

# Freedom of Information Act

## Section 15 and 16 Reference Manual

---

Information about the Citizens Information Board  
prepared in accordance with  
Section 15 and Section 16  
of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003

New edition compiled in January 2010

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION 15 MANUAL.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Citizens Information Board and the Freedom of Information Acts .....</b>	<b>5</b>
How to get information .....	5
Records held by the Citizens Information Board.....	5
How to use the FOI Acts.....	5
Policy on confidentiality and privacy .....	7
Fees .....	7
Section 6(9) FOI Acts and Citizen Information Services .....	8
<b>Chapter 2: About the Citizens Information Board.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Functions.....	9
Mission, values and strategic priorities.....	10
Structure.....	11
Budgets .....	11
The Citizens Information Board's customers.....	12
Customer services and complaints procedure.....	12
<b>Chapter 3: Services provided and records held by different sections of the Citizens Information Board .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Information Production .....	14
Information Publications and Social Policy.....	15
Advocacy and Accessibility.....	17
Customer Service and Training .....	18
Regional Services.....	20
Citizens Information Board Central Services .....	24
Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) Transition Unit.....	25
<b>SECTION 16 MANUAL.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Part A: The funding of Citizens Information Services.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Part B: Training Courses/Events .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Part C: Programme of Advocacy Services .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Part D: Publications Grants Scheme.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Part E: Social Policy Grants Scheme .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Part F: Group Insurance Facility for Voluntary Social Service Organisations...</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Citizens Information Board Organisational Chart.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Citizens Information Board Offices.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Customer Charter and Complaints Procedures.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 4 Citizens Information Board Publications and Resources.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix 5 The Freedom of Information Acts .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## Preface

The Citizens Information Board was established in March 2007. The Citizens Information Board, as Comhairle, became subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 1997 from 1 October 2001. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts 1997 and 2003 impose various duties on public bodies which are subject to it, and give certain rights to individuals to access the records of the public body concerned.

The Citizens Information Board's primary activity is the provision and dissemination of information about public services. Information about its functions, activities and decision-making processes is publicly and routinely available. Under the terms of the FOI Acts the Board is required to make information about itself available in the manner required by the legislation.

This third edition of the Reference Manual, prepared in accordance with the terms of Section 15 and 16 of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 was compiled in January 2010. It outlines the Citizens Information Board's obligations under the Acts and how it fulfils those obligations. It describes the functions and activities of the Citizens Information Board and the records held.

The Manual is in two parts, the first is the [Section 15 Manual](#) which provides a general description of the Citizens Information Board, its functions and services, classes of records held by the organisation and a general description of the rules and guidelines in decision making.

The second part, the [Section 16 Manual](#), provides detailed information on the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the Citizens Information Board for the purposes of decisions, determinations or recommendations in relation to the small number of schemes which it administers and information about the way these schemes are administered. An explanation of general rights under the FOI Acts is provided in Appendix 5.

This Manual is published online on the Citizens Information Board website at [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

All references in this Guide to the Freedom of Information Act or Acts refer to the 1997 Act as amended by the 2003 Act. The Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act came into effect on 11 April 2003.

## **SECTION 15 MANUAL**

Section 15 of the FOI Acts obliges each public body to include the following in the Reference Manual:

1. A general description of its structure and organisation, functions, powers and duties, any service provided to the public and the procedures by which those services may be availed of by the public.
2. A general description of the classes of records held.
3. A general description of the rules, guidelines etc used in decision making (this aspect is more fully dealt with in the Section 16 Reference Manual).
4. The administrative arrangements made by the public body to enable people to exercise their rights under the FOI Acts including the names of the people responsible for these arrangements and details of the appeals procedures.

## **Chapter 1: The Citizens Information Board and the Freedom of Information Acts**

It is the policy of the Citizens Information Board to make information about its activities, services and decision making processes publicly and routinely available.

Information about all of the Citizens Information Board's services is available on its website ([citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie)). Some of the Citizens Information Board's services are online only, for example, the Citizens Information website (see below). As an agency whose most significant activity is the provision of information we recognise that the Internet is the most efficient and effective means of transmission of up-to-date accurate information. As access to the Internet is not yet universally available we will continue to publish as much information as possible in other formats.

The Citizens Information Board's services are provided mainly to other organisations rather than directly to the public. However, ultimately, all our services are designed to facilitate individual citizens. This Freedom of Information (FOI) Manual describes all the services provided by the Citizens Information Board.

### **How to get information**

The Citizens Information Board's obligations under the FOI Acts are described here and in Appendix 5. If you want information on any aspect of the Citizens Information Board's activities, you should contact the relevant section of the organisation. The staff of the organisation are listed in Appendix 1.

### **Records held by the Citizens Information Board**

Records which are currently held by the Citizens Information Board are accessible under the legislation provided they do not impinge on the right to privacy and confidentiality of any individual. The kinds of records held by the Citizens Information Board are described in Chapter 3.

### **How to use the FOI Acts**

Under the FOI Acts, you may be entitled to get access to information which is not otherwise publicly available.

You have the right to:

- Access records held by the Citizens Information Board
- Correct any personal information relating to yourself which is held by the Citizens Information Board and which you consider to be inaccurate, incomplete or misleading
- Be given reasons for decisions made by the Citizens Information Board which affect you personally

The records to which you are entitled to get access are:

- Those records created since 21 April 1998 (that is the date on which the FOI Act 1997 came into effect)
- Records created before that date which are necessary in order to understand subsequent records
- Personal information held by the Citizens Information Board, regardless of when the record was created

In practice, the Citizens Information Board adopts the following procedure:

We will give you the information if it is available and there are no reasons for withholding it. We may consider withholding information if there is a danger that it would interfere with our policy on privacy and confidentiality.

If you are applying under the FOI Acts, we remind you that

- Your application should be in writing and should include the fee if appropriate.
- Your application should also indicate that the information is sought under the FOI Acts.
- You should indicate if you want the information in a particular form (for example, photocopy, computer disk, etc.).
- You should give as much detail as possible to enable us to identify the record. If you have difficulty in identifying the precise records which you require, we will be happy to help you in preparing your request.
- You may be required to prove your identity, especially if you are looking for personal information so you may, therefore, be asked to produce your passport, driving licence, birth certificate, or other appropriate identification.

We are obliged under the FOI Acts to acknowledge your request within two weeks and to make a decision within four weeks.

You should send your request for information under the Acts to

**Paul McGuire**

FOI Officer

Citizens Information Board

George's Quay House

43 Townsend St

Dublin 2

Telephone: +353 1 605 90 00

E-mail: [paul.mcguire@ciboard.ie](mailto:paul.mcguire@ciboard.ie)

If you are not happy with the initial decision on your application or if you do not receive notification of a decision, you may apply for an internal review of the decision (or absence of decision) to:

**Gerry Hegarty**

Senior Manager

Citizens Information Board

George's Quay House  
43 Townsend St  
Dublin 2  
Telephone: +353 1 605 90 00  
E-mail: [gerry.hegarty@ciboard.ie](mailto:gerry.hegarty@ciboard.ie)

You should look for an internal review within four weeks of receiving the initial decision or the absence of an initial decision (i.e. within eight weeks of application).

We are obliged to conduct an internal review within three weeks of receiving your request. If you are still unhappy with the decision or you have not received a reply to our request for an internal review, you may appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

**Office of the Information Commissioner**

18 Lower Leeson Street  
Dublin 2  
Telephone: 01 678 5222  
Fax: 01 661 0570  
Website: [www.oic.ie](http://www.oic.ie)  
Email: [info@oic.ie](mailto:info@oic.ie)

**Policy on confidentiality and privacy**

The Citizens Information Board undertakes to treat as confidential any information provided to us in confidence unless we are obliged by legislation to make it publicly available. When supplying such sensitive information, we will do our utmost to inform you of any possible circumstances in which we may have a problem in keeping the information confidential.

