatives under this objective include developing data insights, continuing to improve the accessibility and functionality of [citizensinformation.ie](https://citizensinformation.ie), and supporting and promoting face-to-face services.



# citizensinformation.ie

The citizensinformation.ie website is provided directly by the Citizens Information Board and consists of more than 1,400 pages covering the full range of public and social services. Arranged in 15 categories, the website aims to be accessible to the widest possible audience and integrates information from sources across the public sector.

## Website Traffic

In 2024, the Citizens Information website saw 10,083,881 users and 33,755,796 page views. The number of page views increased by 18% over the previous year.

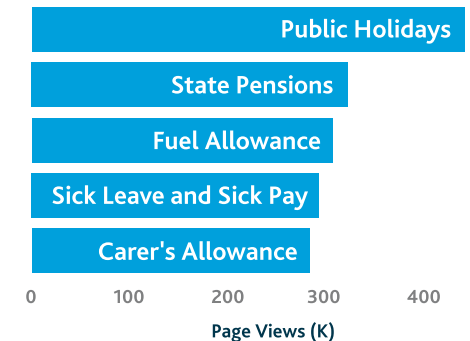
Over 80% of website users came from an organic search, 18% of users accessed the website directly and almost 1% of users came from organic social media.

The busiest day of the year was Budget 2025, announced on Tuesday, 1 October 2024. Over 200,000 unique visitors visited citizensinformation.ie on 1 October – almost 5 times more than the visitor daily average.

Budget content saw over 1 million organic Google search impressions. Views of the Budget 2025 page were 18% higher than 2023 and a new page specifically summarising social welfare budget changes was introduced, with an additional 107,682 views.

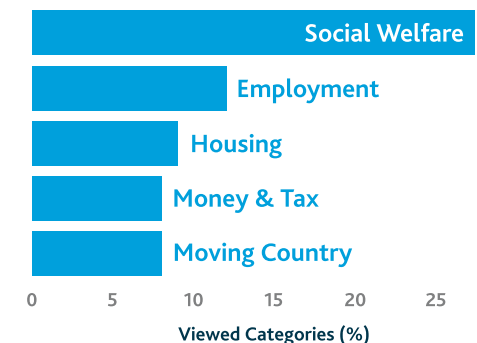
In 2024, the 5 most visited pages on the website were:

1. **Public holidays** 447,331 page views
2. **State Pensions (Contributory)** 326,864
3. **Fuel Allowance** 310,818
4. **Sick leave and sick pay** 297,596
5. **Carer's Allowance** 287,201



There are 15 categories on the website. In 2024, the most viewed categories were:

1. **Social Welfare** 27% of total page views
2. **Employment** 12%
3. **Housing** 9%
4. **Money and Tax** 8%
5. **Moving Country** 8%



## Key content developments on citizensinformation.ie in 2024

A new **What's New** section was introduced in 2024 and provided updates and topical content on the website.

### Social Welfare

saw an 11% increase in pageviews from the previous year, with a new option for pension deferral, and extensive Budget 2025 changes.

11% ↑

### Moving Country

saw a 33% increase in views, with changes to international protection processes, employment permits, visas and immigration processes.

33% ↑

### Employment

saw a 14% increase in page views, with new content on the Work and Access programme for people with disabilities, remote working rights and maternity leave changes.

14% ↑

### Money and Tax

had extensive updates and saw an increase in page views of 19%.

19% ↑

### Housing

continued to be a busy section of the website with updates on home renovation grants, legislation on student accommodation, and new loan schemes to support upfront renovation costs.



### Education

updates include new childminder regulations, free schoolbooks for Junior Cycle students and new content for people leaving school via the School Leaver's Guide - Spring 2024.



44% ↑

**Travel and Recreation**  
saw a 44% increase in views, with new pages on travel to Ireland, rural transport and new rules for e-bikes and e-scooters.

**Consumer**

saw an 11% increase in views, with updates on the Online Safety Code and new pages on complaints about online platforms and representative actions.

11% ↑

**Justice**

saw a 25% increase in views, with new pages on firearms, gambling laws and civil restraining orders.

25% ↑

**Health**

saw a 6.38% increase in views, with new pages on HSE Assisted Reproduction services and women's health.

6.3% ↑

**Environment**

Includes restructured content, a new section related to farming linked to the Supports for Farmers Booklet and includes recent updates on the Deposit Return Scheme and dog licensing.

**Family and Relationships**

had new pages on children in care and alternative care options.

156% ↑

**Government in Ireland**

saw a large 156% increase, driven by elections and the referendum, with a surge in the Register to vote page views.



## Website Accessibility Improvements

Citizens Information Board (CIB) continued to assess online content and improve accessibility in 2024. Citizensinformation.ie scored 94.14% in the simplified review<sup>1</sup> conducted by the National Disability Authority (NDA) for the 2024 monitoring period under the EU Web Accessibility Directive.

Mabs.ie was assessed for the first time and improved its score from 35% at the start of 2024 to 80% in the simplified review. Mabs.ie migrated to the Wagtail Content Management System (CMS) in mid-2024 which enabled major improvements in accessibility. Remaining issues relate to older pdfs on the website.

The Digital Content team continued to ensure that Plain English principles were implemented across the website with dedicated monthly Plain English training. Sixty-eight new content pages were added to citizensinformation.ie over the year with a total of 1,431 content pages on the website by year end. Over 80% of content on the website was dated 2023 or 2024 by 31 December 2024.

2024 saw external recognition of CIB's Digital Content team's achievements. Two CIB projects were shortlisted for the eGovernment Awards in 2024. The first, in the award category for 'Marketing and Social Media,' was the Digital Content team's information provision response to COVID-19. The second, in the award category for 'Promoting Ireland Overseas,' was the Returning to Ireland portal.

citizensinformation.ie scored

94.14%

in the simplified review<sup>1</sup> conducted by the National Disability Authority for the 2024 monitoring period under the EU Web Accessibility Directive.

<sup>1</sup>Simplified Reviews were conducted on a sample of up to 400 web pages and PDFs per website against a subset of the Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.1 clauses. Reviews are conducted weekly using automated tools.



### The top 3 Citizens Information Service query categories:



Social Welfare

**346,054**



Housing

**85,148**



Health

**62,496**

## Citizens Information Services

Eight regional Citizens Information Services (CISs) provide face-to-face services to the public. They are supported and funded by the Citizens Information Board. The CIS network provides free, impartial and confidential information, advice and advocacy support.

People can access information on areas such as:

- Social welfare
- Employment
- Housing
- Immigration and
- Health services

Information Officers in the CIS support members of the public to fill out forms and applications and advocate on behalf of clients when required. The CIS currently operate from 90 core Citizens Information Centres and 26 outreach locations.

## Callers and Queries

### Citizens Information Services

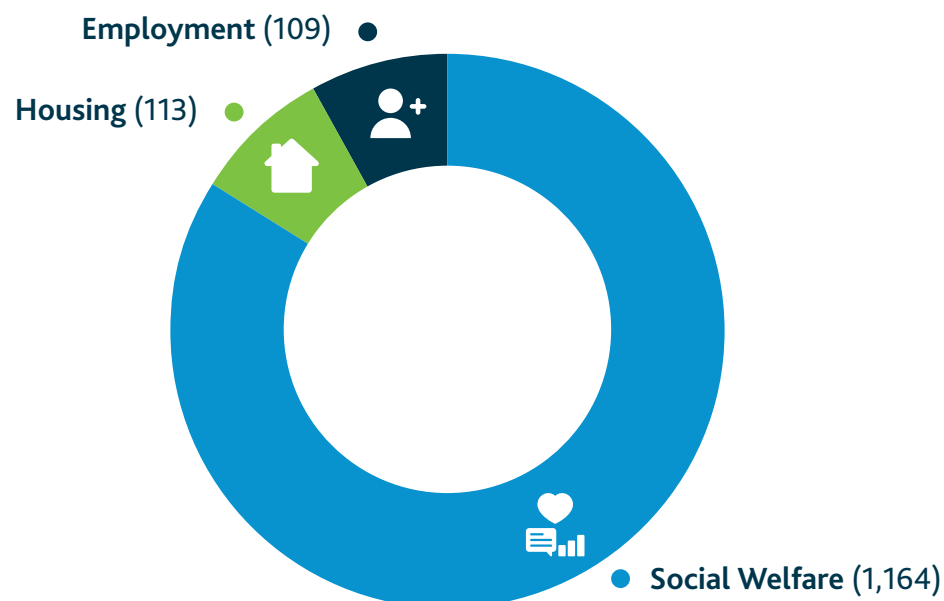
- In 2024, the CISs dealt with 395,017 callers and 767,168 queries.
- Face-to-Face callers accounted for 67% of contacts (262,851 callers).
- The number of face-to-face callers increased by 11% on the previous year.
- 93% of face-to-face callers were drop-in and 7% were appointments.
- The top 3 query categories were Social Welfare, Housing and Health.



## Citizens Information Service Advocacy

Citizens Information Service (CIS) provide a free advocacy service to the public across a range of areas, including social welfare, employment, housing, immigration, health, consumer issues and education. The advocacy service supports and empowers people to ensure their interests and voices are represented in accessing their rights and entitlements to social services. Most of this work involves supporting people to access a social welfare payment, address a grievance with an employer, or secure a housing payment. Some of this work can be complex and involves supporting clients through an appeals process and even representing the client at an oral hearing.

Of the 1,517 new long-term advocacy cases created in 2024, here are the top three categories:



## Prison Support Services

Citizens Information are actively providing in-reach information services in seven prisons. These are Arbour Hill, Cork Prison, Cloverhill Prison, Portlaoise Prison, Midlands Prison, Limerick Prison and Castlerea Prison.

In addition, three pre-release groups and three Parent Groups were supported in Wheatfield Prison via the Education Unit in the prison.

The Parent Group consists of fathers in prison and aims at creating an awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Average uptake per group is 10-15 participants.

The Prison In-reach Team collaborated with the Irish Prison Service and Department of Housing in the production of a video to promote changes made to the application process for social housing for people in prison.

The new change permits applications for social housing from a person in prison and that removal of a person from the social housing list should not occur solely on the grounds of that person being in prison.

