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# Annual Report 2012

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## Chairperson's report

Reading this Annual Report I am struck both by the breadth and scope of work carried out by the Citizens Information Board and its delivery partners and also by how much has changed in the last 10 years – within this organisation and in the wider context. There have been enormous technological changes. Our websites now have over 6 million unique visitors and our customers now expect to be able to access information via mobile devices and social media as well as the traditional telephone and face-to-face channels. There have been huge changes in our clients' personal circumstances as many citizens continue to struggle with job loss and personal debt. During these difficult times our customers' needs have become more complex and more time-consuming. There is also a new focus on accountability and value for money across the public service.

The Citizens Information Board is an organisation that embraces change. We are proud of our reputation as an organisation that gets things done and can adapt flexibly, appropriately and speedily to meet the needs of our customers. The new Strategic Plan 2012-2015: *Meeting the changing information, advice, advocacy and money advice and budgeting needs of citizens* focuses on change.

This new strategy builds upon work done. We will continue to meet the changing information, advice, advocacy and budgeting needs of citizens, particularly of marginalised and vulnerable groups and individuals - by connecting and responding. The Advocacy Support Worker programme in CISs and the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities both support this strand – promoting social inclusion and ensuring that people at the margins of society are supported to avail of our services and access their entitlements.

Another key element of the strategy is ensuring that all our services are delivered to a high and consistent standard. The introduction of a quality assurance framework and the implementation of agreed standards for the provision of information, advice, advocacy and budgeting is key to meeting this priority. We want to promote a culture that values the development of knowledge, expertise and skills and to this end we will ensure all our information providers have an accredited level of knowledge.

We will work to develop and implement an integrated model for delivering our services to ensure a joined up response to people's needs. For example a client visiting MABS who is in financial difficulty will be referred to their local CIS for a benefit check to make sure they are getting everything that they are entitled to.

We have worked hard to understand our clients – so we can respond to their changing needs. Our microsites – [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie), [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) and [selfemployedsupports.ie](http://selfemployedsupports.ie) are excellent examples of this. We will continue to be creative and flexible in our response to emerging demands for information, advice, advocacy and budgeting support. The new Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline staffed by a dedicated team was launched in 2012 and is part of our integrated response to the mortgage arrears crisis which includes the [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) website and a panel of accountants who offer mortgage advice.

We will also ensure that we continue to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery approach. As part of our social policy remit we give feedback to government on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and we highlight issues of concern to the citizens who use these services.

There are challenges ahead – under the Employment Control Framework the Citizens Information Board’s staff numbers will reduce considerably over the next three years. There will also be challenges staffing Citizens Information Services and MABS to meet need into the future. However I have great confidence in the ability of the Citizens Information Board, its staff and its delivery partners to adapt to and meet whatever challenges lie ahead. I would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and scheme workers who delivered the Citizens Information Service and the Citizens Information Phone Service during the year. Thank you also to the staff of MABS companies and MABSndI for their dedicated work in 2012 and the staff of National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities and of the Sign Language Interpreting Service

I would like to thank the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD and the Secretary General of the Department of Social Protection, Niamh O’Donoghue and her staff for their support during the year. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my colleagues on the Board of CIB. Finally, I would also like to thank the Chief Executive, Tony McQuinn, his management team and all the staff of the Citizens Information Board.



Sylda Langford  
Chairperson

## 1 Introduction

This report to the Minister for Social Protection details the Citizens Information Board's activities for the calendar year 2012.

### 1.1 Background

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is the statutory body responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice (including money and budgeting advice) and advocacy services to citizens<sup>1</sup> on a wide range of public and social services. CIB's remit includes a particular focus on vulnerable service users including groups who are at risk of becoming marginalised from the wider community as a result of disability, social or financial exclusion or as a result of a serious crisis in their lives.

The Citizens Information Board was established as a statutory body under the [Comhairle Act 2000](#). This Act was amended by the [Citizens Information Act 2007](#), the [Social Welfare \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 2008](#) (which assigned responsibility for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service to CIB) and by the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011, which amended the rules relating to membership of the Citizens Information Board. CIB is under the remit of the Department of Social Protection.

The main functions of the Citizens Information Board are to:

- Ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services
- Assist and support individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options
- Promote greater accessibility, co-ordination and public awareness of social services
- Support, promote and develop the provision of information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services

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<sup>1</sup> *Citizen*: When we use the term citizen, we are talking about citizens of Ireland and all other people who live in Ireland and who may use our services at any time.