If, for any reason, you wish that information provided to us should not be disclosed because of its sensitive nature, then you must, when supplying the information, make clear this wish and specify the reasons for the information's sensitivity. We will consult with you before making a decision on any FOI request received involving sensitive information which you may have supplied.

**Fees**

The Citizens Information Board is obliged by the legislation to charge fees for certain records accessed under the FOI Acts.

**Personal records**

There is no charge for access to personal records, for correcting or amending personal information or for getting access to decisions which directly affect you.

**Other records**

If you are looking for non-personal information, you must pay an initial fee of €15. This is reduced to €10 if you are a medical card holder or the dependant of a medical card holder.

Fees may also be charged for the work involved in processing the records. These fees are as follows:

- €20.95 per hour of search and retrieval
- €0.04 per sheet for a photocopy
- €0.51 for a three and a half inch computer disk containing copy documents
- €10.16 for a CD-ROM containing copy documents
- €6.35 for a radiograph (X-ray) containing copy documents

You may have to pay a deposit if the estimated cost of finding the records is more than €50.79. The fees may be waived if the estimated cost is less than €10.

If you make an internal appeal, you have to pay €75 (or €25 if you are a medical card holder). The fee for an appeal to the Information Commissioner is €150 (or €50 for a medical card holder).

## **Section 6(9) FOI Acts and Citizen Information Services**

The Citizens Information Board has been advised by the Office of the Attorney General that Citizens Information Services which are supported by the Citizens Information Board could come within the scope of Section 6(9) of the FOI Acts and that records held by CISs, relevant to the services they provide on behalf of the Citizens Information Board, are covered by the Acts. Information held by a Citizen Information Service, relating to an FOI information request, must be made available to the Citizens Information Board on request.

## **Chapter 2: About the Citizens Information Board**

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory agency responsible for a range of activities related to the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social and public services to the public. The Citizens Information Board provides for the delivery of high quality information and advice on public and social services through a range of integrated and accessible delivery channels.

The Citizens Information Board has particular responsibilities with regard to services for people with disabilities. The Citizens Information Board's area of responsibility is determined by its statutory functions as laid down in the Comhairle Act 2000 and the Citizens Information Act 2007. The Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008 gave the Citizens Information Board responsibility for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). These functions are set out below.

### **Functions**

The Comhairle Act 2000, the Citizens Information Act 2007 and the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008 set out the functions of the Citizens Information Board as follows:

- To ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services
- To assist and support individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options
- To promote greater accessibility, coordination and public awareness of social services
- To support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services
- To support the provision of, or directly provide, advocacy services for people with a disability.
- To support the provision of advice on personal debt and money management through the Money Advice and Budgeting Service.

The Acts define social services as “any service provided by a statutory or voluntary body which is available to the public and includes, but is not limited to services in relation to health, social welfare, education, family support, housing, taxation, citizenship, consumer matters, advice on personal debt and money management, employment and training, equality, asylum and immigration.”

“Advocacy services” include services in which the interests of a person seeking a social service are represented in order to assist such person in securing entitlements to such service but does not include legal representation.

## **Mission, values and strategic priorities**

The Citizens Information Board's mission is

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

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

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

### **Strategic priorities**

The Citizens Information Board's commitment is that people will receive independent, reliable information, advice and advocacy wherever they are located in Ireland and in a way that suits their needs.

To do this the Citizens Information Board's 2009-2012 Citizens Information Strategic Plan – *Pathways to Services: Putting Citizens at the Centre* sets out five citizen-centered strategic priorities:

#### **Strategic Priority 1:**

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

#### **Strategic Priority 2:**

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

#### **Strategic Priority 3:**

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

#### **Strategic Priority 4:**

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

**Strategic Priority 5:**

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

**Structure**

The Citizens Information Board currently delivers services centrally and regionally. The Citizens Information Board's headquarters is at George's Quay House, 43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2. There are five regional offices, and a number of local offices around the country.

The Citizens Information Board has a staff complement of over 100 people. The Citizens Information Board's senior management team consists of a Chief Executive and two Senior Managers based in George's Quay House. The Senior Managers are responsible for Development and Support Services and Regional Services respectively. Development and Support Services which are based centrally, are responsible for developing the Citizens Information Board's information resources and services, establishing standards and providing other supports to regional services and customers. These service teams include Information Production, Information Publications and Social Policy, Customer Service and Training, Advocacy and Accessibility and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Service teams based in George's Quay House include Human Resources (HR) and Administration, Finance, Public Relations (PR) and Promotions and the MABS Transition Unit.

The development of information services throughout the country is co-ordinated and managed by the Citizens Information Board's five regional service teams. These teams provide support, including training, to organisations, both statutory and voluntary which have information-giving elements to their work. Regional services are responsible for supporting the network of Citizen Information Services (CISs) and the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS). They also provide support to disability advocacy projects and the network of MABS services as well as being involved with local government and with statutory and voluntary local development bodies. The regions are supported by central services to deliver services effectively to customers.

The Citizens Information Board's five regional teams are based in Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Dublin (Park House, North Circular Road) and Tallaght. A full organisational chart, including the names of staff members is provided in Appendix 1. Citizens Information Board offices are listed in Appendix 2.

**Budgets**

The Citizens Information Board's budget allocation for 2009 was €45.046m\*. This included the direct cost of funding the Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

\*Responsibility for the Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS) transferred to the Citizen's Information Board (CIB) from 13th July 2009. Expenditure of €7.041m was incurred by MABS in 2009 prior to this date. To enable comparison, this funding is included in the 2009 allocation for the CIB above.

The Citizens Information Board's budget allocation for 2010 is €45.872m. This includes the direct cost of funding the Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

## **The Citizens Information Board's customers**

Services are provided by Citizens Information Board to the public mainly through other agencies.

Citizens Information Board's main customer groupings include:

- Citizen Information Services (CISs)
- Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)
- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
- Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)
- Voluntary and statutory organisations
- People with disabilities and their organisations
- Other information services.
- Members of the general public

Details of the services provided are outlined in Chapter 3.

## **Customer services and complaints procedure**

The Citizens Information Board's commitment to its customers is set out in a Customer Charter, which indicates the level of service that can be expected by Citizens Information Board customers. The charter is displayed in Citizens Information Board offices and a copy is attached in Appendix 3.

A supporting Customer Action Plan describes the processes by which the Charter commitments will be delivered and evaluated. The Action Plan is available on request from the Customer Service and Training Service in the Citizens Information Board's head office and on the Citizens Information Board website ([citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie)).

An important part of the Customer Charter is the provision of an accessible, transparent and simple to use system for dealing with customer comments and complaints about the quality of service provided. The Citizens Information Board's customer service officer can be contacted at [customercomplaints@ciboard.ie](mailto:customercomplaints@ciboard.ie) or by telephone: (01 6059000) or by writing to:

**Shona Bannon**

Citizens Information Board  
Ground Floor  
George's Quay House  
43 Townsend St  
Dublin 2

The Citizens Information Board also ensures that all its services are fully accessible including offices and meeting rooms. The Citizens Information Board's Access Officer can be contacted at [access@ciboard.ie](mailto:access@ciboard.ie) or by telephone: (01) 605 9000 or by writing to:

**Helen Lahert**  
Citizens Information Board  
Ground Floor  
George's Quay House  
43 Townsend St  
Dublin 2

## **Chapter 3: Services provided and records held by different sections of the Citizens Information Board**

This chapter details the services and resources provided by the various service delivery teams within the Citizens Information Board and sets out the records held by each team. The Citizens Information Board's main activity is the production of public and social service information resources for information providers and the general public.