A member of staff from South Leinster CIS spoke at the Irish Penal Reform Conference Know your Rights: Advocacy and Remedies in The Richmond Education and Events Centre on 22nd August 2024.

## Citizens Information Phone Service

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) is a national helpline, funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. It provides confidential, independent, information and advice on a wide range of public services and entitlements.

CIPS also operates a Live Advisor instant chat service for people with hearing and speech difficulties and others who have difficulty communicating by telephone.

In 2024, CIPS answered 128,059 calls and responded to 1,926 webchats.

- In 2024, CIPS answered 128,059 calls and 1,926 webchats.
- The top 3 query categories were Social Welfare, Employment and Housing.



### The top 3 Citizens Information Phone Service query categories:



Social Welfare

27,006



Employment

11,772



Housing

7,286

## Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS)



The eight regional MABS companies provide free, confidential, non-judgemental and independent advice on debt and money management. MABS also has a remit to address financial exclusion through education and money management. In 2024, the MABS companies saw 16,556 new clients. The MABS Helpline is a national helpline operated by North Dublin MABS. In the course of 2024, the MABS Helpline received 23,525 calls.

### MABS Support

MABS Support provides training, money management education resources, policy and technical support to the network of eight regional MABS companies. The team works to ensure that MABS has a consistent approach to service delivery by developing quality standards, processes and procedures. They coordinate policy submissions on behalf of MABS to highlight the impact of policy proposals and changes on people who are financially excluded in Ireland.

### National Traveller MABS



National Traveller MABS works to reduce poverty, discrimination and the financial exclusion of Travellers in Ireland. They work with the Traveller community and organisations to change policies and practices that impact Travellers financially.

### Abhaile



Abhaile is a State-funded service helping homeowners to resolve their home mortgage arrears. It provides free financial and legal advice and help from experts, accessed through MABS. Abhaile helps mortgage holders in long-term arrears to find the best solutions and stay, wherever possible, in their own homes.

Abhaile provides a one-stop-shop to a range of financial and legal advice and supports. Financial advice is provided by MABS Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) advisers or Personal Insolvency Practitioners (PIP). Legal support is available from duty solicitors and MABS court mentors at circuit court possession hearings. Legal advice is available from a consultation solicitor service, and through Personal Insolvency Arrangement (PIA) reviews, also known as Section 115A reviews

under the Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Act 2015. The Department of Social Protection (DSP) and the Department of Justice jointly coordinate and fund the services of Abhaile. CIB administers the funding and scheme governance and has responsibility for the national communications of Abhaile. MABS, the ISI, the Legal Aid Board and CIB work together to implement the services of Abhaile.

In 2024, 2,083 new clients received assistance from a Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) adviser in MABS.

## National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) provides a free, independent, professional advocacy service to adults with disabilities across Ireland.

NAS has a particular remit to work with people who are in vulnerable situations, isolated from their community, communicate differently or have limited formal or natural supports.

Advocates work with people with all types of disability and on all issues such as housing and healthcare decisions, personal finances, family or relationships issues. NAS offers both empowerment and representative type advocacy depending on the circumstances.

New initial enquiries in 2024 were 3,166, an increase of 1% on 2023 (3,125).

884 initial enquiries became empowerment cases, and 375 of these became representative type cases.

Total Active Cases in 2024 were 1,779 on a par with 2023 (1,775).

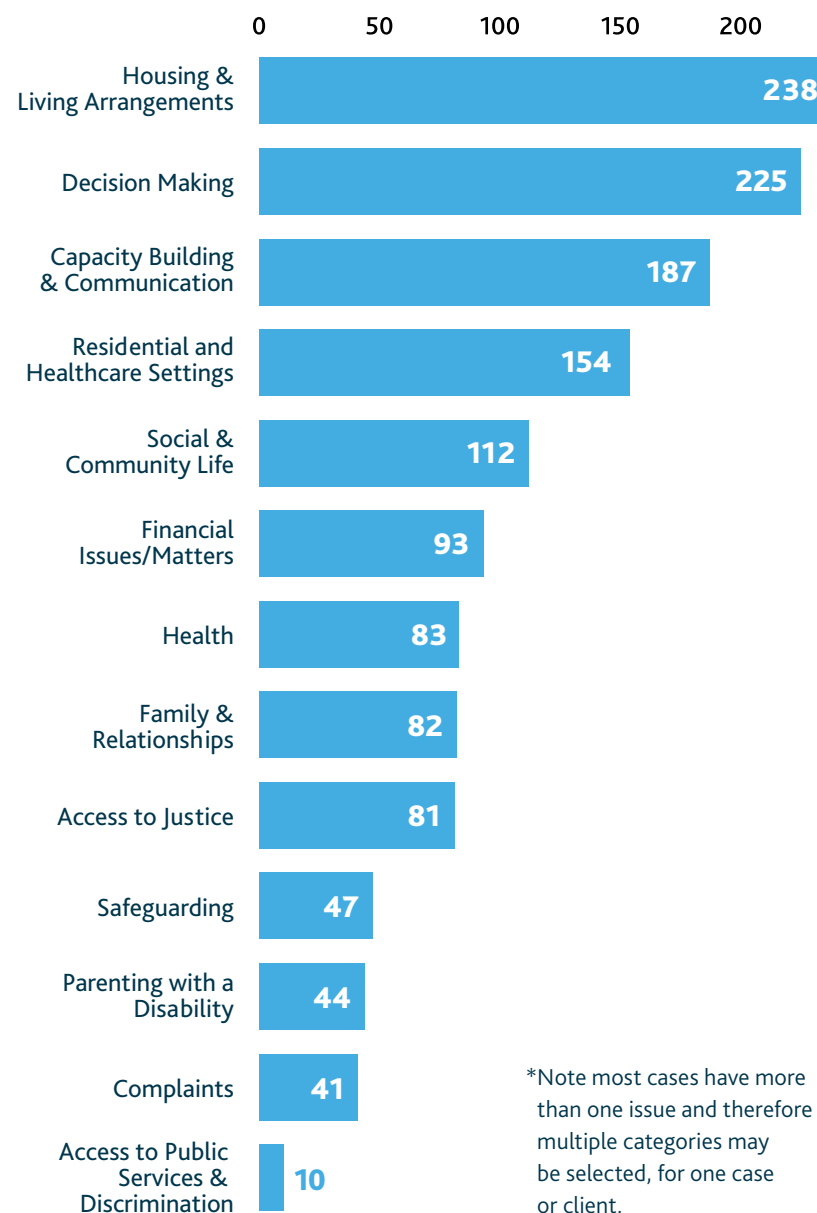
Empowerment advocacy is defined as providing information, remote support for the person or family member or guidance with correspondence and meetings.

Representative advocacy is where the Advocate represents the person in correspondence and at meetings and supports them to have their voice heard.



**The top five sub-categories of issues people with disabilities sought an Advocates support with in 2024 were:**

- Exploration of housing options
- Expression of will and preferences
- Inappropriate housing or living arrangement
- Support with self-advocacy
- Access to and management of own money



\*Note most cases have more than one issue and therefore multiple categories may be selected, for one case or client.

## Sign Language Interpreting Service



The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) provides a range of services including remote interpreting through the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) and a referral service to assist clients to find the right interpreter for their needs.

In 2024, SLIS received 10,217 remote interpreting service calls and 432 people availed of the Irish Sign Language Voucher Scheme.

## Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters



The Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) was established in December 2020 to maintain a standards-based registration system for Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters. The registration system is referenced in the Irish Sign Language Act (2017).

RISLI has developed a Code of Conduct for Irish Sign Language interpreters and set qualification, training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) standards.

In 2024, there were 119 ISL interpreters registered on the RISLI register.



# Data

## Data Hub

The Citizens Information Board maintains a Data Hub on the corporate website, [citizensinformationboard.ie](https://citizensinformationboard.ie). This Data Hub provides insights into the anonymised data that we collect from our network of services. It includes data on the profile of those who use these services, the type of information and advice they are looking for, the range of queries and concerns raised by the public and the top information categories and trends arising each year. The data is presented in individual quarterly statistical reports for Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

## Categories of data available on the Data Hub



Mode of Contact



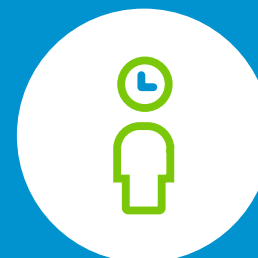
Gender



Caller Profile



Nationality/  
Country of Origin



Age



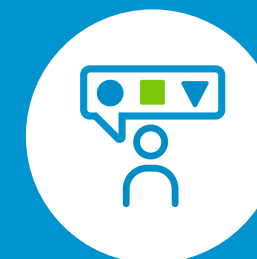
Top 10  
Entitlements



Query Categories



Query Trends



Specific Needs

# Service Developments

## Returning to Ireland Portal

**The Returning to Ireland (RTI) portal on [citizensinformation.ie](https://citizensinformation.ie) provides information to Irish citizens living abroad who are considering moving back to Ireland. The portal shares practical information like shipping belongings back to Ireland, how the taxation system in Ireland works, how to set up a bank account, getting an Irish driving license and how to get a passport for a child born abroad.**



In 2024, the portal saw an increase in web traffic of 24% and positive feedback from users.

### Information was developed for two specific groups:

- People returning from countries with large Irish diaspora populations including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. These pages cover the key differences between tax and other systems.
- Professionals returning to Ireland after working abroad including teachers, construction workers, and healthcare workers. These pages explain profession-specific registration, certification requirements and qualification recognition processes.

From 1 January to 31 December 2024, the RTI portal saw 365,269<sup>2</sup> page views and 211,713 users who recorded 281,733 sessions (visits). In 2024, the top five pages were:

1. [Bringing your non-EEA spouse or civil partner home to Ireland](#)
2. [Bringing your vehicle to Ireland](#)
3. [PPS numbers for returning Irish emigrants and their families](#)
4. [Irish citizenship and passports for children born abroad](#)
5. [How to get your foreign qualification recognised in Ireland](#)

### Returning to Ireland on social media

The RTI portal ran a #ReturningtoIreland2024 social media campaign in December 2024 to raise awareness about the information resources available for people abroad. The campaign

reached 11,328 users with short, concise explanations of topics like bringing a non-EEA spouse or civil partner home with you to Ireland and shipping your belongings back to Ireland.