- Support the provision of, or directly provide, advocacy services for people with disabilities
- Support the provision of advice on the management, avoidance, reduction and discharge of personal debt and money management through the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

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

- The network of Citizens Information Services (CISs)
- The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)
- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
- The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)
- The National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS)

## 1.2 Strategic priorities

The Citizens Information Board's commitment is that people will receive quality, relevant, independent, reliable information, advice and advocacy and budgeting services wherever they are located in Ireland and in a way that suits their needs. We have identified five priorities in the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan to achieve this:

1. Meet the changing information, advice, advocacy and budgeting needs of citizens, particularly of marginalised and vulnerable groups and individuals - by connecting and responding
2. Implement consistent, high quality services by CIB and our delivery partners – by providing services to a high standard
3. Work to develop and implement an integrated service delivery model that puts the citizen at the centre – by organising to deliver



4. Lead the design and implementation of creative and flexible responses to meet emerging demands for information, advice, advocacy and budgeting support – by creating and adding value
5. Measure the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery approach – by demonstrating outcomes through feedback from users

The Strategy provides an overall framework for the development of services provided through Citizens Information and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service.

The vision for services provided by CIB and its delivery partners is that:

- People who live in Ireland will know about and use our services when they need support to exercise their rights or get entitlements
- People will get the information they need about public services, as well as advice, advocacy, budgeting or debt relief, in ways that suit them
- Our services will be accessible and will always be delivered to a high standard
- Our services will be joined up so that the citizen will find it easy to move through, between and across them
- Our services will make provision for those with particular difficulty accessing mainstream services i.e. through NAS, SLIS, Remote Interpreting, Live Adviser etc.
- Our services will support people in getting the best possible outcomes according to their situations
- Information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services will be developed and presented to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services

These are the principles that underpin the on-going development of all services in the period 2012-2015.

- **Citizen centred** – The focus is on organising ourselves and delivering services to get the best outcome for citizens
- **Community** – The service offering is continually adapted in response to the needs of communities
- **Flexible** – thinking ahead and moving quickly to meet changing needs of citizens.
- **Trust and respect** – for citizens, each other and our community and voluntary sector /public service stakeholders
- **Available to all** – Independent, impartial, confidential and non- judgemental information, advice, advocacy and budgeting services
- **Delivering value and positive outcomes** – for citizens and other stakeholders

- **Developing potential** – to ensure that the work of the staff and volunteers who work in the CIB and the delivery partners services is satisfying, meaningful and makes the best use of their commitment to our services

## **Pathways to Services – Putting the Citizen at the Centre**

The Citizens Information Board's 2009-2012 Strategy, *Pathways to Services – Putting Citizens at the Centre*, provided a single framework for the development of all the services offered by CIB, CISs, CIPS, MABS and NAS. Successive CIB strategies have worked towards the goal of delivering a range of joined up citizen-centred services that are easily accessible and capable of making a positive difference to the lives of people who are struggling with real difficulties. The assignment of MABS added a significant additional and complementary dimension to the CIB range of services.

Substantial development took place over the lifetime of the plan to enable the vision of joined up services to become a reality. These included the development of an ICT infrastructure that is capable of supporting interconnected services, a common approach to quality, training and development and a common approach to service delivery across all services while supporting the distinctive aspects of each service.

## 2 Our delivery partners

The Citizens Information Board funds and supports a range of key delivery partners to ensure that the public have access to information, advice, advocacy and budgeting services in the form that best suits them. Supports for our delivery partners are outlined in detail in Chapters 11 and 13.

The nationwide network of **Citizens Information Services (CISs)** provides free, impartial and confidential information to the public on a range of social and public services (see Chapter 3). The **Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)** provides a national telephone service (see Chapter 4). The public can also access integrated information directly through the **Citizens Information website (citizensinformation.ie)** (See Chapter 10).

The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** offers free, confidential and independent assistance for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt, both face to face and through its telephone helpline and website. National Traveller MABS advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalised groups) to help them access legal and affordable savings and credit (See Chapter 5).

Over the last ten years the Citizens Information Board has worked to develop advocacy services for the public in general and for people with disabilities in particular. This process has involved building advocacy capacity and skills in Citizens Information Services (CISs) to deliver advocacy to all citizens including those with a disability who are able to access mainstream services. The **National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS)** addresses the needs of more vulnerable people with disabilities who require a targeted service and who are unlikely to be able to access the service themselves without support (See Chapter 8).

The **Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)** is the national agency for the provision of sign language interpreting services in Ireland. It is an independent voluntary body with its own board of management and is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board (See Chapter 9).