### **Information Production**

The Information Production Service is responsible for delivering online information services to meet the public's need for information as well as providing online supports to information providers to enable them to provide information effectively. Responsibilities include managing the Citizens Information website and the Citizens Information Board's website.

#### **Citizens Information website**

The Citizens Information website, [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), delivers accessible and accurate public service information on the public and social rights of everyone in Ireland. The website structures information around key life events. [Citizensinformation.ie](http://Citizensinformation.ie) covers a wide range of subjects, including social welfare, employment rights, buying a home, moving abroad, education and housing. The information is divided into 14 categories so that users can access the topic relevant to them. Each category addresses a series of frequently asked questions on the topic which is supported with in-depth information, case studies, supporting documents and downloadable forms.

The website has a range of features such as a 'find an address' tool which lists over 8,000 service providers and government bodies nationwide. All content is available in both English and Irish. Relevant content is published in Polish, French and Romanian. The site is also accessible to users with disabilities, who may need to use assistive technologies. Two microsites were launched in 2009 and early 2010 – [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) and [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie).

[Losingyourjob.ie](http://Losingyourjob.ie) has been specially designed around the needs of users who are newly unemployed or who have had their pay or hours cut. It covers all aspects of job loss and the services and entitlements available for newly unemployed people. It is based on content from [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie).

[Keepingyourhome.ie](http://Keepingyourhome.ie) provides comprehensive information on the services and entitlements available for people who are having difficulties paying rent or making mortgage repayments.

[Keepingyourhome.ie](http://Keepingyourhome.ie) is based on content from the [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service website, [mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie).

## **The Citizens Information Board website**

The Citizens Information Board website, [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie), provides information on its services and links to other information resources.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

Citizens Information is provided online at [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)

### **Records held**

- General administrative records including minutes of meetings
- Financial records
- Contracts with IT support services and information providers
- Website traffic statistics

## **Information Publications and Social Policy**

The Information Publications and Social Policy service is responsible for producing the Citizens Information Board's information publications and for carrying out the Citizens Information Board's social policy functions.

### **Information publications**

The Citizens Information Board produces a range of information publications on all aspects of rights and entitlements for the public. They include booklets, leaflets, directories and wallcharts which are made available to Citizen Information Services, information providers and the voluntary and community sector. Publications include *Relate* – a monthly information journal.

Publications are available online on the [Citizens Information Board website](http://Citizens Information Board website). A full list of publications can also be accessed in from Appendix 4. In addition to its publications on rights and entitlements, the Citizens Information Board publishes social policy and research reports highlighting issues of concern to the public and information providers.

### **Social policy**

The Citizens Information Board's participation in social policy work is based on its functions as set out in the Comhairle Act 2000: "to support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services."

The Citizens Information Board contributes to the development of national social policy by collecting and using feedback from the users and providers of information and advice services. Policy concerns identified by Citizen Information Services, the Citizens Information Phone Service and other providers of independent information and advice services are analysed and used as the basis for social policy reports published regularly by the Citizens Information Board.

*Voice* is a quarterly publication from the Citizens Information Board. It aims to highlight the queries and concerns voiced by the users of information and advice agencies and to document how these issues influence policy making at local and national level.

Social policy research and reports are available in print and on the Citizens Information Board website. Recent social policy reports include *Getting There: Transport and Access to Social Services* which highlights the range of issues experienced by the public in relation to travel, transport and access, particularly in rural areas. For a complete list of reports see Appendix 4.

The Social Policy Grants Scheme which provides small-scale support for social policy initiatives being undertaken by independent information providers, particularly CISs working on their own or in conjunction with other CISs and/or local voluntary/community organisations is described in detail in [Part E of the Section 15 Manual](#).

Guidelines on social policy work for Citizen Information Services are published in print and are available from the Citizens Information Board website: [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

More information on the type and nature of social policy work carried out by the Citizens Information Board is available in the links below.

[Submissions and policy recommendations](#)  
[Research and social policy reports](#)  
[Social policy quarterly reports](#)  
[Voice, the social policy periodical](#)  
[Social policy guidelines for information staff](#)

## **Publications Grants Scheme**

The Citizens Information Board operates a small grant scheme for publications issued by other information providers (see [Part D of the Section 16 Manual](#)).

## **Expert query back-up service**

A telephone query back-up service is available to Citizens Information Services and other information providers and is staffed by Information staff in the Citizens Information Board George's Quay House Office.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

- Publications available free of charge to the public
- Criteria for grant aid routinely published in conjunction with advertising of schemes

### **Records held**

- General administrative records including minutes of meetings
- Back issues of publications
- Applications for grant aid (Information Grants and Publication Grants)
- Contracts/tenders for commissioned work
- Oyster database for query returns/statistics for CIS network
- Financial records
- Contracts for support services and suppliers
- Records of social policy feedback from Citizens Information Services (held on Oyster system)

## **Advocacy and Accessibility**

One of the Citizens Information Board's strategic priorities is to develop and facilitate advocacy services, particularly for people with disabilities and influence policy developments and administrative systems and procedures in this area

The Advocacy and Accessibility Service have a number of responsibilities in relation to advocacy, including:

- Supporting and resourcing advocacy projects in co-operation with the community and voluntary sector, particularly for people with disabilities
- Supporting the development of accredited advocacy training
- Raising awareness of advocacy among service providers and community, voluntary and statutory agencies
- Commissioning research
- Advocacy publications are available free of charge and are listed below.

This service is also responsible for [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie) and has produced the report *Access to Information for All* (2009) which aims to help organisations improve the accessibility of their information.

The Citizens Information Board promotes advocacy in a number of ways by supporting the development of advocacy services within CISs and providing resources to advocacy projects in the voluntary and community sector. From time to time it commissions research to further the understanding of advocacy and the services and supports required for its development. Recent advocacy reports are available on the Citizens Information Board website. There is a list of them in Appendix 4.

*Speaking Up For Advocacy* is a regular newsletter that discusses advocacy issues and details projects and research relating to advocacy. It mainly focuses on advocacy in Ireland but also refers to advocacy issues abroad.

## **Advocacy Case Management System**

The Citizens Information Board recently commissioned the development of an electronic web-based case management system for use by advocates and their line managers at local project level. The Citizens Information Board will run statistical

reports through this system. This replaces a variety of paper and electronic systems that currently exist to track advocacy cases.

- Access to files which contain personal and sensitive data is only open to the designated people in the local project, the data controller.
- There is a report function on the system which enables the client of any advocacy service to have access to all of the information held about them at any stage.
- The Citizens Information Board as data processor is responsible for the information being held safely and securely on the server. The Citizens Information Board does not access or look at any local project files.
- There is a complete audit trail on all files detailing which user has accessed the system and what they have looked at.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

Advocacy and research reports and newsletters are available online at [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie) and in print.

#### **Records held**

- General administrative records including minutes of meetings
- Financial records
- Tendering documentation and contracts for research undertaken
- Grant applications, assessments and contracts with successful applicants

## **Customer Service and Training**

The Customer Service and Training Service seeks to ensure that the CIB customers have access to high quality training services to enable them to deliver quality information, advice and advocacy services to all. It delivers and supports the delivery of the accredited Information Providers Programme throughout the country.

The Citizens Information Board also provides training services to Citizen Information Services, and other voluntary and statutory bodies to enable them to deliver quality information, advice and advocacy services. A wide range of training courses and supports are delivered through the National Calendar of Training Events. (Further details are available in the Section 16 Manual.)