### Information portal for international protection applicants

CIB started a collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to develop information resources for newly arrived international protection applicants. The research and development phase of the project started in September 2024 and the portal will be available in 2025. It will provide information on the international protection process in a range of languages and also aims to support integration into local communities with information on living in Ireland.

<sup>2</sup>Google Analytics page views for 2024 totalled 365,269, an increase over the 2023 total of 287,072. Matomo recorded 503,155 page views.



## Free Legal Advice Clinics (FLAC)

FLAC has a long association with Citizens Information. FLAC volunteers provided in-person clinics in Citizens Information Centres in the evenings that have now evolved to dedicated telephone clinics where an appointment can be made for people who bring legal queries to Citizens Information Centres.

In 2024, 446 legal telephone clinics were organised in conjunction with the Citizens Information

Services (CIS) and 1,706 people were given an appointment at these clinics which were supported by approximately 250 volunteer FLAC lawyers.

Employment law, family law, immigration law and other general areas of law made up the majority of referral queries to FLAC clinics.

**CIB provides funding to FLAC annually to administer these clinics and to provide a dedicated expert query line for CIS staff.**



## Irish Sign Language Voucher Scheme

2024 marked the first full year of operation for the Irish Sign Language (ISL) Voucher Scheme. This scheme provides funding for an interpreter to accompany an ISL user to social, educational, medical and cultural events that otherwise would not be accessible.

Citizens Information Board provided funding of €400,000 to the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) to deliver this scheme in 2024.

432 members of the Deaf Community in Ireland availed of the Irish Sign Language Voucher Scheme in 2024.

Interpreters accompanied members of the Irish Deaf Community to 639 different and diverse events, talks, training courses, funerals and family occasions, enhancing accessibility and engagement.



**"It is wonderful. I booked an Interpreter for a festival. We could chat and ask questions of the stall owners. Highly recommend the Interpreter Voucher Scheme."**

- member of the Irish Deaf Community

## Strategic Objective 2:

# Communicate & Engage

Develop communication and engagement with Citizens Information Board staff, Service Delivery Companies and the public.

Objective two of the strategy will see the Citizens Information Board (CIB) put in place a number of strategies, including in relation to internal and external communication and staff development. A particular emphasis will be placed on engagement between CIB and the Service Delivery Companies. It will also involve CIB exploring a role in countering misinformation and disinformation.



# 2

## Communication Strategy

**CIB's first Communication Strategy was under development in 2024 with several key actions delivered:**

Communication workshops were held with CIB's Senior Management team, Staff Consultative Committee, Internal Communications Committee and staff representatives to gather insights for the Communication Strategy.

A staff survey was carried out on communication platforms and their usage to see how CIB can enhance how information is shared. Research was carried out to examine communication materials across CIB. This included the citizensinformation.ie website, social policy reports, newsletters, social media updates and annual reports, to ensure they supported CIB's strategic objectives.



## Misinformation and Disinformation

A key strategic area that the Board has identified is the growth in misinformation and disinformation, with a matching need for trusted sources of information.

In 2023, 64% of Irish respondents told the Reuters Digital News Survey that they were concerned about what is real or fake online. This increased to 71% in 2024 in the context of generative artificial intelligence, deepfakes and changes to algorithms.

A range of actions have been taken in this space, including the strengthened EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, the establishment of Coimisúin na Meán and Media Literacy Ireland and the introduction of the Digital Services Act 2024.

Against this backdrop, the new Programme for Government includes a very specific commitment:

**"Counter disinformation through regulation and support for trusted public information sources".**

CIB wants to help to deliver this commitment by continuing to provide reliable, user-focused information in different formats, by expanding our content base and by increasing the speed at which we update content. As described in the new National Counter Disinformation Strategy:

**"Supporting the development of strong public communications and the provision of reliable, clear and accessible public information can play an important role in reducing the impact of disinformation and supporting trust in government."**

The strategy goes on to recognise the role of the Citizens Information Board and other organisations in communicating trustworthy information.



## Abhaile and MABS Social Media

Both the MABS and Abhaile brands are active on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. In 2024, the Citizens Information Board posted content and blogs on money management tips, budgeting advice and mortgage arrears. The MABS platforms generated 285,917 organic impressions and Abhaile platforms achieved 349,816 impressions in 2024. The Citizens Information Board's Abhaile/MABS communications team published a total of 2,072 posts on the various platforms.

**Abhaile Awareness Campaign Impact:**  
**78% increase in Mabs.ie visits**



There were 398,990 visits to MABS.ie in 2024. This is an increase of 8% on 2023. This included 109,274 visits to the Abhaile section on MABS.ie. This is a 26% increase on the number of visits in 2023.

There were 68,919 visits to the blogs section on MABS.ie in 2024. This is an 18% increase in blog visits in 2023.

## Abhaile Awareness Campaign



Open Doors Campaign Poster

One Abhaile national awareness campaign ran from the 22nd of April to the 3rd of June 2024. It used radio, digital audio, OOH (out-of-home), digital display, VOD (YouTube), and social media ad platforms (META and TikTok). The campaign featured our 'Open Doors' campaign messaging.

## National Ploughing Championships 2024



Abhaile/MABS team at the National Ploughing Championships 2024

Abhaile featured in the 'Housing for All' marquee at the National Ploughing Championships. MABS advisers and members of the Abhaile/MABS Communications team handed out over 2,000 Abhaile information packs and assisted members of the public with money and mortgage arrears-based queries.

The estimated marquee footfall over the three days of the event averaged c. 5,900 per day. Seventy-six people completed our Ploughing 2024 survey, which allowed us to gain insight into the day-to-day cost of living concerns, including mortgage repayments.

## Abhaile Always-On Campaign



The Citizens Information Board ran an 'Always-On' search and social media campaign for Abhaile. The social media campaign ran from April to December 2024, and the search campaign ran from January 2024 to January 2025.

## MABS Christmas Campaign



Between November and December 2024, the Citizens Information Board ran a series of MABS 'BOSS Christmas' videos on Facebook. These videos featured key money management tips for the festive period.

## Global Money Week 2024

A new report from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), [Money Attitudes and Behaviours of Young People Living in Ireland](#), was launched by Minister for Finance Michael McGrath as part of Global Money Week 2024. The report is based on a survey of 1,850 secondary school students in Ireland, aged mainly between 15 and 17. Selected findings:

- 1 in 3 students mainly learn about money from social media, with TikTok the social network of choice for most
- 1 in 10 never save money
- 4 in 5 shop online
- Almost all (96%) of those surveyed believe it is important to talk about money.

Global Money Week, which took place from 18 - 24 March, is an annual worldwide financial awareness campaign for young people. MABS teams hosted financial education sessions in schools across Ireland. These sessions used fun, interactive activities to help students understand key money concepts.



# Social Policy

## Social Policy Returns

7,248 Social Policy Returns\* were submitted in 2024. CIB use this data in submissions and briefing papers to Government, to regulators and other agencies throughout the year.



\*When an Information Officer feels that a client is experiencing a particular difficulty in trying to access social or public services, they submit an anonymised short narrative on the issue to Citizens Information Board. This is referred to as a Social Policy Return.

## Policy Submissions

The data and insights provided to the Citizens Information Board (CIB) by the Service Delivery Companies from their daily engagement with clients continues to provide a strong evidence base for policy submissions.

During 2024 CIB's Data and Research Team made a total of 10 policy submissions in response to public consultations. These covered a range of themes, including:

- The National Disability Strategy
- Health and social care services for older people
- Energy poverty
- Reform of disability payments
- The Review of Housing Assessment and Allocation Guidelines for people with disabilities
- Child poverty

A key submission that continues to be made on an annual basis is the Pre-Budget Submission. This provides a valuable insight into the broad range of issues that the Service Delivery Companies are engaged in, and active on, with clients. The 2024 submission focused on work and welfare; disability, illness and caring; and housing supports.

CIB submitted the following policy submissions in 2024:

- CIB Submission to the Department of Health: Public Consultation on Health and Social Care Services and Supports for Older People (November 2024)
- Budget 2025: A Citizens Information Board review (October 2024)
- Energy Poverty Action Plan (May 2024)
- Adult safeguarding in health and social care settings (April 2024)
- Green Paper on Reform of Disability Payments in Ireland (April 2024)
- Courts Service Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (March 2024)
- Review of Housing Assessment and Allocation Guidelines for people with disabilities (March 2024)
- National Disability Strategy (February 2024)
- Child Poverty Target (January 2024)

## Policy Engagement

In addition to formal submissions, Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Data and Research Team also participate in a variety of policy fora and network initiatives to highlight concerns for our service users - in keeping with our legislative mandate. During 2024, this included the Department of Social Protection's Disability Consultative Forum, the Legal Aid Board Consultative Panel, the Irish Dental Association on medical card holders' access to dental care, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth with respect to the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme; and feedback to the HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Services Consultative Group.

CIB's social policy evidence featured in a briefing paper, Means-testing, commissioned by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection from the Oireachtas Library and Research Service. The paper has a section on 'Citizens Information Board Queries' on the application of means-testing in the Irish system which draws on our various related policy submissions.


## Research

CIB supported NAS through our Social Policy Grants scheme to produce a report exploring the barriers experienced by people with disabilities in managing and accessing their finances. The NAS report is called '[Shortchanged: Barriers to Financial Autonomy for People with Disabilities in Ireland](#)'.

## Social Policy Update

During 2024, CIB continued to produce and circulate the [Social Policy Update](#) to over 800 subscribers. This newsletter captures CIB's policy work quarterly, highlights the key trends within delivery service data and contextualises this work within the broader context of national developments in social and public policy.