## ***2.1 Working with delivery partners***

The relationship between the Citizens information Board and its delivery partners has been formalised through the introduction of Service Agreements between CIB and each of its delivery partners including the 42 local Citizens Information Services and the 53 MABS companies.

The Service Agreements are annual contracts between CIB and 96 separate companies. These contracts are agreed by the Board of the Citizens Information Board and cover standard items such as service delivery, governance, financial controls, HR practices, reporting, evaluation and monitoring. The agreements set out the commitments the parties make to each other including the services that will be provided in return for funding received.

This enables CIB to ensure that excellent service and value is achieved across the wide range of services it provides. The agreements also ensure that the Citizens Information Board fulfils its responsibility for ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place in relation to the expenditure of public funds. It is essential that this significant amount of public monies is carefully monitored and properly accounted for, in terms of financial accountability, effective performance and delivery of quality services to the customer and taxpayer, who ultimately funds these services.

## 3 Citizens Information Services (CISs)

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

Each CIS is established as a limited company with a voluntary board of management that includes CIS volunteers, representatives from local community and voluntary organisations and representatives of the statutory sector. Each CIS covers a geographical area, either countywide or part of an urban area, and delivers its services through a number of Citizens Information Centres (CICs) and outreaches. All 42 CISs are supported and funded by the Citizens Information Board (See Appendix 5 for funding information).

### 3.1 Staffing and funding

The total CIB grant allocation to CISs in 2012 was €12,356,350 (See Appendix 5 for a breakdown of this figure).

There are 269 paid staff (185.40 whole time equivalent posts) in CISs, of which 105 are full-time and 166 are part-time.

There are 210 employment scheme workers working in CISs (116.26 whole time equivalents). The majority of scheme workers involved in CISs are with Community Employment Schemes (CE). Some services are using newer schemes like Tús and Jobbridge.

There are 1,136 volunteers (123.09 whole time equivalents) working in CISs.

Members of CIS Boards of Management are drawn from the statutory, voluntary and community sector and from CIS volunteers. Many CISs have MABS representatives on their boards of management.

## 3.2 Service demand and statistics<sup>2</sup>

- There were 629,168 callers to CISs in 2012 (this is a 4% decrease on 2011)
- 289,219 (46%) of callers were dealt with by services in 10 minutes or under. 247,672 (39%) of callers were dealt with in 11-20 minutes and 74,632 (12%) took 21-40 minutes.
- One in five services had over 20,000 callers.
- 30% of callers nationally were dealt with by services in the Dublin area
- The total number of queries dealt with by services in 2012 was 997,287
- Almost half (47%) of all queries were in the Social Welfare category. Employment accounted for 9% of queries followed by Health (7%).
- Over half (57%) of queries were categorised as information (572,953).
- 42% of callers (421,051) required advice and assistance compared with 38.4% in 2011, showing an increase in the complexity of queries.
- The vast majority (94%) of callers were first-time callers to a CIS.
- Most services showed a decrease in contacts by telephone. Increasingly, the CIS client is walking into a service to access face-to-face services.
- 51% of callers were in the 26-45 age-group.
- Almost 20% of callers, where nationality was recorded, were foreign nationals
- Access difficulties were identified for 23,074 clients (4% of total). Over half of these were language difficulties.
- Medical card eligibility and applications accounted for over two-thirds of health service queries to CISs.
- 132 fixed outreach services were provided in 2012 in a range of locations including Family Resource Centres, Community Development Projects and other community voluntary groups. Services reported that they provided 745 different occasional outreach services to meet the information needs of the community. Most (34%) of the outreach provided was to the general community, 22% to people with disabilities, 15% to older people.

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<sup>2</sup> The 42 CISs make monthly reports to the Citizens Information Board through the Oyster Data Management System. Amongst other reporting features, this report provides detail of the numbers of callers and queries to a service, the age and gender profile of the CIS customer, the nature of the queries made and the type of action provided by the service.

## Caller profiles

The vast majority (94%) were first-time callers to a CIS, while 6% of callers were repeat contacts, an increase of 1% on repeat callers since 2011. 57% were female, 38% male. 5% were couples. Information about age was recorded for 71% of clients. 51% were in the 26-45 age-group, 33% were aged 46-65, 10% were aged 66 years or more and 6% were under 25. The figures for 2011 were 53%, 30%, 9% and 7%.

The nationality of 64% (over 400,000 callers) was recorded during 2012. 80% of these were Irish, 12% were EU nationals and 8% were from non-EU countries. The breakdown of non-Irish callers across the network of CISs illustrates the continued usage of mainstream information services by migrants. After Irish callers, the next largest group is Polish (5% or 20,260), Nigerian (1.5%) and UK (1.5%). The remainder were spread over 150 different nationalities. Dublin City Centre had the largest number of non-Irish callers (8,510 or 11% of all callers), followed by Fingal (North County) CIS (5,013 or 6.4%), Galway CIS (4,233 or 5.4%), and Louth CIS (3,383 or 4.3%).

