# **Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)**

# **2021 Annual Statistical Summary**

## **Caller Summary**

The following is a summary of the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) caller statistical data for 2021 (1st January – 31s December 2021).

### **Caller - Type of Contact**

There were **165,047** calls answered by CIPS during 2021.

*Table 1: CIPS Type of Contact in 2021*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Caller Type | Number of Callers | % Of Callers |
| Telephone | **161,683** | **98.0%** |
| Web Chats | **2,789** | **1.7%** |
| Social Media Enquiries | **575** | **0.3%** |

### **Call Category Types by Main Category**

The Table below sets out the main categories of enquiry for the categorised[[1]](#footnote-1) call types. Of the total calls categorised, 31.1% were related to *Social Welfare*, followed by *Covid19* (16.4%) and then *Employment* (11.2%).

The table below sets out the number of calls answered across the main call category areas in 2021.

*Table 2: Main Category of Calls answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Main Caller Category | No. of Callers | % of all Callers |
| Social Welfare | 28,626 | 31.1% |
| Covid-19 | 15,085 | 16.4% |
| Employment | 10,323 | 11.2% |
| Housing | 6,737 | 7.3% |
| Money and Tax | 5,658 | 6.1% |
| Travel and Recreation | 4,016 | 4.4% |
| Local | 3,878 | 4.2% |
| Health | 3,531 | 3.8% |
| Moving Country | 2,923 | 3.2% |
| Justice | 2,856 | 3.1% |
| Consumer Affairs | 2,685 | 2.9% |
| Birth Family and Relationship | 2,447 | 2.7% |
| Education and Training | 1,757 | 1.9% |
| Death and Bereavement | 961 | 1.0% |
| Environment | 291 | 0.3% |
| Government in Ireland | 253 | 0.3% |
| Total of categorised calls | **92,027** |  |

## **Caller Sub-Category Breakdown**

The following tables provides a more detailed breakdown of call numbers for the five most queried sub-categories during 2021 - Social Welfare, Covid19, Employment, Housing and Money & Tax. This breakdown is based on categorised calls only (55.8% of total callers).

### **Social Welfare callers by sub-category**

CIPS answered 28,626 calls relating to **Social Welfare** issues in 2021 - that is, 31.1% of all callers and the highest area of enquiry. The sub-category *Disability and Illness* was the most queried topic in this category with *Claiming a Social Welfare Payment*, *Families and Children* and then *Carers* being the next most queried.

*Table 3: Breakdown of Social Welfare Call Sub-Categories answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call Sub-category | Number of Callers | % Of Social Welfare Callers |
| Social Welfare | Disability and Illness | 4,529 | 15.8% |
| Social Welfare | Claiming a Social Welfare Payment | 4,293 | 15.0% |
| Social Welfare | Families and Children | 3,087 | 10.8% |
| Social Welfare | Carers | 2,872 | 10.0% |
| Social Welfare | Older and Retired People | 2,563 | 9.0% |
| Social Welfare | Other | 2,500 | 8.7% |
| Social Welfare | Extra Social Welfare Benefits | 1,998 | 7.0% |
| Social Welfare | Unemployed People Job Seekers Allowance | 1,612 | 5.6% |
| Social Welfare | Unemployed People Jobseekers Benefit | 1,162 | 4.1% |
| Social Welfare | Social Insurance (PRSI) | 817 | 2.9% |
| Social Welfare | Supplementary Welfare Schemes | 602 | 2.1% |
| Social Welfare | Means Test for Social Welfare Payments | 516 | 1.8% |
| Social Welfare | Back to Education | 460 | 1.6% |
| Social Welfare | Social Welfare Payments and Work | 386 | 1.3% |
| Social Welfare | Rent Supplement | 339 | 1.2% |
| Social Welfare | Activation Schemes Education and Training | 240 | 0.8% |
| Social Welfare | Death Related Benefits | 230 | 0.8% |
| Social Welfare | Appeals | 118 | 0.4% |
| Social Welfare | Social Assistance Payments | 107 | 0.4% |
| Social Welfare | Unemployed People | 90 | 0.3% |
| Social Welfare | Social Welfare Miscellaneous | 70 | 0.2% |
| Social Welfare | Farmers | 34 | 0.1% |
| Social Welfare | Null | 1 | 0.0% |
|  | **Total Social Welfare Calls** | **28,626** |  |