### SOCIAL POLICY UPDATE

Citizens Information Board 

Our quarterly newsletter to keep you informed of the social policy work of CIB and our funded services

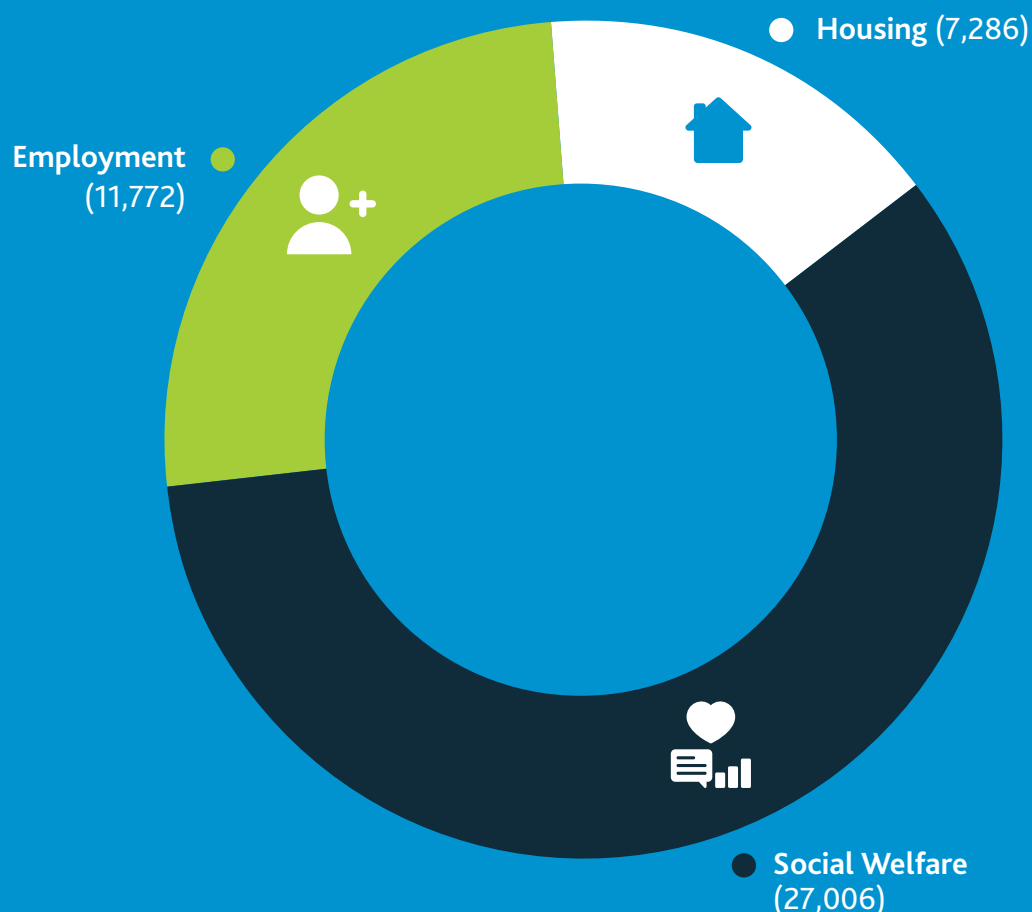
## Social policy feedback

When information staff in the Citizens Information Service (CIS) or Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) feel that a client is experiencing a particular difficulty in trying to access social or public services, they submit an anonymised short narrative on the issue to Citizens Information Board. This is called a Social Policy Return. We use this data, along with the queries data as evidence in reports and submissions, in fulfilment of our statutory role to provide social policy feedback to the government.

During 2024, there were 7,248 Social Policy Returns submitted by CISs. This data helped us to understand the problems people are facing in accessing public services.

Most of these cases (40%) related to Social Welfare issues, 18% were on housing, almost 10% related to immigration and citizenship, and almost 10% were on health-related matters.

### The top 3 Citizens Information Phone Service query categories:





## CIB Social Media

Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Digital Content team managed three social media channels in 2024 – [Facebook](#), [X](#)<sup>1</sup>, a new [Instagram](#) account and supported [CIB's LinkedIn](#). Over the year, we highlighted topical issues, such as changes in payments, new legislation and scheme launch dates. We used our website content to highlight particular issues or target groups of people in monthly campaigns.

2024 was a busy year, with over **5.6 million impressions**<sup>2</sup> across Facebook and Instagram posts alone, and **52,000** followers across Facebook, Instagram and X (an increase of over 5,000 followers in 2024). The launch of the new Citizens Information Instagram account allowed the Digital Content team to build new skills

in video editing, creating reels and improving graphic design skills – making content more engaging and relevant.

We also maintained above average levels of engagement on our platforms, with an engagement rate per reach of 3.3% on Facebook for 2024, (good engagement rate is 1% for public sector organisations) and an average organic engagement rate per reach on Instagram of 4.9% (compared to the benchmark of 2.31%).

During 2024 we posted a total of 16 posts in Irish on our platforms. This accounted for 0.6% of all Facebook posts, 0.81% of all Instagram posts and 0.82% of all X posts.

CIB posted a total of 320 videos across Facebook and Instagram in 2024. 164 of these videos were posted to Facebook, with 156 reels and stories posted to Instagram.

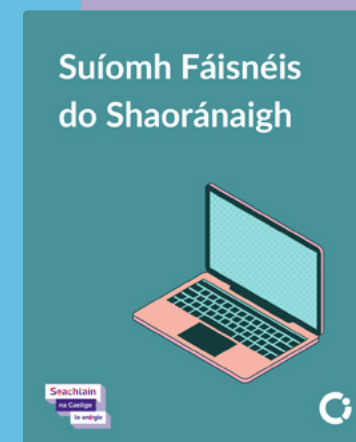
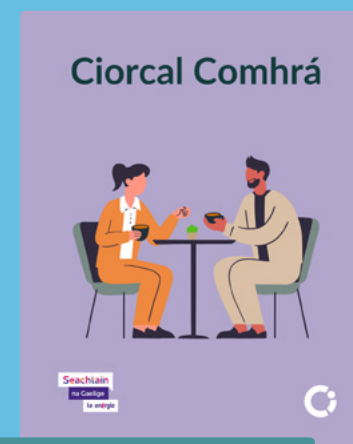
	Facebook	Instagram*	X (formerly Twitter)
Impressions	5,336,865 (-2.4%)	300,169	112,900**
Reach	4,107,488 (-21.1%)	60,624	N/A
Engagement	25,084 (-3.2%)	2,841	1,926 (-37.9%)
No. of posts	999 (-13.9%)	372	849 (-7.4%)
Followers gained	1,343 (+13.6)	1,172	-118 (-0.9%)

<sup>1</sup> CIB is no longer active on X as of December 2024

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Agorapulse 2024

\* The percentage differences between 2023 and 2024 are not available for Instagram, as we launched Instagram in March 2024

\*\* Agorapulse stopped providing statistics for Impressions on X from June 2024 – the figure recorded comprises Impressions from January to May 2024.



## Monthly Social Media Campaigns

In 2024, Citizens Information Board (CIB) ran 10 monthly social media campaigns, aimed at a particular group of people or covering a certain topic. The most successful campaign was on Budget 2025 in October with a reach of over 300,000. Other campaigns in 2024 were aimed at young workers, parents, and consumers, and covered topics like benefits and taxes, housing, and the environment.

## Statistics for CIB's 10 monthly social media campaigns:

Months	Topic	No. of posts	Reach	Impressions	Engagement
Feb 2024	Our Environment	44	77,280	78,852	3,734
Mar 2024	Benefits and Taxes	55	186,902	192,326	14,661
Mar 2024	Seachtain na Gaeilge	21	7,856	8,242	148
April 2024	Online shop and fly	51	51,405	53,013	1,404
June 2024	Young workers	65	105,575	109,027	4,180
August 2024	Housing	73	115,101	116,648	4,068
September 2024	Parents campaign	57	87,354	89,621	3,975
October 2024	Budget 2025 campaign	83	322,594	332,891	36,925
November - December 2024	Consumer	42	31,026	32,698	705
December 2024	Returning to Ireland	29	11,328	12,215	295



## Citizens Information Board (CIB) Publications

*The Benefits and Taxes 2024* leaflet and wallchart were published and distributed to Citizens Information Services, the Money Advice and Budgeting Services, member of the Oireachtas and other stakeholders.

*Leaving School, a guide from Citizens Information* was distributed electronically to over 700 post-primary schools along with a survey to establish how the booklet was used in schools. This survey helped to inform a new extended print version of the booklet for 2025.



## Farmers booklet at Ploughing Championships

*Supports for Farmers* is a key resource for farmers which details the supports and schemes available to them. The booklet was officially launched by Charlie McConalogue TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine at the National Ploughing Championships in September 2024. This booklet is a longstanding collaboration between CIB and Teagasc.



*Supports for Farmers* explains the supports and schemes available to farmers throughout their career, including becoming a farmer, farming

education and training, supports and tax reliefs for young farmers, farming grants and schemes, social welfare supports, employing agricultural workers, farm business management, health and safety, taxation, farm partnerships, retiring from farming, farm succession planning, pensions and inheriting a farm.



Pictured at the National Ploughing Championship 2024 as part of the Support for Farmers launch (L to R): James Holohan, Citizens Information Board; Professor Frank O Mara, Teagasc Director; Charlie McConalogue, T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Graham Long, Chief Executive Designate, Citizens Information Board; Cathy Gerrard, Digital Content Manager, Citizens Information Board; and Barry Caslin, Teagasc. Photo: Finbarr O'Rourke Photography

## CIB's Advocacy Newsletter

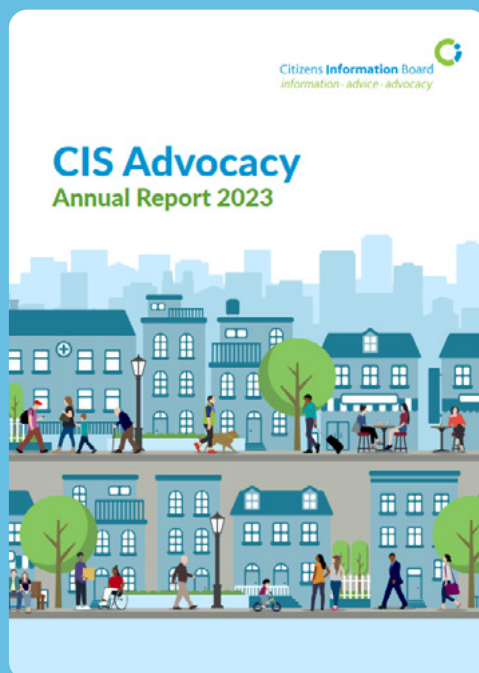
The Citizens Information Board's Advocacy Standards and Development team produced a quarterly advocacy newsletter distributed across the Citizens Information Service (CIS) network. This newsletter shares updates on social welfare, employment, housing, and immigration to CIS staff.