## 3.3 Service delivery and developments

CISs continue to report that their clients are going through difficult times – negotiating the rising costs of living, changes to the social welfare system and increasing unemployment. Many clients are experiencing financial and family-related problems due to the economic downturn. Some public spending cuts announced in Budget 2012 took immediate effect; others have taken longer to implement and present longer-term uncertainty for CIS clients. The increasing complexity of client queries in relation to job loss, mortgage issues, debt and relationship breakdown has increased the workload of services.

### Service delivery meetings

In 2011 five new five new Service Delivery Areas replaced the regional structures. As part of the new service delivery approach service delivery meetings were organised with groupings of CISs. The meetings aim to develop a common understanding of service user needs and concerns and support the implementation of responses to address those needs. In addition the meetings promote cross-service support mechanisms and identify what supports are needed to deliver effective services to our clients. In 2012 service delivery meetings were implemented across the CIS network.

## **Joint work with MABS**

There were 2,086 MABS referrals to CISs in 2012. Co-working arrangements are developing across the network. Previously such arrangements were underdeveloped in many areas.

Joint work between MABS and CISs is being developed nationally through the MABS Cross Referrals Project. This project was set up to develop a system of cross-referral between MABS and CISs. A key aim of the project is to promote consistency in service delivery for clients who present to either a CIS or MABS. As part of the process, a categorisation of the types of services offered by each service took place in 2012. This gave an opportunity to identify how the services complement each other without duplicating the service offered to the client. Over 50% of CISs have MABS representatives on their board of management.

## **National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS)**

Many CISs work in collaboration with NAS advocates to deliver a service to people with disabilities through their local centre. There are joint working arrangements with NAS to ensure clear referral procedures are in place.

## **Other specialist services in CISs**

Many CISs offer a range of services to their clients, for example, free legal advice clinics provided by FLAC or local solicitors; financial advice provided by the Chartered Accountants Voluntary Advice (CAVA); taxation; services to immigrants and employment clinics. Some CISs are co-located with other service providers, in particular, MABS. Other CISs have clinics for Consumer Advice, the Office of the Ombudsman and Threshold. In 2012 the Chartered Accountants Voluntary Advice service (CAVA) extended its free business advisory service nationwide. It will be rolled out at clinics held in Citizens Information Services and MABS offices by appointment.

The Citizens Information Board gives financial support to the following organisations to provide information in specialised areas:

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

**Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)** provides expert legal support to CISs. It also operates a free and confidential legal advice service to the public in CISs around the country.



**The Integration Centre** operates a helpline for CIS staff on immigration and asylum issues. It also runs a range of clinics in the Dublin and Galway areas in conjunction with CISs.

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

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

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

**Threshold's Housing Advice** service provides back-up support on housing-related queries for CISs and provide supports for advocacy in more complex housing cases.

## Some other achievements and developments during 2012

**Blanchardstown CIS** carried out social policy research on clients' experience of the centralised Rent Supplement unit in conjunction with four other CISs.

In September **Bray CIC** celebrated 40 years of information provision. The Ombudsman, Emily O'Reilly, gave the key note address.

**Clare CIS** organised a joint seminar on the Personal Insolvency legislation with MABS locally and Minister Joan Burton launched an information leaflet on '*Saying No to Doorstep Credit*' an initiative organised by Clare CIS and MABS. Clare CIS's legal advice slot on Clare FM covering issues identified through customer queries also won a Justice Media Award from the Law Society.

**Crumlin CIS** compiled two booklets for specific target audiences: a checklist for pensioners and a guide to making a will for parents and families of people with intellectual disabilities.

**Donegal CIS** undertook a collaborative (with Donegal Local Development Company) *Maximising Benefits Programme* which targeted low income families.

**Dublin 2,4,6 CIS** has set up a specialised employments rights clinic and this has been very successful.

**Galway CIS** now offers a specialised immigration service which started in December 2012.

The new **Gaeltacht (Faisnéis do Shaoránaigh)** service commenced in Rosmuc in September 2012. This provides an information service to the Connemara area for 2.5 days per week.

**Leitrim CIS** launched the updated *Living in Leitrim* publication in February 2012. This publication is very popular with people living in Leitrim and also people coming to live or returning to the county.