The main activities of the Citizens Information Board's central and regional training and development teams are:

- Provision of training services to Citizen Information Services personnel, other information providers and voluntary and community organisations
- Development of training resources for use by information providers
- Delivery of accredited training courses to information providers e.g. Information Providers Programme

- Provision of training consultancy service
- Co-ordinating the Group Insurance Facility for voluntary social service organisations

## **Training courses**

Training courses are provided to meet the needs of Citizen Information Services staff, (paid and volunteers), management committees and the specific needs of other information providers (see Section 16 Manual). Details of scheduled training courses, their content, location, cost and target audience and criteria for selection are available on the Citizens Information Board website at the [National Calendar of Training Events and Training Programme](#).

## **Training resources and publications**

The Customer Service and Training Service develops and disseminates training resources, for example manuals and videos, which may be used by Citizen Information Services and other relevant voluntary and statutory organisations.

Among the resources currently available are:

- *Managing Volunteers* - a good practice guide published online
- *How Can We Help You* - an interpersonal skills video with comprehensive training notes

## **Good practice and accreditation**

The Customer Service and Training Service supports the development of best practice standards in the content and delivery of training.

The Information Providers Programme is a FETAC-accredited programme at level 6 on the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications. The two accredited modules are

- 1) L32072 Information, Advice and Advocacy Practice
- 2) L32073 Social and Civil Information.

## **Provision of Group Insurance Facility for voluntary social service organisations**

The Citizens Information Board operates a group insurance facility for voluntary social service organisations in conjunction with Allianz Insurance. Membership is open to any group involved in the provision of personal social services. (Details are included in the Section 16 Manual.)

## **Publicly and routinely available information**

Details of training courses, their content, location, cost and target audience are published regularly on the Citizens Information Board website. Information on

the Group Insurance Facility is also available.

### **Records held**

- Applications for participation in training courses
- Evaluation reports of training courses by participants
- Training requests
- General administrative records including finance, meetings, contracts with trainers, training organisations and training programmes

### **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

The ICT Team are responsible for all hardware, software, and telecommunications services in use in the Citizens Information Board and Citizens Information Services throughout the country. Services provided by the team include:

- Provision of ICT services to all Citizens Information Board staff and Citizens Information Board offices including network, e-mail, internet, and application support
- Telephone and e-mail helpdesk operated daily to provide back-up to CISs and other information providers who are using email, websites and other ICT services
- Hardware and software purchase, configuration and installation in all Citizens Information Board offices and CISs
- Application development to support the customer and information dissemination role.

### **Oyster data collection system**

Oyster is an electronic data collection tool that supports information providers across the entire Citizens Information network to collect and store information about customer queries. It provides one central source of information on the Citizens Information Board's customers. All data held in the system is statistical information (for example about the numbers and types of customer queries) and Oyster holds no personal data. Oyster is backed up on a nightly basis, with a month end backup tape that is archived and kept for seven years. The backups run on a 4-weekly cycle, and the nightly tapes are overwritten on a monthly basis.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

#### **Records held**

- General administrative records including meetings, tenders and contracts for commissioned work
- Problem report documentation

## **Regional Services**

Citizens Information Board Regional Services assist and promote the development and delivery of information advice and advocacy services nationally through:

- The provision of funding and general support to a range of information-providing agencies, particularly the network of Citizen Information Services (CISs) and the Citizens Information Phone Service
- Ongoing delivery of customised training courses aimed at the development needs of information providers
- Development and co-ordination of information and advocacy initiatives, in partnership with other organisations, aimed primarily at marginalised groups

The main activities of Regional Services are:

- The provision of development and support services for the network of CISs
- Support for the independent information sector and specific communities of interest, such as people with disabilities
- Development and promotion of quality standards in relation to the delivery of information and advice services
- Development of resource materials for CISs and other information providers
- Provision of mobile citizen information units
- Working with local government and with statutory and voluntary local development bodies in contributing to an integrated service approach to the delivery of public services
- Organising and delivering training courses to meet the needs of information-giving bodies
- Funding and supporting advocacy projects
- Funding of specific voluntary sector projects
- Promoting Citizens Information Board products and services
- Organisation of local and regional seminars and the Citizens Information Board national conferences (held every two years)

## **Citizens Information Services (CISs)**

The Citizens Information Board supports and funds Citizens Information Services (CISs) throughout the country. CISs are independent voluntary bodies whose primary function is to provide a free, confidential and impartial information, advice and advocacy service to members of the public on the full range of citizens rights and social services. Each CIS comprises a number of Citizens Information Centres (CICs) which offer Citizens Information services to the public on a drop-in basis.

Citizens Information is currently provided from 256 locations, comprising 111 centres of which 53 are full-time, 58 are part-time and 145 are outreach services. Many CISs also provide specialised services such as legal or financial advice or local access to the Office of the Ombudsman. Citizens Information Services dealt with almost 900,000 queries from members of the public during 2009. Two mobile Citizens Information Service units are available for use by CISs and other organisations to

promote outreach and deliver information services in outlying areas. The mobile units are based in Co. Offaly and can be booked through the relevant regional office.

### **Registration process for CISs**

Registration with the Citizens Information Board is a basic requirement for the network of CISs. In order to qualify for registration a CIS must meet the registration and operational guidelines as prescribed by the Citizens Information Board and registration must be approved by the Board of the Citizens Information Board. Registered CISs are issued with a Certificate of Registration and receive funding from the Citizens Information Board.

The Citizens Information Board issues guidelines to CISs on standards for service delivery, recruitment, pay and conditions of employment for employees, financial control, company law, code of practice for CIS Boards of Directors and reporting procedures. These guidelines are available in print. CISs make regular reports on their activities to the Board of the Citizens Information Board.

The National Association of Citizens Information Services (NACIS), founded in 2005, is the representative body for CISs and liaises with the Citizens Information Board on matters of common interest.

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

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS), which is supported by the Citizens Information Board, provides telephone-based Citizens Information via a lo-call number: 1890 777 121. All calls within Ireland are charged at local rates. The service operates Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 9.00pm.

### **Annual funding of specific voluntary sector projects**

As part of its information remit, the Citizens Information Board recognises that there are specific groups of people whose information needs require particular attention. A number of specialist organisations that provide support to CISs are funded by the Citizens Information Board:

- **Free Legal Advice Service (FLAC)** is a voluntary organisation, which campaigns for full and equal access to justice for all members of Irish society. The Citizens Information Board provides funding to FLAC to operate a free and confidential legal advice service in Citizens Information Services (CISs) around the country. The service is operated by qualified lawyers who volunteer their expertise and time, with a particular focus on the areas of social welfare and employment law. They also support the volunteer legal advisors providing clinics in CISs.
- **The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)** is funded to provide a dedicated Citizens Information phone line for information providers. ICI also gives training to information providers and contributes to website content.

- **National Association for Deaf People (NAD)** is funded annually to support the provision of an information service for people who are Deaf from their Dublin centre at North Frederick Street, which also connects with NAD resource centres in other locations.
- **Refugee Information Service (RIS)** was established in 1999 to deal with the information needs of refugees and asylum seekers. RIS is established as an incorporated body and is managed by a board of directors representing a broad spectrum of groups and agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers. The Citizens Information Board assists with the employment of a manager, an information officer and administrator based in Dublin, and an information officer based in Galway. The service operates a range of clinics in the Dublin and Galway areas, several in conjunction with CISs. (This service is merging with Integrating Ireland and the new service will be known as the **Integration and Social Inclusion Centre of Ireland**.)
- **Treoir** (Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children) is funded to provide a query back-up service to information providers in CISs. Treoir also liaises with central services teams to develop appropriate content for lone parents.
- **Inclusion Ireland** is funded to provide a query back-up service to CISs in the area of intellectual disability. It provides copies of Inclusion Ireland publications to CISs – in particular, accessible publications for people with learning difficulties. It also advises on the accessibility of publications for people with intellectual disability, provides training on intellectual disability and self-advocacy, and occasionally takes referrals of advocacy cases concerning people with intellectual disabilities and/or their carers.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

- Development plans for CISs
- Financial control guidelines, recruitment guidelines and reporting arrangements for CISs
- CIS reports on activities

### **Records held**

- Files on CISs including information about financial support, training, standards of service, management committees and sub-committees
- Files on voluntary sector projects funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board
- Contacts with other local organisations
- Applications for training grants
- General administrative records including meetings, contracts with service providers, buildings and premises
- Minutes of meetings and reports to the Board

## **Citizens Information Board Central Services**

Finance and Human Resources functions for the organisation are centralised in the Citizens Information Board's head office. ICT services are also provided from the head office to all the Citizens Information Board regional offices and to Citizens Information Services.