The team organised and facilitated training for CIS staff in employment and immigration and an information session about the Ombudsman.



## Citizens Information Service (CIS) Advocacy Annual Report

CIB's Advocacy Standards and Development team produced the [2023 CIS Annual Advocacy Report](#), which showcases the breadth of advocacy work undertaken in the CIS. The report highlights several case studies demonstrating the positive outcomes achieved for CIS clients.



## Scope Newsletter

Citizens Information Board's Scope newsletter keeps the Service Delivery Companies up-to-date on the latest news and changes to benefits, entitlements, schemes and services. It includes short summaries of news and upcoming changes with implementation dates and links to the citizensinformation.ie website and other government sources. It also flags possible policy and legislative changes. Every two weeks Scope is emailed to approximately 800 staff and volunteers.



## Internal and External Communication

In 2024, the Citizens Information Board:



Conducted comprehensive research that examined CIB communication outputs and materials, to ensure resources are accessible and fit for purpose.



Carried out a staff survey on communication platforms and their usage to see how CIB can enhance information sharing. Insights from the surveys were incorporated into the CIB Communication Strategy.



Supported a Citizens Information Volunteer Recruitment Advertising Campaign.



Facilitated communications workshops with CIB's Heads of Division, Staff Consultative Committee, Internal Communications Committee and staff representatives as part of the development of the communication strategy.



## Public Sector Equality and Human Rights

Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Public Sector Duty Working Group continued its work in 2024 in a number of different areas, including specific Public Sector Duty training for staff members, the promotion of awareness of human rights issues for staff members, the raising of awareness and understanding of forms of disabilities among staff members, as well as the ongoing promotion of awareness of human rights issues to staff members, Service Delivery Companies and the public.

### The Public Sector Duty Working Group organised several interesting events for staff over the year:

- In March, Catherine Cosgrave from the Immigrant Council of Ireland spoke to staff on the **challenges faced by immigrants** to Ireland and the work of the Immigrant Council supporting them.
- In May, to mark **Global Accessibility Awareness Day**, Dónal Rice from the National Disability Authority gave a very interesting talk on 'Accessible communications and the Public Sector Duty'.
- In September, CIB again celebrated Deaf Awareness week and promoted our publicly available [Deaf Awareness videos](#). CIB also hosted an interactive Irish Sign Language (ISL) basics event for staff. All the participants greatly enjoyed this session and essential ISL words and phrases

were covered including daily greetings, social interactions, and food and drink.

- CIB's Public Sector Duty Group also welcomed the opportunity to speak to staff in the Office of the Ombudsman about the importance of Deaf Awareness Week. It was an engaging session and we are grateful to the Office of the Ombudsman for hosting this valuable exchange.
- In October, we were delighted to host Deirdre Bulman and Adrienne Collins to speak about Reasonable Accommodation in the Workplace for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Adults Receiving Late Diagnoses. This session aims to further our understanding of inclusivity and provide practical strategies for supporting these individuals in the workplace.

The Public Sector Duty Working Group is very grateful to all of this year's speakers for their engaging, informative talks.

CIB continued to collect data on and highlight the concerns of members of the public, including people with disabilities, migrants, women, Travellers, and people living on low incomes, who come to CIB funded services in large numbers seeking advice, information, and assistance on engaging with public services.

In 2024, the data generated on their experiences was presented in our submissions and policy reports, covering areas such as housing adaptation grants services and supports for older people, reform of disability payments, energy poverty as well as income adequacy and access to services in our Pre-Budget Submission.

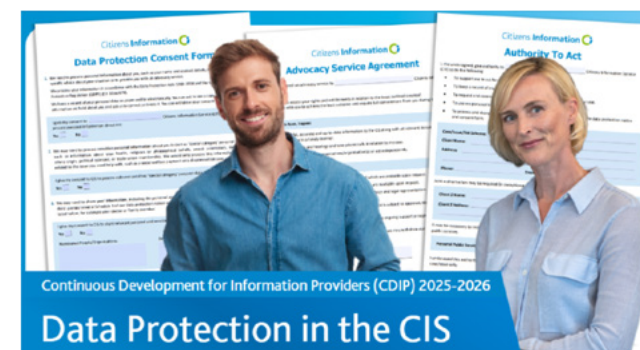


# Supporting Service Delivery Companies

## eLearning

The Citizens Information Board's (CIB) eLearning team is responsible for the development and delivery of specialist online training for staff across all CIB Service Delivery Companies. eLearning works with key stakeholders to identify specialist training needs which results in the development of self-paced online courses containing interactive lessons, videos, case studies and assessments. CIB's eLearning courses are available through a secure private learning management system. In 2024, the main highlights delivered by the team were:

- Continued growth of CIB's library of high-quality specialist content including the following new courses:
  - Data Protection in the Citizens Information Services (CIS)
  - Queries about Death and Bereavement
  - Queries about Travel and Transport
  - Advocacy Training in Employment Law
  - Advocacy Training in Immigration Law
- CIB and Service Delivery Companies: An Overview
- Essential Training for Information Providers
- Psychological First Aid
- Organised and delivered numerous training webinars in co-operation with various organisations including the Department of Social Protection, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Youth and Integration, the Personal Injuries Resolution Board and the Irish Refugee Council.
- Enabled over 5,000 learners to complete training and achieve certification, including 150 CIS staff and volunteers who completed induction training courses.



## Engaging with the Service Delivery Companies

Throughout 2024, the Citizens Information Board continued with a series of quarterly meetings with the chairs and managers of the 22 Service Delivery Companies. The aim of these meetings is to promote and support proactive and informative two-way communications to advance the strategic aims of CIB and Service Delivery Companies. The meetings follow a format whereby the executive in CIB meets with the employers, and subsequent meetings are held with the managers of companies.

CIB, the Department of Social Protection and employers in the Service Delivery Companies were actively involved in the negotiation and resolution of industrial relations issues arising in the Service Delivery Companies in 2024, with agreements reached during the year with staff members of the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities and staff members of the Citizens Information Services and Citizens Information Phone Service.

CIB is engaging actively with employer groups in the Citizens Information Services and the Money Advice and Budgeting Services and is also active on a range of working groups including working groups for communications, PR, ICT, quality assurance, impact frameworks and advocacy.

## Volunteering with Citizens Information

The Citizens Information Service (CIS) has a long and proud tradition of volunteerism and volunteers.

Volunteers have been involved at a governance level and in the day-to-day delivery of service.

In 2024, measures were put in place to promote volunteering numbers in Citizens Information.

A new [volunteer section](#) was developed on the Citizensinformation.ie website which includes an information video about the benefits of volunteering. Volunteer vacancies are now advertised on the citizensinformationboard.ie website.

Five regional CIS companies advertised 62 volunteer positions through the vacancies page on the website. Positions advertised included information providers, information assistants, receptionists and board members.

A radio advertising campaign ran at the end of 2024 promoting volunteering in CIS. By late 2024 there were 195 volunteers in the CIS network.



**By late 2024 there were 195 volunteers in the CIS network.**



## Strategic Objective 3:

# Technology & Supports

Improve technology and supports to deliver an enhanced experience for the public.

Objective three of the strategy relates to Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and digital supports. Under this objective, CIB plans to develop a digital strategy to expand the digital service provided, as well as to develop future-facing ICT infrastructure, applications, and cybersecurity systems



# 3

## CIB Digital Strategy

In 2024, Citizens Information Board (CIB) made significant progress in planning the development of a digital strategy and, following a procurement process, appointed 4OC to assist the organisation in developing the strategy. This strategy is intended to support and enhance the critical face-to-face delivery carried out all over Ireland by the Service Delivery Companies.

Integrating design principles with design thinking, we focused on creating a strategy to improve services so that they are not only functional but also intuitive and engaging for our employees and clients.

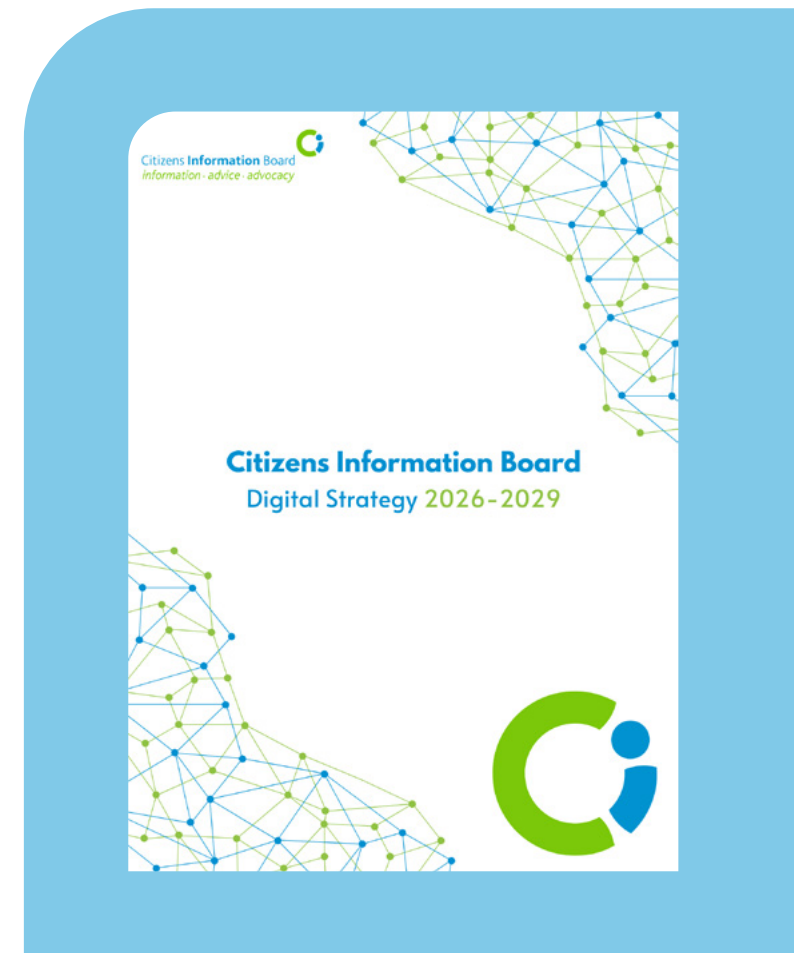
CIB and 4OC conducted extensive user research through surveys and focus groups to gather insights into service user needs and analysed data to identify key trends and opportunities, ensuring digital solutions to be developed are aligned with service user expectations. Several best practice

research initiatives were also undertaken as part of the initiation stage, including a review of digital approaches and innovation from other sectors.