**Longford CIS** held a *Pensions Week* in September and its Retirement Programme in association with Longford VEC is supported by the Retirement Council of Ireland.

**Louth CIS** put together two information packs for students leaving school, aimed at students going onto further education and those who are not continuing with further education. The packs have been sent to each secondary school in Co. Louth. **Louth CIS** also held a *Make A Will Week* in Dundalk (March 2012) during which 96 wills were made.

Following an extensive recruitment drive in the summer **Tipperary CIS** offered places to nineteen new volunteers. Seventeen are now on the rota in four centres following an eight-week induction programme.

**Northside CIS** has been raising awareness of its services with GPS and local Primary Care Health Teams.

**Waterford CIS** hosted a *Making the Link* event which facilitated 40 local statutory and voluntary agencies to introduce themselves and their work to one another.

**Waterford and Carlow CISs** had over 1,600 visitors to the Citizens Information stand at the National Ploughing Championships held in New Ross in September 2012.

**Several CISs set up new outreaches** - Cork City South CIS offers a new Kinsale outreach service and Fingal CIS set up a new outreach in Baldoyle Library in 2012. West Cork CIS used the mobile Citizens Information unit to reach communities in Bandon, Clonakilty, Enniskeane, Skibbereen and Mizen Peninsula.

### **3.4 Volunteers in Citizens Information Services**

There were 1,136 volunteers working in CISs in 2012 (123.09 whole-time equivalents). Volunteers complement paid information providers and scheme workers in CISs. Tipperary CIS has the largest number of volunteers nationally (98) followed by Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown CIS (85) and North & East Cork County CIS (83).

A number of services ran volunteer recruitment drives during 2012 and two services (Clondalkin CIS and Cork City (North) CIS) appointed volunteer co-ordinators to their

services. While volunteer co-ordinator roles already exist in some services, there is scope to expand these roles to services with large numbers of volunteers in the future. This would devolve some of the workload from the Development Manager and provide opportunities for volunteers to work in management roles.

## **The National Volunteer Strategy**

A project team made up of representatives from the Citizens Information Board and Citizens Information Services developed the first *National Volunteer Strategy for Volunteers in the CIS 2012-2015* and revised and updated a range of supporting documents.

The Volunteer Strategy was developed following the research and related recommendations presented in the 2010 Citizens Information Board report: *Volunteering in Citizens Information Services; the role and contribution of volunteers*.

Volunteers have been a cornerstone of the CIS network since the first community information centre opened in the 1960s. From a volunteer-led service, the CIS has developed into a national network of 42 CISs. The volunteer contribution, both in terms of time and expertise, can be measured by how much services rely on volunteer involvement for service delivery and outreach services. Of equal value and importance is the impact volunteer involvement has on the ethos and culture of a community-based service.

The purpose of the Volunteer Strategy is to set out how the role of volunteers will be strengthened, so that volunteers can continue to contribute to a changing and expanding service, and be supported to do so. An infrastructure that supports and facilitates volunteering is essential so that the service is not only maintained and sustained but is allowed to develop.

## **Volunteers – recognising service**

Volunteers who gave over 20 years of service to their community with the CIS were honoured at a special ceremony in Dublin, in October 2012. The contribution of 13 volunteers from CISs in Limerick, North and East Cork, Offaly and Tipperary were recognised and each volunteer received a certificate and a commemorative bowl.

## **3.5 Advocacy in Citizens Information Services**

One of the main ways in which the Citizens Information Board supports advocacy services to the general public is through the network of Citizens Information Services (CISs), where information providers advocate for their clients in relation to difficulties with access to social welfare, housing, health and employment. Information providers support their clients to act on their own behalf wherever possible (self-advocacy). They also advocate on behalf of clients – for example, contacting and negotiating with a third party or attending meetings, hearings and appeals.

Advocacy continued to develop as a key feature of CIS service provision. There were 3,072 initial interviews with clients in 2012. Of these 1,462 new cases were opened. The number of cases carried over by services from 2011 was 753, bringing the total client numbers for 2012 to 2215. During the period, January-December 2012, 1004 cases were closed. The majority of advocacy interventions (23.5%) were assistance with an appeal. Services also engaged in research and case preparation work on behalf of the client in 18% of cases. Other types of advocacy intervention included negotiations on behalf of the client (16%), intensive self-advocacy support or coaching (10%), and assistance with a formal review or meeting (7%).

Most advocacy cases (48%) related to Social Welfare, followed by Employment (27%) and Housing (7%). The remaining cases (18% of the total) were spread across a range of subjects (Health, Consumer Matters, Money and Tax, Moving Country, Justice, Education and Training, for example) indicating the dominance of social welfare and employment, in particular, appeals cases.