The main activities of the Citizens Information Board support functions services are to provide:

- Financial planning and control
- Administrative support services including accommodation, records management and property management
- Senior management administrative support
- Strategic management
- Human resource management
- Servicing of the Board of the Citizens Information Board and its meetings
- Public relations and media liaison

## **Human Resources (HR) and Administration**

The HR and Administration Service looks after all HR matters, including recruitment and selection, health and safety. The Manager of this Service acts as Secretary to the Board of the Citizens Information Board. It is also responsible for all property matters, official languages, ethics in public office requirements and records management for the organisation and provides administrative support services to Citizens Information Board service teams.

## **Finance, Public Relations (PR) and Promotions**

The Finance Service co-ordinates all budgeting funding and grants, supplier payments, payroll and accounting and audit processes in the Citizens Information Board. In addition the Citizens Information Board's communication and PR functions are co-ordinated within this team.

### **Publicly and routinely available information**

- Strategy statements
- Annual report
- Financial accounts which are published each year in the Annual Report
- Personnel records are available to the individual staff member involved
- Staff Resource Pack which is available to Citizens Information Board staff

### **Records held**

- Financial records including budgets, accounts, bank statements, payroll records, tax records, expenditure and income reports
- Administration records including records relating to buildings and premises, maintenance and insurance
- Personnel records including staff and former staff files, conditions of employment, superannuation, industrial relations, HR procedures and policies,

job descriptions and recruitment competition documentation

- Departmental circulars
- Information technology (IT) usage policies
- Board and sub-committee meetings and associated documentation
- General records including correspondence, government circulars, dealings with government departments and other public bodies and section meetings

## **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) Transition Unit**

The Citizens Information Board was assigned responsibility for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) with effect from July, 2009. The MABS Transition Unit is responsible for the administration of MABS and for the development and management of CIB supports to the 53 MABS Companies.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people with debt problems and money management problems. There are 53 MABS offices in Ireland. MABS services include:

- Helping clients to deal with debts and to make out budgets
- Examining clients' incomes to make sure entitlements are not being missed
- Contacting clients' creditors with offers of payment
- Helping clients to decide on the best way to make payments

MABS offices operate on an appointment system. You can find [contact details](#) for all the MABS offices on the MABS website. MABS also run a lo-call helpline available from 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday: 1890 283 438. Clients can make appointments with a local office through the lo-call number.

## **Publicly and routinely available information**

### **Records held**

- Administration records relating to the MABS Companies.

## SECTION 16 MANUAL

Section 16 of the FOI Acts requires each public body to publish:

- The rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the public body and the precedents kept by the public body for the purposes of decisions, determinations or recommendations in relation to schemes administered by the public body and
- Information about the way such schemes are administered.

## **Part A: The funding of Citizens Information Services**

### **Scope, aims and objectives**

The Citizens Information Board funds the national network of Citizens Information Services (CISs). Citizens Information Services provide information, advice and advocacy services to specific county or urban areas as agreed with the Citizens Information Board.

The Board of the Citizens Information Board approves operational grants for CISs (following recommendations by Citizens Information Board regional services to senior management).

### **Criteria**

A CIS must be established as a company limited by guarantee. The Memorandum and Articles of the company should be agreed with the Citizens Information Board. To facilitate CISs, standard format Memorandum and Articles are made available by the Citizens Information Board. The CIS must be in compliance with statutory requirements under company law and must adhere to the financial control guidelines and reporting procedures issued by the Citizens Information Board.

The CIS must also adhere to prescribed Citizens Information Board guidelines for the running of CISs. Funding is made available to CISs through quarterly instalments on a calendar year (January 1 to December 31) basis. The first instalment is paid in January with subsequent instalments paid in April, July and October (subject to receipt by the Citizens Information Board of relevant quarterly returns and also a set of audited accounts approved at the AGM of the CIS).

### **Information required**

By mid-June CISs submit a draft budget estimate for the following year (based on the work plan/strategic plan) to the Citizens Information Board. This estimate must include any new spending items and relevant explanatory notes. Each CIS is required to submit quarterly returns on its financial position to the Citizens Information Board in a prescribed format. CISs must return audited accounts to the Citizens Information Board following approval at the CIS's AGM. The accounting period for which audits are required is the period January to December of the previous year.

In general, the first instalment of the grant for the following year will be sent, in advance of receipt of audited accounts, on the basis of the previous year's grant amount.

## **Part B: Training Courses/Events**

### **Scope, aims and objectives**

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) delivers training services to people involved in organisations providing public and social information to the public. Training programmes are delivered at regional level throughout the country. A range of training courses is provided for people involved in organisations providing social service information to the public and to those involved in the management of voluntary and community organisations. Courses are available on information, legal, interpersonal, management, organisational skills and money advice topics. The course application and selection procedure is described in the annual course programme.

Training courses are free of charge to CIS and MABS personnel and currently a charge of €100.00 per day is levied for other users.

Details of scheduled training courses, their content, location, cost and target audience are available in the National Calendar of Training Events.

CIB is a registered Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) provider and offers programmes leading to FETAC awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQs). The Information Providers Programme (IPP) is delivered to support and enable information providers to provide a quality information service in the community. The IPP consists of two modules at level 6:

- Information, Advice and Advocacy Practice (L32072)
- Social and Civil Information (L32073)

The IPP is delivered in the classroom, by distance learning and by Recognition of Prior Learning.

### **Criteria**

Applications for training courses are assessed to establish the best match of participant to training course. The criteria for selection include:

- level of experience of applicant as appropriate to level of course
- the applicant's role in the organisation as relevant to the course topic
- applicant's expectations, as expressed in the application form, related to the course content
- full completion of application form
- geographic location of training course
- number of applications from one organisation
- total number of applications versus places available

### **Who may apply**

Voluntary and community organisations at a local and national level involved in providing information on social services to the public and voluntary social service organisations are eligible to apply. Relevant statutory organisations are given a limited number of places as appropriate. Applications should be processed by the Training Co-ordinator/Supervisor/Development Manager in the organisation.

**Information required of applicants and their organisations**

Information relevant to the selection procedures is required including information about the organisation, about the applicant's previous level of training, the training needs of the organisation and the role of the applicant in the organisation.

**How decisions are made**

Decisions are made by a Training Executive at regional or central level in accordance with the selection procedure. (A decision is referred to a Citizens Information Board manager if necessary).

**Communication with applicants**

Decisions on all applications are made immediately on or before the closing date. Applicants are then informed of whether or not they have been successful and may be offered alternative courses, if appropriate.

Information on training and courses is available from:

**Service Administrator,**

Customer Service and Training Service and Regional Training Administrators

**Completed forms are sent to:**

Please refer to contact details on the current National Calendar of Training Events and Training Programme.

## **Part C: Programme of Advocacy Services**

### **Scope, aims and objectives**

The *Programme of Advocacy Services for people with disabilities in the community and voluntary sector* was initiated in 2005 for the provision of advocacy services to people with disabilities. In 2006 and 2007 the Citizens Information Board looked for applications from the community and voluntary sector for the provision of advocacy services to people with disabilities. As a result forty seven projects were established, many as partnerships, and these are now operating in the sector.