During the delivery of the strategy, CIB plans to adopt key design principles such as simplicity, accessibility, and responsiveness to guide our digital projects and ensure that all digital interfaces are user-friendly and accessible, enhancing overall service user satisfaction. Developing a set of performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of our digital initiatives, focusing on user engagement, satisfaction, and conversion rates will also be central to the development of the strategy.

Our Digital Strategy will respond to a shifting landscape—with advances in technology, changing demographics and increasing demand for seamless, multichannel services. Key themes of the strategy will be empowering

employees, enhancing services and using data as an enabler. The strategy is intended to align with national and European initiatives aimed at fostering digital transformation and inclusion.



## ICT Infrastructure

During 2024, Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) team looked to build on and provide more secure cloud-based access to our systems, applications, and data.

CIB implemented the next-generation cloud-based Customer Experience system for our Helplines in the Citizens Information Phone Service, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) with a new contract for Call Centre Technologies in June 2024.

The CIB ICT Helpdesk answered 9,084 requests in 2024. Our Helpdesk Provider, PFH, continues to assist our users with extensive support. ICT will look to align with our forthcoming Digital Strategy and provide solutions that will enhance the assistance our Service Delivery Companies provide to citizens nationwide. In addition, procurement processes for our new infrastructure, networks, telephony, and software will start in 2025.

CIB ICT supports offices nationwide with managed network services, managed infrastructure services, managed phone services, 0818 and direct phone lines services, bulk text services, secure internet access, managed cybersecurity services, all software applications, direct and remote network connectivity, access to cloud-based services such as Microsoft Azure and 365, Amazon AWS, and more.

CIB ICT supports these services on over 1,500 computers and 400 printers, while also utilising Government Network Services and other services under various Office of Government Procurement frameworks.

CIB ICT also develops and supports our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems for CIS (Oyster), MABS (SAOR), and National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (ECMS), which are instrumental in supporting our clients.



# 9,084

ICT Helpdesk requests from CIB staff and the Service Delivery Companies were answered

## The Digital Help Service Pilot Project in Citizens Information Services

In 2024, three Citizens Information Services (CIS), North Munster CIS, South Leinster CIS and South Dublin CIS - developed a pilot project that involved an expanded Citizens Information Service offer to:

- assist clients to access online Government platforms,
- set up user accounts on Government platforms such as MyRevenue,
- and conduct their business with State agencies digitally.

The pilot project set out to develop a robust service delivery model for Digital Help within Citizens Information. With funding from Adult Literacy for Life, a Project Manager was employed to work directly with staff from 14 Citizens Information Centres. The project included CIC offices in Dublin, Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Laois, Offaly, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford. A key part of the project involved developing the governance and operational frameworks necessary to achieve this vision.

Citizens Information clients were able to access online portals under the guidance of Information Providers. The most widely used portals by clients under the MyGov platform are MyRevenue, MyWelfare, Online Passport service, National Driver Licence Service, Student Universal Support Ireland and Choice Based Letting (Social Housing).

The pilot project placed a particular emphasis on coaching and informing clients to gain agency over their own interactions with State services online, promoting digital accessibility.

Information Officers working on the pilot undertook literacy awareness training, and procedures were put in place to explore options for further literacy training with clients and facilitate appropriate referrals.

The aim of the project was to pilot and develop a framework to expand the help Citizens Information provides to clients to conduct their business with the State efficiently via online platforms. Following the success of the project, three regions now offer a Digital Help service with a view to further rollout.



## Strategic Objective 4:

# Oversee & Collaborate

**Provide oversight and agree metrics  
with Service Delivery Companies.**

Objective four of the strategy relates to the Citizens Information Board's relationship with the Service Delivery Companies (SDCs). Plans under this objective include agreeing outcome-based metrics with the SDCs, enhancing compliance and reporting processes, assessing the scope of advocacy services, collaborating on new service design and implementing recommendations in relation to volunteers in the Citizens Information Services.



# Compliance and Reporting Division

## Service Level Agreements

The Citizens Information Board has a signed service level agreement (SLA) with each of the twenty-two funded service delivery companies. The SLA is for a period of three years from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026. The Citizens Information Board funds Service Delivery Companies subject to the terms and conditions of their SLA.



## Service Delivery Company Operational Grant Allocations

The Compliance and Reporting division issues annual operational grant allocations to the Service Delivery Companies. This is subsequent to the review and approval by the Compliance and Reporting Committee, FAR and the board of the service delivery company budget proposals for existing level of service. Separately, additional funding was allocated to the National Advocacy Service, the Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service for pay agreements in 2024. The Compliance and Reporting division validated costings, which included arrears for ten service delivery companies and ensured that the funding was promptly released.

## Service Delivery Company Financial Reports

The twenty-two Service Delivery Companies are required to complete and submit board approved Quarterly Financial Returns to the Compliance and Reporting division. The Compliance and Reporting division monitors expenditure versus budget, on a cash basis to ensure that companies remain within their annual operational grant allocation.

The Service Delivery Companies are paid in four grant instalments. The grant instalments are issued to the Service Delivery Companies by the Compliance and Reporting division following validation of the Quarterly Financial Returns and compliance with CIB's Financial Compliance and Reporting Requirements handbook.

Service Delivery Companies are required to have their annual financial statements audited by an external auditor. The board approved audited annual financial statements of each company are submitted to the Compliance and Reporting division by the first of July following the previous financial year.

## Financial Controls

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The Compliance and Reporting division maintains a Financial Controls and Reporting Requirements handbook for the Service Delivery Companies. This document contains a range of financial controls directed at ensuring Service Delivery Company financial transactions are properly incurred, authorised, and correctly accounted for. The companies are required to develop their own financial policies and procedures having regard to this handbook.

### Enhanced Reporting Requirements (ERR)

Enhanced Reporting Requirements came into effect for employers on 1 January 2024 and under these rules, employers are required to report travel and subsistence on a real-time basis. The Compliance and Reporting division supported service delivery companies with the implementation of ERR to enable them to comply with the Revenue Commissioners reporting requirements.

### Guidance document on the management of service charges

The Citizens Information Board developed a guidance document on the management of service charges. This document represents best practice in the management of service charges associated with new/existing leases acquired by the Service Delivery Companies.

## Service Delivery Company Occupational Pension Schemes

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The Citizens Information Board provided support to the Service Delivery Companies with the transfer of the remainder of occupational pension schemes to a master trust. The consolidation of occupational pension arrangements should lead to benefits of scale being realised enabling the Service Delivery Companies to outsource regulatory compliance.

## Internal Audit

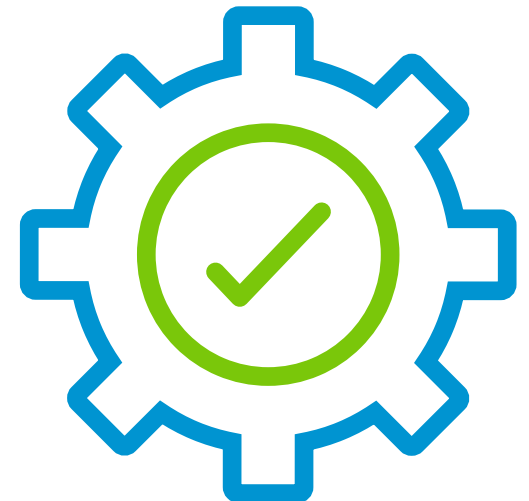
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The Service Delivery Companies are audited on a three-year cyclical basis by internal audit. The Citizens Information Board's internal audit function is provided by an external professional services firm and overseen by the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee and the Board. The FAR approved a risk-based Internal Audit Plan for 2024 and oversaw its implementation. It reviewed the key findings and management responses from the outcome of individual audit reviews.

## Corporate Governance

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The Citizens Information Board developed eLearning corporate governance courses to support board members in the Service Delivery Companies. The courses were intended to supplement the Guide to Best Practice Corporate Governance developed by the Compliance and Reporting division. The eLearning courses include Board Leadership 1: The role of charities and directors and Board Leadership 2: Meetings management.





## eLearning

Citizens Information Board's (CIB) eLearning team developed new compliance and reporting courses to support managers and Board members across all Service Delivery Companies. These include:

- Managing Property Leases
- Managing Using Effective Communication skills
- Understanding Financial Controls and Reporting
- Board Leadership 1: Charities and Directors
- Board Leadership 2: Meetings and Management





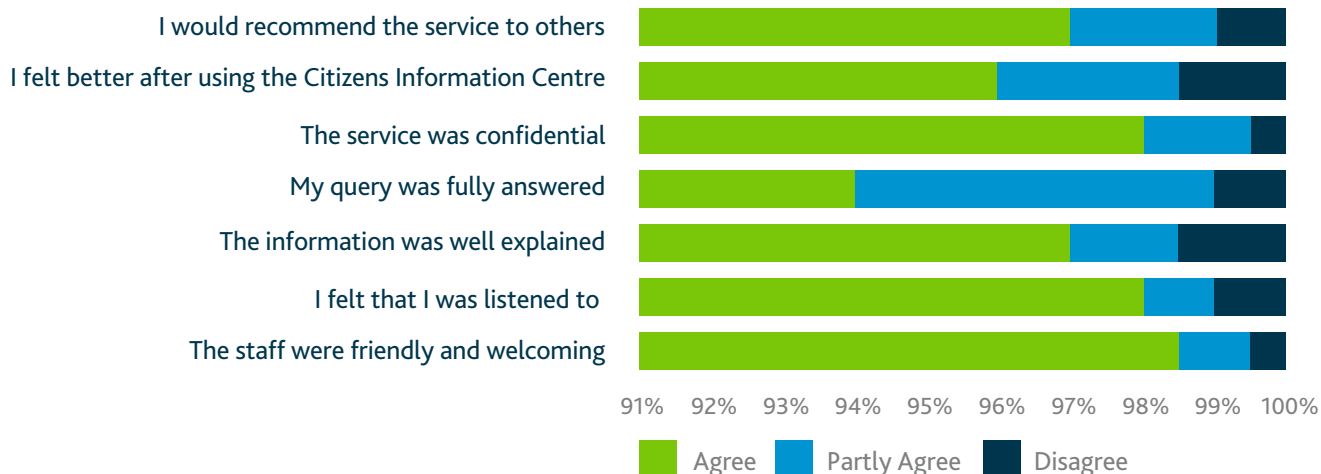
## Citizens Information Service (CIS) Quality Working Group

The Quality Working Group successfully developed a standardised customer feedback form and an accompanying customer feedback procedure. This represents a significant milestone, marking the first time that all Citizens Information Services have adopted a unified approach to collecting feedback from service users.