Most clients self-referred to the CIS advocacy service (67%) or were referred by another Citizens Information Service (18%). Less than one percent was referred by CIPS (0.35%) and MABS (0.27%).

### **Advocacy Support Worker (ASW) programme**

2012 was the first full year of the Advocacy Support Worker (ASW) programme in CISs. The Advocacy Support Worker Programme works to enhance the capacity of Citizens Information Services to deliver advocacy as part of an integrated information, advice and advocacy service. The aim of the ASW programme is (over time) to build consistent advocacy capacity across Citizens Information Services.

Five Advocacy Support Workers (ASWs) are employed by Dublin (Clondalkin), Longford, Offaly, West Cork and Clare CISs. ASWs work with the CISs in their region to improve advocacy services to the citizen. ASWs coach and mentor CIS personnel in the processes and skills of advocacy case work including interview skills, case recording, negotiation, representation and preparation for third party complaints, hearings and appeals. During 2012 the Advocacy Support Worker Programme, in conjunction with CIB, also worked on national standardised procedures and templates and on defining the stages of advocacy and the competencies and training required for each stage. Advocacy case records for 2012 show significant growth in the overall provision of advocacy by CISs with the number of clients receiving an advocacy service increasing by 51%.

## 4 Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a comprehensive and confidential information service. The telephone service is provided Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm on lo-call 0761 07 4000. The service is based in Cork.

CIPS's lo-call number (1890 777 121)<sup>3</sup> changed in early 2012. The new number 0761 07 4000 means that callers to the service pay national call rates (from both landlines and mobiles). Ninety percent of service providers are now signed up to this arrangement. The new telephone and data infrastructure will also allow a range of new developments.

### 4.1 Staffing and funding

CIPS receives 100% of its funding from CIB. The 2012 operational grant was €1,320,000. The bulk of this is spent on employee costs (just over €1m).

CIPS is staffed by a manager, two team supervisors, 21 information officers (four of whom are part-time, one of whom is on a career break), one senior administrator and two part-time administrators. CIPS is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by CIB's Chief Executive.

### 4.2 Service demand and statistics

In 2012, CIPS' information officers responded to 158,083 requests for information and advice from the public, of which 157,483 were telephone queries, 263 emails, 337 Live Advisor (web chat accessed via [ciboard.ie/liveadvisor](http://ciboard.ie/liveadvisor)). This was a decrease of 13% on 2011.

The ATT (average time spent on a call) for 2012 was 4 minutes 53 seconds. Systematic quality assurance using a sample of recorded calls is carried out by team supervisors. In general, call quality has been found to be very high.

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<sup>3</sup> CIPS also advertised a landline number – 021 4521600 – in view of the relatively high cost of '1890' numbers to many of those ringing from mobile phones.

Customer enquiries are categorised according to the standard call categorisation system used across the Citizens Information network, which reflects the way in which information is organised on the citizensinformation.ie website. The majority of queries were in the areas of Social Welfare (48%) and Employment (16%) which mirrors the breakdown of queries across the CIs network.

## **4.3 Service delivery and developments**

### **Call management**

CIPS operates an integrated telephony/ICT/Management Information system. The system allows sophisticated call queuing and answering systems and provides detailed and reliable information on, for example, data on caller waiting times, call abandonment rates, and the performance of individual information officers. All incoming calls are recorded. A sample of calls are assessed each month by Team Supervisors for quality assurance purposes and to assist with coaching and training. The system also incorporates a number of tools, alerts and reports that assist the Team Supervisors with ‘real time’ floor management.

A central human resource database and document repository for CIPS was purchased in December 2011. The system went ‘live’ at the end of May 2012. This system provides several benefits such as automating timesheets and providing key reporting information.

### **CIPS survey**

A survey was undertaken on behalf of CIPS by telephone in June 2012. The researchers made the following conclusions.

- CIPS provides a high quality service which is valued by users, many of whom have previously used the service
- When asked to what extent they would recommend the service to others, 91% gave a rating of 5 out of 5 with a further 4% giving a rating of 4 out of 5.
- A majority of CIPS callers use the internet and many have searched there for information before calling the service – in many cases the Citizens Information website



## **4.4 Single Point of Telephone Contact (SPOTC)**

The Single Point of initial Telephone Contact (SPOTC) pilot project was set up in April 2012, to support CIB's strategic priority of seamless access to information, advice and advocacy services across all delivery channels to meet citizens' needs.