No further funding is available through this programme. The Programme of Advocacy Services piloted between 2005 and 2010 was evaluated by RoundTable Mediation and Solution Enable during 2009. The report from this evaluation will inform the rollout of this programme beyond 2010.

### **Criteria**

The emphasis of this initiative is on representative advocacy, i.e. a service that provides a trained advocate to help vulnerable people with a disability to address their individual needs and options. The overall focus of the advocacy service is to work with people with disabilities who are vulnerable.

Particular target groups included:

- People living in the community seeking a social service
- People in, or wishing to move from, long-term residential services
- Young people completing their education

### **Information required**

Organisations funded under the Programme provided information about their aims and activities, show how they meet the requirements set out in the criteria and provide information on the overall financing of the proposed project. Projects were also asked to describe:

- The target customer group
- The type of advocacy project proposed
- A description of the organisation
- The organisation's capacity to provide an independent service
- Any proposed partnership arrangements
- The organisation's willingness to participate in an evaluation process

### **How decisions were made**

Proposed projects were assessed by an assessment panel in accordance with the set criteria and recommendations were made to the Board on the basis of this assessment. In arriving at a final selection, consideration was given to factors such as the project type and target group, the national/local dimension and the geographical distribution.

No further funding is available through this programme at present.

## **Part D: Publications Grants Scheme**

### **Scope, aims and objectives**

This small scheme assists voluntary organisations with an information dissemination role to meet specific publication needs. Small grants are available ranging from €250-€1,200. Publications are generally part-funded. Repeat grants are possible in certain circumstances.

### **Criteria**

Publications that provide information on social services and entitlements may be funded. Previous awards have been made to organisations to publish leaflets on entitlements or directories of specialist services. Ongoing publications such as newsletters, or grants to publish research are not usually considered under this scheme. Funding is not available retrospectively.

### **Information required of applicant organisations**

Applicants must provide information about their aims and activities, the nature of the publication for which a grant is being sought, a breakdown of the overall costs of the proposed publication and information on applications to other funding sources.

### **Who may apply**

Voluntary and community organisations at a local and national level with an information dissemination role are eligible to apply.

### **How decisions are made**

Applications are assessed in accordance with the set criteria by the Information Publications Manager in consultation with the Senior Manager. Liaison with regional services where appropriate.

### **Communication with applicants**

All applications are acknowledged promptly. Decisions are usually made within one month of receipt of applications and applicants are then informed of the decision in writing. If successful, cheques for the grant are enclosed with the notification. Unsuccessful applicants are informed of the reasons for the decision.

### **Information on grants and application forms are available from:**

Administrator, Information Publications and Social Policy Service

Completed application forms are sent to:  
Information Publications and Social Policy Manager

## Part E: Social Policy Grants Scheme

### Scope, aims and objectives

The purpose of the Social Policy Grant Scheme is to provide small-scale support for social policy initiatives being undertaken by independent information providers, particularly CISs working on their own or in conjunction with other CISs and/or local voluntary/community organisations.

The grant payable under this scheme ranges between €1,500 and €3,000. Funding is not available retrospectively.

### Criteria

The grants are provided to assist in areas such as:

- Analysis of social policy issues identified by the service and the preparation of a short report accordingly which would be submitted to relevant organisations and agencies, as well as to the Citizens Information Board
- Networking between a number of local agencies in order to identify common social policy issues and the compilation of relevant submissions
- Seminar/workshop for information workers at local level to explore issues around social policy work, for example, the interrelationship of advocacy and social policy feedback
- Discussion fora between independent information providers and local statutory agencies to consider policy issues identified and how these might be addressed.

### Who may apply

Independent information providers or other community and voluntary organisations working with independent information providers.

There is no specific application form for the social policy grant, but all applications should contain the following details:

- Name(s) and contact details (address, telephone, fax, e-mail) of the centre or centres applying for a grant.
- Name of the contact person who also has overall responsibility for the proposed project.
- Names of any other persons or organisations involved in the project.
- Brief statement of the policy issue to be addressed.
- What is the issue or policy problem to be analysed or addressed, and how did it arise?
- Why is it important to analyse and/or act on this issue?

**Implementation:** how it is proposed to carry out this work, details of the process involved.

**Existing and ongoing work in the area:** whether the organisation has already done some work on this area and whether there are any other organisations that are already engaged in policy work in this area

**Scope for co-operation:** involving other organisations in the work, either locally or nationally

**Dissemination of findings and/or involvement of individuals and organisations in workshops and training:** how it is planned to use the information or analysis generated with the help of the grant. If applying for funding for a workshop or training event, the target audience/participants.

**Areas of responsibility:** for different parts of the project proposed

**Costs:** breakdown of the funds requested

**Timeframe:** when the project will start, timetable for progressing the project, deadline for finishing the project

**How decisions are made**

Decisions are made on the basis of how clearly the proposed project fits the criteria outlined above.

**Communication with applicants**

Applications should be submitted in the first instance through the Citizens Information Board Area Executive for the area. This is then forwarded to the Information Publications and Social Policy Manager, Citizens Information Board with a recommendation/evaluation from the region regarding the proposal.

**All enquiries and communications in relation to the Social Policy Grants Scheme should be directed to:**

Administrator, Information Publications and Social Policy

Completed forms are sent to:

Information Publications and Social Policy Manager

## **Part F: Group Insurance Facility for Voluntary Social Service Organisations**

### **Scope, aims and objectives**

The Group Insurance Facility for Voluntary Social Service Organisations is a comprehensive scheme covering a range of insurance needs for voluntary social service organisations. Established by the Citizens Information Board in 1981 it is underwritten by Allianz Insurance. It is a broad-based scheme covering fire and special perils, theft, loss of money, public liability (including member to member liability), employers' liability, all risks and glass breakage and personal accident. Separate cover is available for professional indemnity insurance.

### **Who may apply**

In order to be eligible to get insurance cover under the scheme, groups must be organised on a voluntary or community basis and be providing personal social services. Existing groups include community and social services councils, home help organisations, Money Advice and Budgeting Services, women's refuges, older people's groups, meals on wheels, resource centres for the unemployed and organisations concerned with specific illnesses or disabilities.

### **Information required of applicant organisations**

Applicant groups or organisations must complete an affiliation form and a proposal form providing details about the insurance cover required. The affiliation form must be sent to the Citizens Information Board and the proposal form to Allianz.

### **How decisions are made**

The decision as to the eligibility of a group or organisation to be included in the scheme relate primarily to whether the applicant organisation meets the criteria as set out above. The Manager of the Citizens Information Board's Customer Service and Training Service has overall responsibility for this process. Decisions relating to the insurance cover are the responsibility of Allianz Insurance.