The standardised form enables consistent gathering of user insights across all services, providing valuable information on what aspects

of the service are working well and where improvements can be made. This coordinated approach enhances the ability to monitor service quality, identify trends, and implement user-informed improvements across the CIS network. Surveys were rolled out from March, and by December, a total of 7,666 responses had been received—providing a robust evidence base to inform service enhancements and ensure user voices are central to service development.

### CIS national feedback March – December



## Development of CIS Advocacy

CIB supported the CIS Advocacy Development Group in overseeing the development of advocacy in the CIS network, identifying and addressing gaps in policies and resources, and establishing action groups to progress advocacy initiatives.



Above: CIS Quality Working Group

## Citizens Information Board – Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) Quality Assurance Programme Board 2024

The CIB - MABS Quality Assurance Programme Board (MABS QAPB) met six times in 2024. Membership was extended to include one Board member in 2024 with Aisling Kennedy, Chair of MABS Support joining the QAPB.

The membership consists of two MABS Regional Managers, a MABS Support representative, a MABS board nominee and two CIB representatives.

### The following projects were progressed by the QAPB in 2024:

- A procedure to capture client feedback in a standardised manner across MABS offices was developed and training provided to all MABS staff to implement the measure. The digital survey asks MABS clients to rate their overall experience of using the service.
- A standard procedure to capture feedback from attendees at the extensive programme money management education sessions that MABS delivers across the country was also developed. Sessions take place in communities across the country and attendees are invited to participate in a standard feedback survey via QR code or paper alternative.



## Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

The second MABS Perception of Quality Survey was run in September 2024. The survey was sent to all MABS staff and Board members. The survey questions sought staff views on how quality measures are achieved in MABS and their view on where they perceive development needs in respect of quality assurance.

The collated responses of the 2024 survey show an improvement in client feedback and in the use and availability of case work technical support since last surveyed in 2022.

However, other areas showed a decrease on the 2022 survey. The responses to case reviews taking place to 'a large extent' or to 'some extent' saw an 11% decrease. The overall awareness and familiarity of the existing quality standards also decreased since the 2022 survey.

## MABS Key Performance Indicator Development Group

The MABS Key Performance Indicator Development Group completed its work in June 2024. The group worked collaboratively to agree three Key Performance Indicators. These were:

- 100% of clients will be invited to complete the standard client impact survey on discharge.
- 100% of MABS regions will report the quarterly number of new clients to their boards and CIB; the number of clients that have remained active from previous quarter; the number of clients discharged in the previous quarter and the number of clients on the purged list in the previous quarter.
- 100% of attendees/participants at Money Management Education (MME) events are asked to complete a standardised survey on the training session or information event attended. 100% of MABS staff providing MME events will complete a standardised post event data template form.



## Remote Citizens Information Clinics Pilot Project

A Remote Citizens Information Clinic is a free service where people can make an appointment to speak to Citizens Information staff on a video call in a dedicated private space in their local library.

Three Remote Citizens Information Clinics were opened in Ireland in 2024 as part of a pilot project to deliver the Citizens Information Service (CIS) through a video link from a library. The clinics are available in Wicklow Town Library, Achill Library and Leabharlann na Ceathrú Rua. This pilot project was developed in conjunction with South Leinster CIS, South Connacht CIS, the three local libraries and with funding from the Public Sector Innovation Fund.

This pilot sought to enhance access to information for people living in areas that do not have a Citizens Information Centre.

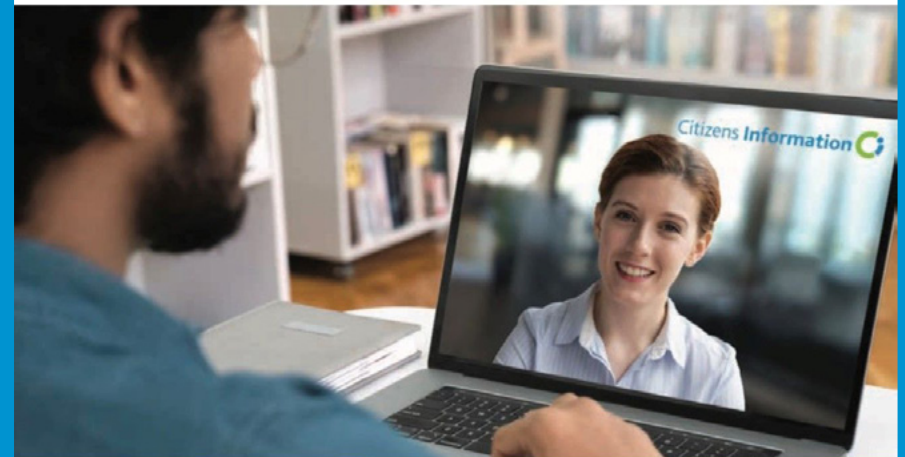
The Revenue Commissioners also offers a remote clinic in Leabharlann na Ceathrú Rua.

Citizens Information Board created a [short video](#) to advertise the pilot service. This video was shared on social media and it was shared with project partners in particular the Library Services of the three relevant County Councils. In November, CIB's Standards and Development team ran a workshop to review the pilot.

Service users were surveyed on the pilot project and feedback is extremely positive.

### Citizens **Information**

## Access Citizens Information through the library



Talk to the librarian at the library to access Citizens Information remotely on a library computer in a private space.



**Know your rights.**

## Strategic Objective 5:

# Demonstrate Efficiency & Effectiveness

Demonstrate service value through governance and outcomes.

Objective five of the strategy involves continuing to develop the Citizens Information Board's systems of governance and internal control, as well as using outcome-based metrics to demonstrate the impact made by services.



# 5

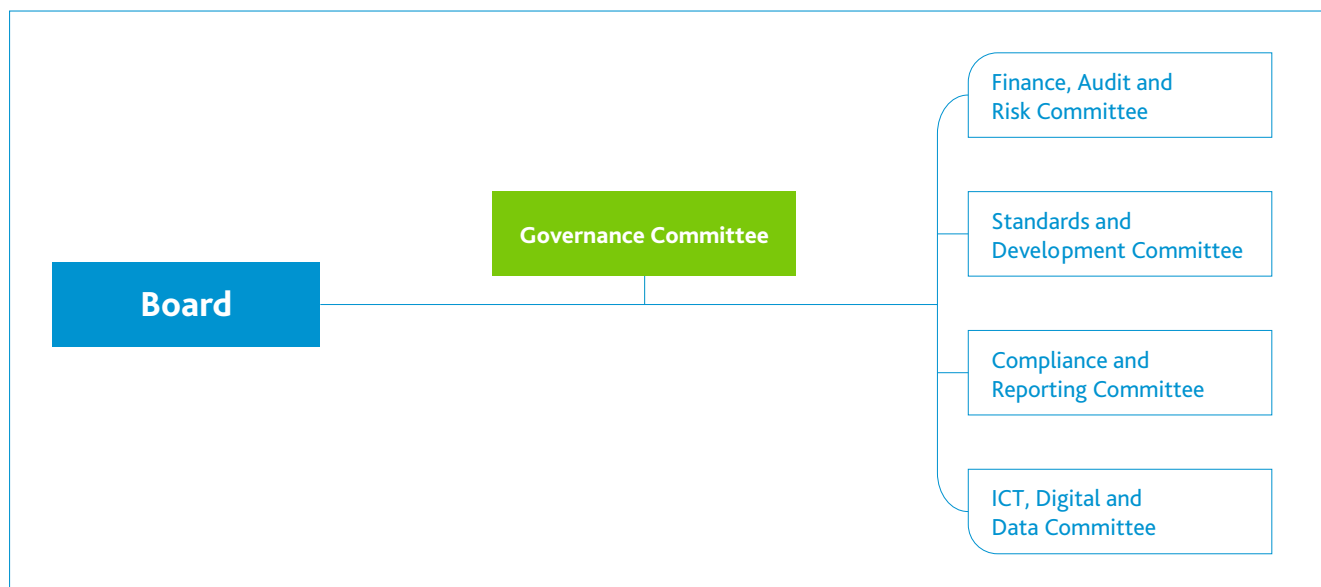
## CIB Governance

Citizens Information Board's (CIB) Board has undertaken significant advances in recent years, including a restructuring of its own committees to ensure more effective and comprehensive oversight, a renewed focus on active management of risk, the broadening of the remit of internal audit, as well as more extensive evaluations of the Board and committees themselves.

Since 2023, the Board has operated with five committees, set out below:

This committee structure broadly mirrors the structure of the CIB Executive. Of the committees, the Compliance and Reporting Committee is responsible for overseeing the reporting and financial and operational compliance of the funded companies, while the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee retains overall responsibility for internal audit, risk management, procurement, budget monitoring and the budget estimates cycle.

In the course of 2024, the Board and its committees met on a combined 37 occasions. The year also saw a particular focus from the Board on the process of strategic budgeting, with detailed budget planning for 2025 beginning in March 2024.



## Finance

The Finance team manages CIB's finance, procurement and risk functions, including production of the annual financial statements and the maintenance of the risk register.

Finance looks to continuously improve systems, processes and controls and during 2024 adapted to changes required by external and internal stakeholders.