The SPOTC initiative aims to reconfigure service delivery by introducing a shared resource model where services would come together to form a virtual resource pool for initial telephone contact – so when a person telephones any of the services (CIPS, CISs, MABS and NAS) they would be directed to the most appropriate service for their individual needs, instead of having to work out themselves how best to interact with services on offer. The combined resource can then be used where the need is greatest at any point in time across the combined services.

During 2012, the basics for the pilot were put in place, including project management and governance, detailed design and planning, selection of pilot services, technology, people, training and metrics. The pilot team began testing the technology, business process and assumptions with a small number of services. It is planned to build on this work in 2013 by extending the pilot to additional services.

## 5 The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

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

### The Citizens Information Board and MABS

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

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

### Structure of MABS

The MABS service is delivered in three ways:

- On its website ([mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie))
- Via the MABS Helpline (1890 283 438)

- Face-to-face with trained money advisers in offices nationwide

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

Each MABS is run by a company limited by guarantee. Each company is an independent legal entity with a board of directors drawn from local voluntary and statutory services and community groups. MABS National Development Limited (MABSndI) is a central support service which provides technical support with casework, money management education and training to MABS companies. National Traveller MABS was established in 2005. It advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalised groups) to help them access legal and affordable savings and credit.

## **5.1 Staffing and funding**

Direct grant funding allocated to MABS in 2012 was €15,876,028. Funding of € 1,795,213 was allocated to MABSndI. See Appendix 5 for a breakdown of this figure.

In 2012 the 51 MABS companies were staffed by the following whole-time equivalent posts:

- 46 Money Advice Co-ordinators,
- 97 Money Advisers,
- 50 Administrators and
- 12 Resource Money Advisers

MABSndI has 18 whole-time equivalent posts and National Traveller MABS has 8.

The Department of Social Protection in early 2012 formally confirmed the extension for a further two-year period – to March 2014 – of the temporary 12 whole-time equivalent Money Adviser staffing that had been in place since late 2009. Following this approval it was agreed to introduce a Resource Money Adviser (RMA) role where an RMA would be allocated 60% to a host MABS and the remaining 40% allocation would be used to offer a telephone support service to another MABS (generally services which had not benefited from the 2009 allocations). This arrangement is designed to resource services most under pressure with

increased client demand, as reflected in new and active client numbers and waiting times for appointments with a money adviser.

During 2012, this process took effect and had a marked impact on several services which had been experiencing heavy caseloads.

## 5.2 Service demand and statistics

MABS statistics are provided under four main headings:

- Active clients – on the last day of the month/quarter  
There were **26,163 active clients** on 31 Dec 2012, a slight increase (0.26%) on 2011.
- New clients – cumulative to date for the year  
There were **22,198 new clients** in 2012, which represents a decrease of just over 1% on 2011.
- Information only clients – cumulative to date for the year  
There were **3,965 information only** clients in 2012. This is a decrease of 1% on 2011. Some MABS services have information only clients and several services record no information clients.
- Telephone Helpline clients – cumulative to date for the year  
There were **24,264 Helpline clients** in 2012 (a decrease of 18.1% on the 2011 figure). In 2012 the MABS Helpline continued to encourage referral by services and maintained its support to services with heavy workloads.

	Number	Increase/Decrease
<b>Active clients (on 31 December 2012)</b>	26,163	+0.26%
<b>New clients</b>	22,198	-1%
<b>Information only clients</b>	3,965	-1%
<b>Helpline</b>	24,264	-18.1%

Figure 1: MABS client numbers

## Total amount owed

The total amount owed by new clients to creditors at the end of 2012 based on the debt they had when they first came to the MABS, was €582.9m, a 17% increase on the 2011 debt figure. The average level of debt for new clients at the end of 2012 was €26,263. The distribution of debt of new clients, which showed little change from 2011, was as follows:

- 72.4% owed to banks/financial institutions
- 10.5% owed to credit unions
- 4.4% owed to legal bills
- 2.3% owed to sub-prime lenders
- 2.3% owed to utilities bills
- 1.4% owed to debt collection agencies
- 1.1% owed to local authorities
- 0.5% owed to money/lenders/catalogues
- 5.0% others

## New client profiles

Half of new clients (50%) were aged 26-40 with 42% aged between 41- 65. Over half (57%) were female. The majority of new clients (58.5%) were reliant on social welfare payments, many of these (25.6%) are getting jobseeker's payments and some (13%) are getting a One Parent Family Payment. A further 25% of clients were employed, 4% were self-employed and 37% relied on a single household income.

New MABS clients mostly live in mortgaged accommodation (44%). Twenty two percent are in private rented accommodation and 16% in rented local authority accommodation. Three percent of clients live with their parents.