### **Covid-19 callers by sub-category**

CIPS answered 15,085 calls relating to **Covid-19** in 2021 - that is, 16.4% of all calls which were categorised and represents the 2nd highest subject matter area. The sub-category, *Public Health Measures* was, by far, the most significant area of concern at 53.3% of all Covid-19 related calls.

*Table 4: Breakdown of Covid-19 Call Sub-Categories answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call Sub-category | Number of Callers | % of Covid19 Callers |
| Covid19 | Public Health Measures | 8,040 | 53.3% |
| Covid19 | Pandemic Unemployment Payment | 3,346 | 22.2% |
| Covid19 | Other | 1,742 | 11.5% |
| Covid19 | Enhanced Illness Benefit | 900 | 6.0% |
| Covid19 | Employment Rights | 490 | 3.2% |
| Covid19 | Revenue's Employer Refund Scheme | 226 | 1.5% |
| Covid19 | Returning to work | 153 | 1.0% |
| Covid19 | Supports for Businesses | 120 | 0.8% |
| Covid19 | Older people | 37 | 0.2% |
| Covid19 | Mortgages, Loans, Rents | 23 | 0.2% |
| Covid19 | Students | 8 | 0.1% |
|  | **Total Covid-19 Calls** | **15,085** |  |

### **Employment callers by sub-category**

CIPS answered 10,323 calls relating to Employment issues during 2021 - that is, 11.2% of all caller queries that were categorised. The sub-category of *Employment Rights and Conditions* accounted for the vast majority (82%) of these calls.

*Table 5: Breakdown of Employment Call Sub-Categories answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call Sub-Category | Number of Callers | % of Employment Callers |
| Employment | Employment Rights and Conditions | 8,549 | 82.8% |
| Employment | Unemployment and Redundancy | 686 | 6.6% |
| Employment | Self-Employment | 378 | 3.7% |
| Employment | Other | 256 | 2.5% |
| Employment | Employment and Disability | 96 | 0.9% |
| Employment | Enforcement and Redress | 78 | 0.8% |
| Employment | Starting Work and Changing Job | 63 | 0.6% |
| Employment | Employment Schemes and Internship | 62 | 0.6% |
| Employment | Migrant Workers | 41 | 0.4% |
| Employment | Types of Employment | 37 | 0.4% |
| Employment | Equality in Work | 35 | 0.3% |
| Employment | Retirement | 27 | 0.3% |
| Employment | Part Time Employment | 11 | 0.1% |
| Employment | Appeals (Enforcement ) | 4 | 0.0% |
|  | **Total Employment Calls** | **10,323** |  |

### **Housing callers by sub-category**

CIPS answered 6,737calls relating to **Housing** issues during 2021 - that is, 7.3% of all categorised callers, with 80.1% of calls relating to three main topics - Local *Authority and Social Housing*, *Renting a Home* and *Housing Grants and Schemes*.

*Table 6: Breakdown of Housing Call by Sub-Categories answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call Sub-category | No. of Callers | % of Housing |
| Housing | Local Authority and Social Housing | 2,418 | 35.9% |
| Housing | Renting a Home | 1,818 | 27.0% |
| Housing | Housing Grants and Schemes | 1,159 | 17.2% |
| Housing | Other | 379 | 5.6% |
| Housing | Buying a Home | 367 | 5.4% |
| Housing | Planning Permission | 248 | 3.7% |
| Housing | Homelessness | 177 | 2.6% |
| Housing | Losing your Home | 82 | 1.2% |
| Housing | Building or Altering a Home | 65 | 1.0% |
| Housing | Emergency Accommodation | 24 | 0.4% |
|  | **Total Housing Calls** | **6,737** |  |

### **Money and Tax callers by sub-category**

CIPS answered 5,658 calls relating to **Money and Tax** during 2021 - that is, 6.1% of all categorised callers, with *Income Tax* and *Income Tax Credits and Reliefs* being the most queried topics within this.