One such change was an increase, in conjunction with the FAR Committee, in the scope of the internal audit function to include thematic reviews of aspects of the financial operations of the Service Delivery Companies.



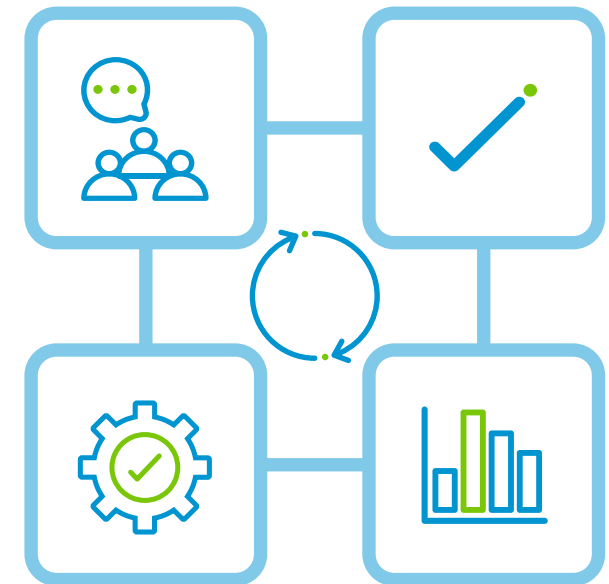
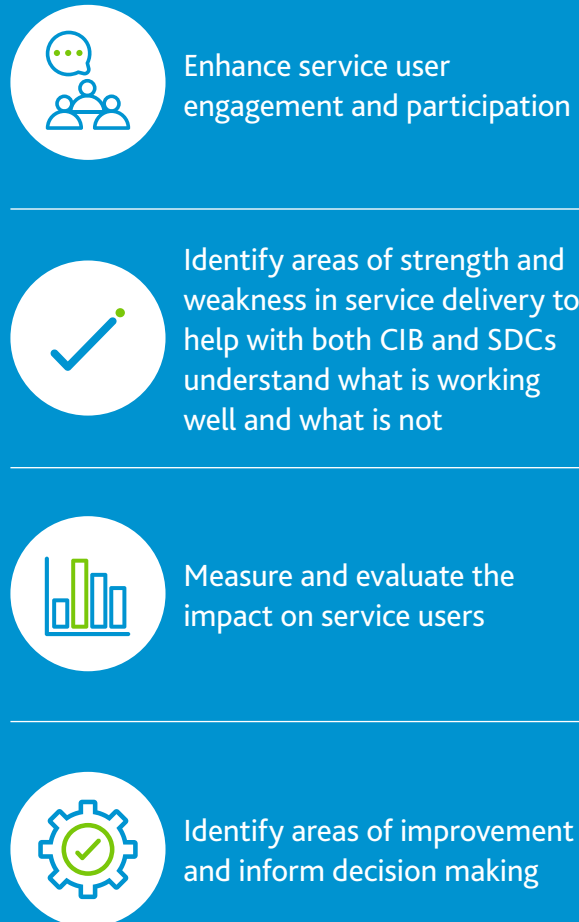
## Impacts Framework Project

In line with its strategic objective to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of services for users, the Citizens Information Board (CIB) has committed to developing outcome-based metrics in collaboration with its funded Service Delivery Companies (SDCs).

In 2024, CIB appointed Indecon Economic Consultants to support the development of Service User Impact Measurement Frameworks for the 22 CIB-funded SDCs. These frameworks are designed to evaluate and demonstrate the outcomes and impacts achieved for service users in a structured and meaningful way.

A Service User Impact Framework is a tool that enables organisations to systematically measure and understand the effects of their services on the individuals and communities they serve. By implementing these frameworks, CIB and SDCs will gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of their services, helping to enhance user engagement, satisfaction, and overall service quality.

The project commenced in November 2024 and is scheduled for completion in 2025. Once implemented, the frameworks will ensure that services remain responsive to the evolving needs and preferences of users, while also supporting continuous improvement and accountability across the network.



# Appendices



## Customer Service Charter

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through [citizensinformation.ie](https://citizensinformation.ie), the Citizens Information Phone Service (0818 07 4000) and the network of Citizens Information Services. We are responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and provide the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS).

We put the citizen at the centre of everything we do and this Charter sets out the principles that underpin our services. You can find our Customer Service Action Plan on our website, [citizensinformationboard.ie](https://citizensinformationboard.ie).

## 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.

### 2. Prompt, courteous and efficient responses

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

### 3. Equality and diversity

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

### 4. Choice

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

### 5. Access

We will ensure that all our services and offices are fully accessible. Contact our Access officer at the address below or [accessofficer@ciboard.ie](mailto:accessofficer@ciboard.ie).

### 6. Official languages

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

### 7. Consultation and evaluation

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

### 8. Internal customers

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

### 9. Co-ordination

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

### 10. Appeals

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

### 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, Anne Marie Owens at [AnneMarie.Owens@ciboard.ie](mailto:AnneMarie.Owens@ciboard.ie).

# Protected Disclosures 2024

## Protected Disclosure Policy

In accordance with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 as amended by the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022, the Citizens Information Board (CIB) is committed to fostering an environment where employees, as well as workers and volunteers of CIB funded service delivery companies, can raise concerns about possible irregularities or wrongdoing. This commitment ensures that all stakeholders feel empowered to report any matters of concern.

A protected disclosure means an individual is protected in law to report a concern about a

wrongdoing that they believe is occurring or has occurred in their workplace. Making a protected disclosure is also known as 'whistle blowing'.

In line with the amendments introduced by the 2022 Act, CIB developed and approved a comprehensive Protected Disclosure policy in 2024. This policy serves as a framework for individuals and includes clear definitions and examples of what constitutes wrongdoing, clarifies what would not be classed as wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act, and highlights existing internal policies that address

complaints outside the scope of the policy. CIB recognises the importance of continuous monitoring and support to encourage open communication among all employees and stakeholders and will continue to foster a workplace environment that values integrity and ethical behaviour.

CIB did not receive any Protected Disclosures in the course of 2024.

# Sustainability

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## Energy related Green House Gas emissions

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The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Ireland's national climate objective requires the State to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy. The 2021 Act also provides for a reduction of 51% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, compared to 2018 levels. The Citizens Information Board is committed to reduce its energy related GHG emissions by 51%. We continue to make positive progress on GHG reduction. This has been achieved through actions covering energy management and operational energy efficiency.

The Citizens Information Board installed LED lighting in a number of its offices in 2024. This will result in lower energy consumption and contribute to a reduced carbon footprint.

There was no official air travel undertaken by personnel in the Citizens Information Board in 2024. On this basis, there was no payment to the Climate Action Fund at the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment under Circular 1 2020.

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is required to report its energy management and performance data to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

## Energy Performance

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The Citizens Information Board is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and improving its energy efficiency having regard to the following 2030 targets:

- **Carbon**

The 2030 greenhouse gas target is 45,439.20 KgCO<sub>2</sub> (including non-electricity greenhouse gas target of 16,041.3KgCO<sub>2</sub>).

- **Energy efficiency**

The Citizens Information Board's energy consumption target is 505,649 kWh.

The latest statistics from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Monitoring and Reporting system shows CIB's energy consumption in 2023 as follows:

- **Energy efficiency performance** 43.2% better than 2009 baseline
- **Total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions down** 28.8% from Average 2016-2018 baseline

## Funding Provided to Service Delivery Companies

Services	Total €	Total €
Citizens Information Services	2024	2023
Dublin South (CIS)	€2,399,064	€2,143,902
Dublin North (CIS)	€2,621,183	€2,402,450
South Leinster (CIS)	€2,167,345	€2,048,702
North Leinster (CIS)	€2,340,418	€2,315,040
North Connacht & Ulster (CIS)	€2,134,097	€1,988,133
South Connacht (CIS)	€1,619,580	€1,535,873
North Munster (CIS)	€1,918,922	€1,756,451
South Munster (CIS)	€2,131,260	€2,023,924
Total	€17,331,869	€16,214,475

## Funding Provided to Service Delivery Companies

Services	Total €	Total €
Money, Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)	2024	2023
MABS Support CLG	€1,097,219	€1,108,991
National Traveller (MABS)	€337,061	€332,048
Dublin North (MABS)	€3,001,670	€2,948,325
Dublin South (MABS)	€2,890,584	€2,691,663
South Leinster (MABS)	€2,381,554	€2,406,871
North Leinster (MABS)	€2,333,339	€2,286,857
North Connacht & Ulster (MABS)	€2,251,715	€2,131,122
South Connacht (MABS)	€1,817,553	€1,749,206
North Munster (MABS)	€2,465,354	€2,430,572
South Munster (MABS)	€2,194,589	€2,193,860
Total	€20,770,638	€20,279,515

## Funding Provided to Service Delivery Companies

National	2024	2023
Citizens Information Phone Service	€1,492,002	€1,490,498
Sign Language Interpreting Service	€1,020,053	€725,542
National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities	€3,420,062	€3,148,074
Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters	€227,872	€254,706
Total	€6,159,989	€5,618,820

## Funding Provided to Specialist Supports

Supports	2024	2023
Threshold	€47,000	€47,000
Free Legal Advice (FLAC)	€140,000	€140,000
Treoir	€34,400	€34,400
Immigrant Council of Ireland	€68,000	€68,000
Total	€289,400	€289,400
Overall	€44,551,896	€42,402,210



## Official Irish Languages Act

- In 2024, the Citizens Information Board (CIB) achieved the target set out under section 10 of the Official Irish Languages Act and had at least 20% of our advertising in the Irish language.
- CIB recorded a spend of 4.22% in relation to the 5% target of any funding spent on advertising to be used to place advertising in the Irish language through Irish language media. A shortage of qualifying Irish language media placements was a key reason.
- CIB attended an information seminar in January, which was hosted by Rannóg na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán/ Official Languages Section, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The seminar outlined various obligations on public bodies under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.
- During 2024, several CIB staff members took part in an immersive Irish language course called Scoil Scairte. It is hoped that this participation can be expanded in 2025.
- Five CIB staff signed up for Irish language courses offered on the One Learning platform.





**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland

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