### **Information on the insurance facility is available from:**

#### **Group Insurance Administrator**

Citizens Information Board

Hainault House

The Square

Tallaght

Dublin 24

Tel: (01) 462 0444

Fax: (01) 462 0494

Email: [groupinsur@ciboard.ie](mailto:groupinsur@ciboard.ie)

## Appendix 1 Citizens Information Board Organisational Chart

<b>Minister for Social and Family Affairs</b>	
Mary Hanafin TD	
<b>Board Chairperson</b> (Vacant)	
<b>Chief Executive</b> - Tony McQuinn	
<b>Secretary to CE</b> - Shona Bannon	
<b>Regional Services Senior Manager</b>	<b>Development and Support Senior Manager</b>
Eileen Fitzgerald	Gerry Hegarty
<b>Administrator</b> – Ann Moore	
<b>HR and Admin Executive (Regional Services)</b> – Mary Fitzgerald	

### George's Quay House Central Services

<b>HR and Administration Manager</b>	<b>ICT Manager</b>
Brian Murphy	Sinead Forde
<b>Facilities, Health and Safety Officer</b>	<b>IT Officer</b>
Gerry Kinsella (Park House)	Adrian O'Connor
<b>HR Executive</b>	<b>IT Support</b>
Niamh McCarthy	Brian McCarthy
<b>Central Services Administrator</b>	<b>Web Developer</b>
Karen King	Joseph Flynn
<b>Receptionist</b>	<b>Oyster Project Coordinator</b>
Celena Kelly	Amanda O'Sullivan
<b>Information Assistant</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
John Curtis	Matthew Lee
<b>Services Officer</b>	<b>Advocacy and Accessibility Manager</b>
Patricia O'Grady	Helen Lahert
	<b>Advocacy Executives</b>
<b>Finance, PR/Promotion Manager</b>	Mairide Woods

David Scott	Caroline Mitchell
<b>Accounts Administrator</b>	<b>Assistive Technology Information Executive</b>
Mark Molloy	Dara Woods/Moira Fraser
<b>Accounts Assistant</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
Gordon Ryan	Anne Savage
<b>PR Executive</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
Evelyn Lee	Rachel Downes
<b>Information Production Manager</b>	<b>Information Publications and Social Policy Manager</b>
Graham Long	Geralyn McGarry
<b>Information Executives</b>	<b>Information Executives</b>
Paul McGuire	Cathy Gerrard
Gwen Gunning	Des Gunning
Bríd Ingoldsby	Ken Dempsey
Anne Cox	
Hilary Frazer	<b>Social Policy Executive</b>
<b>Administrator</b>	David Stratton
Den Culleton	<b>Administrator</b>
	Margaret Zheng
<b>Customer Service and Training Manager</b>	<b>Publications Administrator</b>
Geraldine Cullen	Olivia Donlon
<b>Training Executives</b>	
Josephine Glennon	<b>MABS Transition Unit Manager</b>
Heather Sheane	Seán Mistéil
Adrienne Collins	<b>Executive</b>
<b>Customer Service Executive</b>	Eileen Scanlon
Helen Galvin	Amanda McLoughlin
<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Senior Administrator</b>
Gillian Strain	Ann Riordan
	<b>Administrator</b>
	Elaine Hynes

## Regional Services

### Region 1: Dublin North and the North East

<b>Manager</b>	
Josette Cuthbert	
<b>Park House</b>	<b>Dundalk</b>
<b>Area Executives</b>	<b>Area Executives</b>
Mary McVeigh	Anne McEvoy
Amanda McLoughlin	Liam Murtagh
<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Regional Training Executive</b>
Patricia Thornton	Liam Murtagh
Jan Maloney	<b>Administrator</b>
<b>Cavan</b>	Anne Flynn
<b>Area Executive</b>	
Cathy O'Donoghue	
<b>Administrator</b>	
Renee Hayes	

### Region 2: Dublin West and the Midlands

<b>Manager</b>	
John Long	
<b>Tallaght</b>	<b>Tullamore</b>
<b>Area Executives</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
Niamh O'Doherty	Anne Marie Byrne
Daire Gilvary	<b>Mullingar</b>
Joe Byrne	<b>Area Executive</b>
<b>Regional Training Executive</b>	Tom Kelly
Anna O'Flanagan	<b>Administrator</b>
<b>Administrators</b>	Bernie Acton
Dolores Murphy	
Carmel Hennessy	

### Region 3: Dublin South and the South East

<b>Manager</b>	
Susan Shanahan	
<b>Kilkenny</b>	<b>Waterford and Wexford</b>
<b>Area Executives</b>	<b>Area Executive</b>
Ian Coulter	Una Tobin
Philip Lecane (Tallaght)	<b>Administrator</b>

Bernie Kennedy	Marie Farrelly
<b>Regional Training Executive</b>	
Ian Coulter	
<b>Administrators</b>	
Nicola Walshe	

#### Region 4: The South and the Mid-West

<b>Manager:</b> Helen Brougham	
<b>Cork</b>	<b>Limerick</b>
<b>Area Executives</b>	<b>Area Executive</b>
Mary Lyne	Sarah Togher
Michelle Melia	Noel O'Meara
<b>Regional Training Executive</b>	<b>Administrator</b>
Mary Lyne	Keara Burke
<b>Administrator</b>	
Stephanie Coleman	
Eileen Lee/Mary Kelliher	

#### Region 5: The West and the North West

<b>Manager:</b> Marty Kerrane, Galway	
<b>Galway</b>	<b>Sligo</b>
<b>Area Executives</b>	<b>Area Executives</b>
Anne Leahy	Conor Corduff
Mairead Carney	Sean Staunton
<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Letterkenny</b>
Helen Faherty	<b>Administrator</b>
<b>Castlebar</b>	Bernie Crowley
<b>Area Executive</b>	
Linda Gilroy	
<b>Regional Training Executive</b>	
Claire Ruddy	
<b>Administrator</b>	
Goretti Quigley	

## **Appendix 2 Citizens Information Board Offices**

### **CENTRAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

Head Office  
Ground Floor  
George's Quay House  
43 Townsend St  
Dublin 2  
Ireland  
Telephone: +353 1 605 90 00  
Fax: +353 1 605 90 99  
Email: [info@ciboard.ie](mailto:info@ciboard.ie) or [eolas@ciboard.ie](mailto:eolas@ciboard.ie)

### **DUBLIN NORTH AND THE NORTH EAST (REGION 1)**

Dublin  
Park House  
191-193 North Circular Road  
Dublin 7  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 1 824 5200  
Fax: +353 1 824 5201

Cavan  
Elm House  
Elm Bank  
Cootehill Road  
Cavan  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 49 436 2533

Dundalk  
4 Adelphi Court  
Long Walk  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 42 933 2913  
Fax: +353 42 933 7081

### **DUBLIN WEST AND THE MIDLANDS (REGION 2)**

Tallaght  
Hainault House  
The Square  
Tallaght

Dublin 24  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 1 462 0444  
Fax: +353 1 462 0494

Mullingar  
The Manse  
Castle Street  
Mullingar  
Co. Westmeath  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 93 40219  
Fax: +353 93 42897

Tullamore  
c/o Offaly Citizens Information Service  
Level One  
Bridge Centre  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 57 934 1262  
Fax: +353 57 935 1523

### **DUBLIN SOUTH AND THE SOUTH EAST (REGION 3)**

Kilkenny  
4 The Parade  
Kilkenny  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 56 776 5176  
Fax: +353 56 776 4211

Waterford  
14 Gladstone Street  
Waterford  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 51 850 998 or +353 51 872 431  
Fax: +353 51 876 575

### **THE SOUTH AND MID WEST (REGION 4)**

Limerick  
6th Floor  
River Court Business Centre  
Cornmarket Square  
Limerick  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 61 440 199

Fax: +353 61 440 198

Cork  
101 North Main Street  
Cork  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 21 422 2280  
Fax: +353 21 422 2270

## **THE WEST AND NORTH WEST (REGION 5)**

Castlebar  
Mill Lane  
Castlebar  
Co. Mayo  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 94 902 2169  
Fax: +353 94 902 1963  
Letterkenny  
Port Road  
Letterkenny  
Co. Donegal  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 74 912 1103  
Fax: +353 74 912 3019

Galway  
4th Floor Dockgate  
Merchants Road  
Galway  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 91 560370  
Fax: +353 91 560 378

Sligo  
1st Floor  
Harbour View House  
16 Holborn Street  
Sligo  
Ireland.  
Telephone: +353 71 914 5920  
Fax: +353 71 914 5916

## **Appendix 3 Customer Charter and Complaints Procedures**

As a customer-focused organisation, the Citizens Information Board welcomes comments about how we deliver our services, our policies and procedures and how our customers are treated by our staff. We recognise also that complaints may arise from time to time and to that end we have put in place the following procedure which aims to ensure any complaints are dealt with in an open, fair and consistent manner.