*Table 7: Breakdown of Moving Country Call Sub-Categories answered by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call Sub-Category | Number of Callers | % of Money and Tax Callers |
| Money and Tax | Income Tax | 1,632 | 28.8% |
| Money and Tax | Income Tax Credits and Reliefs | 1,279 | 22.6% |
| Money and Tax | Capital Taxes | 553 | 9.8% |
| Money and Tax | Property Taxes | 453 | 8.0% |
| Money and Tax | Other | 413 | 7.3% |
| Money and Tax | Housing taxes and reliefs | 354 | 6.3% |
| Money and Tax | Duties and VAT | 308 | 5.4% |
| Money and Tax | Insurance | 152 | 2.7% |
| Money and Tax | Debt | 144 | 2.5% |
| Money and Tax | Pensions | 95 | 1.7% |
| Money and Tax | Financial Institutions | 87 | 1.5% |
| Money and Tax | Moving Country and Taxation | 75 | 1.3% |
| Money and Tax | Loans and Credit | 61 | 1.1% |
| Money and Tax | Savings and Investments | 17 | 0.3% |
| Money and Tax | Consumer Protection Code and Mortgages | 13 | 0.2% |
| Money and Tax | Wills | 12 | 0.2% |
| Money and Tax | Universal Social Charge ( USC ) | 8 | 0.1% |
| Money and Tax | Tax on Savings and Investments | 2 | 0.0% |
|  | **Total Money and Tax Calls** | **5,658** |  |

**Calls by Sub-category - Top Six areas.**

This table provides a breakdown of the six most queried sub-categories from the 92,027 categorised call to CIPS during 2021, with *Employment Rights and Condition* receiving the highest level of calls - followed by various Covid19 and Social Welfare topics.

*Table 8: Most Queried Sub-Categories received by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Call Category | Call sub-category | Number of Callers | % of all categorised Calls |
| Employment | Employment Rights and Conditions | 8,549 | 9.3% |
| Covid19 | Public Health Measures | 8,040 | 8.7% |
| Social Welfare | Disability and Illness | 4,529 | 4.9% |
| Social Welfare | Claiming a Social Welfare Payment | 4,293 | 4.7% |
| Local | Local Government | 3,878 | 4.2% |
| Covid19 | Pandemic Unemployment Payment | 3,346 | 3.6% |

**Social Policy Feedback**

In addition to collecting data on callers’ queries, CIPS Information Officers also identify ‘Social Policy Returns’ (SPRs) - that is, instances that are indicative of a wider policy or administrative concern that is impacting on the caller ability to access a social or public service. These SPRs provide CIB with useful, anonymised case study material that can ‘get behind’ the statistics and demonstrate how policy (and the administration of policy) can impact on peoples’ lives. Staff in CIPS the national phone service are well-placed to identify and record these issues, many of which will arise repeatedly and will have a significant impact on callers.

The table below provides an indication of the key areas where Information Officers identified that difficulties were arising for callers during 2021 - with *Social Welfare, Travel and Recreation,* and *Housing* accounting for almost two thirds of all of the policy feedback.

*Table 9: Social Policy Returns by Main Category (as percentage) received by CIPS in 2021*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Main Caller Category | % of SPRs |
| Social Welfare | 35.9% |
| Travel and Recreation | 17.8% |
| Housing | 12.2% |
| Money and Tax | 11.1% |
| Moving Country | 9.6% |
| Others | 13.5% |

1. 44.2% of total calls to CIPS in 2021 which were answered were not categorised under specific subject matter areas i.e. 73,020 calls. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)