You can make a comment or complaint in person, by telephone, fax, e-mail or via the Citizens Information Board websites. Citizens Information Board staff will try to resolve your issue in an efficient and effective manner, maintaining our standards of timeliness and courtesy.

Where a particular complaint needs further investigation the matter should be referred to the Customer Service Officer. Citizens Information Board staff will provide you with contact details which are also available on the Citizens Information Board website, [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie)

The Customer Service Officer will acknowledge receipt of complaints within five working days and will issue a reply to the complaint within 15 working days of receipt. This response will be made through your preferred method of communication where possible.

Where a mistake has been made we will apologise and make every effort to rectify the issue and prevent it recurring. The Citizens Information Board will collate and analyse the type, nature, number and outcome of complaints received and will report annually on all complaints received. Data collected will be recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

### **Shona Bannon**

Customer Service Officer  
Citizens Information Board  
Ground Floor  
George's Quay House  
43 Townsend St  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 605 9000  
E-mail: [customercomplaints@ciboard.ie](mailto:customercomplaints@ciboard.ie)

The Citizens Information Board is committed to providing a quality service to its customers and clients. A Customer Service Action Plan underpins the commitments set out in the Customer Service Charter which can be viewed on the Citizens Information Board website – [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie) or in any Citizens Information Board office.

[The Citizens Information Board Customer Service Charter.](#)

## **Appendix 4   Citizens Information Board Publications and Resources**

Please visit the [publications section of the Citizens Information Board's website](#) for an up to date list of all our publications.

## **Appendix 5 The Freedom of Information Acts**

The Freedom of Information Act 1997 (as amended by the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2003) has two main purposes:

It imposes certain obligations on public bodies to make information available about their activities and decision-making procedures.

It gives individuals the right to access information held by public bodies. In particular, it gives you the right to access information which the public body may hold about you and to have that information corrected if it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading. It also gives you the right to be given reasons for decisions made by public bodies which specifically affect you.

The general principle underlying the Acts is that everyone has a right of access to any record held by a public body. Public bodies have a duty to give reasonable assistance to you if you wish to exercise this right of access. If you have a disability, the public body must facilitate you in exercising your rights under the Acts.

### **Limits on the right of access**

The right of access is circumscribed by the right to privacy and the protection of the public interest in certain cases.

### **What records can be accessed?**

The Acts cover all kinds of records held by public bodies - paper records, electronic records etc.

### **How is access arranged?**

In order to get access to records under the FOI Acts, you must apply in writing to the head of the public body concerned. For the purposes of this legislation the head of a public body is usually the chief executive officer or director. The head may delegate his/her functions under the Acts to another official and, in practice, this is very often done.

You must specify that you are making the request under the FOI legislation and you must give enough details of the information required to enable the public body to identify exactly what records you want. You must specify the manner of the access required i.e. on paper, electronic record etc.

The head of the public body (or the designated person) must acknowledge receipt of your request within two weeks and must also give you information about the processing of the request including information on appeals. If your application is made to the wrong public body it is up to that body to send the request to the correct one - in other words, you cannot be sent around various offices unnecessarily.

Similarly, if you look for information or access without using the FOI procedure and the only way you are entitled to get such information/access is under that procedure, the public body has a duty to tell you about the FOI procedure and to offer to help with the request.

In effect, public bodies must facilitate your request and not try to circumvent it.

The head of the public body must decide on the request within four weeks of receiving it (This may be extended if access to a large number of records is requested). If the request is granted, you must be told where and when the record can be accessed and, in general, the name of the person dealing with your request. You may be able to get a copy of the documents concerned or a computer disk or an opportunity to read the document - the precise format depends partly on what you want and partly on what is the most efficient way.

If the request is refused in whole or in part, then you must be told the reasons why and also informed of the review and appeal procedure available.

There are a number of administrative reasons why access may be refused e.g. the record cannot be found after reasonable steps have been taken or the record is going to be publicly available within the next 12 weeks. There are also a number of reasons set out in legislation as to why access may be refused e.g. for security or related reasons.

### **Internal review of decision**

If you are unhappy with the decision you may ask for it to be internally reviewed - in general you must do this within four weeks of receiving the initial decision. The review must be carried out by a higher-ranking official than the one who made the initial decision and must be done within three weeks of your request for the review. The initial decision may be upheld, changed somewhat or overturned.

Public bodies must also publish the names and designations of the staff members responsible for carrying out the arrangements unless the head of the body reasonably believes that publication of that information could threaten the physical safety or wellbeing of the staff concerned.

### **Amendment of personal information**

Personal information means information which would normally be known only to you, your family and friends or information held by a public body about you on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. It includes, among other things, information about educational or medical history, information about finances, employment, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, identification numbers, entitlements to social welfare, tax records, property and views and opinions.

If such personal information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading you may ask for it to be amended or deleted as appropriate. Again, application is made to the head of the public body concerned giving details of what is wrong with the record. A decision on the application must be made within four weeks. If the application is granted then the information is dealt with as required and the public body concerned must try to ensure that other bodies which had access to the record are informed of the change. If the application is refused, you must be told of the right to review and appeal. The record concerned must have the application attached to it so that, even if you do not succeed in having it corrected, then your disagreement with it is on the record.

Acts of public bodies affecting an individual

If you are affected by an act of a public body and you have a material interest in the act, you may require the public body to inform you of the reasons for the act and of any findings on any material issues of fact made for the purposes of the act. You are considered to have a material interest in an act if the consequences or effect of the act may be to confer on or withhold a benefit without also conferring or withholding that benefit from people in general or from a large group of people.

### **Exempt records**

The general principle of the FOI Acts is that all records except those specifically exempted are accessible. The Acts specify those records which may be exempt.

Among the records to which you may be refused access are:

- Access to records relating to the discussions and decision-making procedures of a public body must be refused in certain cases and may be refused in others. The exemption does not cover factual information, certain technical reports or reports on the performance or effectiveness of the body, internal rules and guidelines and reasons for decisions.
- Records may also be refused where their disclosure could prejudice the effectiveness of certain operations of public bodies e.g. audit, control or investigative functions, industrial relations negotiations. However, the information may be made available where, on balance, the public interest would be better served by granting rather than refusing the information.

### **Confidential and other sensitive information**

Access may be refused to records which contain information which has been given to a public body in confidence. Personal information may not be accessed by third parties.

### **The Information Commissioner**

The basic role of the Information Commissioner is to provide the appeal procedure if you are not satisfied that your rights under FOI have been granted. The Commissioner may review almost all decisions under the FOI legislation. In an appeal against a decision of a public body, the onus is on the public body to justify its initial decision. The Commissioner may confirm, vary or annul the decision. The time limits for applying to the Commissioner vary slightly but, for the more important decisions, the time limit is six months.

The Commissioner also has a general role of overseeing the legislation and may carry out investigations into the practices and procedures adopted by public bodies for the purposes of complying with the legislation.

### **Fees**

Fees must be charged in certain cases. Fees are not charged for access to personal information. The current (2010) scale of fees is described in Section 1.7.

### **Obligations on public bodies**

Public bodies must facilitate your access to records. They must also provide comprehensive information about themselves, their activities and their decision-making procedures.

Under the Acts, public bodies are obliged to publish what are known as Section 15 and Section 16 Reference Books or Manuals. These are the relevant sections of the Act and they specify precisely what the Reference Book must include.