The largest group of people (31%) came to MABS of their own volition with 14% being referred by a friend/family, 13.5% referred by creditors and 8.5% referred by the Community Welfare Service or social welfare local offices.

## 5.3 Service delivery and developments

2012 was a year of continuing challenges for MABS against the backdrop of persisting personal household debt problems in Ireland, and the passage in December of insolvency legislation by the Oireachtas. MABS will provide the Approved Intermediary Service for debtors seeking a Debt Relief Notice (see Chapter 7).

Although client numbers in MABS (see above) suggest a slowdown or levelling off in active or new cases, the client profile again reflected the debt complexity of recent years. Mortgaged new clients reached 44.4% nationally by end 2012, compared to 43.5% in 2011. As in recent years, mortgage debt continued to be matched in most cases by significant debt to multiple creditors. As a result, money advisers were increasingly engaged not just with creditors but also in very frequent contact with clients themselves. This continues to affect service capacity across companies, which was a shared concern for CIB and MABSndI.

These pressures formed a backdrop for the increased focus on case management practices. The progress made in 2012 on developing standardised approaches to client access and client assessment and the management of waiting times indicated strong commitment among services for the initiatives undertaken by CIB and MABSndI.

### Waiting times

There was continued progress in 2012 on reducing waiting times for new clients awaiting an appointment with a money adviser.

The average national waiting time for clients seeking an appointment with a money adviser was 3.7 weeks, compared with 4.28 weeks at the end of 2011, a decrease in the waiting time for the previous quarter which was 4.82 weeks. The number of people on the waiting list has further decreased from 1,676 to 1,309. The average number of people waiting per service was again lower at 25.7 – down from 33 at the end of 2011.

This improvement reflects a strong collaborative effort between CIB, local MABS and MABSndI in addressing client need, in developing standard good practice and tracking client progression within the service from first contact. Work is still ongoing to improve the accuracy of reporting on waiting times.

## **Service delivery meetings**

In 2012 the new CIB regional service delivery support structure took full effect, with quarterly group meetings with services augmented by planning and review and other meetings taking place with individual services.

The quarterly service delivery meetings operate to a standard set of terms of reference so a consistent approach is taken across all MABS services. They aim to promote and support conversation and collaboration on the practicalities of service delivery between CIB and MABS companies. Key objectives of the meetings included discussion of subjects raised by services, identification of trends in client need, consideration of potential responses to demand and additional support needs and the implementation of new practices and procedures.

While there was specific engagement with individual services on issues such as client demand, case management and the client access process and supports such as resource money advice, growing numbers of services sought support and advice in relation to HR and premises as well as other company management issues. The Technical Support Unit (TSU) within MABSndI provided technical support on complex client casework to MABS staff. This was supplemented by the support from the external panel contracted by MABSndI. During 2012, there were 2,292 queries to the Technical Support unit and the expert panel.

## **5.4 MABSndI**

MABS National Development Limited (MABSndI) is a central technical support service which provides support with technical casework, money management education, and training to MABS companies. It also works on social policy issues with the Citizens Information Board. MABSndI manages the MABS national telephone helpline, website and the MABSIS client information system and responds to media queries on money and debt

## **Collaborative work with CIB**

Closer working both strategically and in relation to support for services on the ground was a growing feature of the relationship between CIB and MABSndI in 2012. Regular meetings and consultations took place during the year between CIB and MABSndI personnel and also between senior management in CIB and members of the Board of MABSndI. Collaborative working extended across a range of other functional responsibilities including quality

standards and ICT. MABSndI staff attended and participated in several of the service delivery meetings with MABS companies.

## **Social policy and research**

In addition to joint work on the complex area of mortgage debt and arrears CIB and MABSndI liaised closely on a wide range of policy submissions during 2012, in particular in relation to personal insolvency legislation. Joint submissions and presentations to various bodies were made where relevant (see Chapter 12).

MABSndI also carried out a survey of almost 6,000 MABS clients with mortgage debt following a request from the Department of Social Protection for information on the number of MABS clients engaged in the MARP process.

## **Training**

Two thirds of MABS and CIS services undertook training for board members during the year (See Chapter 11). MABS staff also participated in the *Minding Self; Serving Others* Programme (devised for CISs originally).

The Accreditation of Money Advice Project (Advanced Diploma in Money Advice) was contracted to the University of Ulster following a public procurement process. Development work progressed significantly during 2012 and the programme will commence in 2013. This will be the first accredited programme for money advisers and it will recognise the importance and complexity of money advice work.

MABSndI's training calendar in 2012 had a strong emphasis on the delivery of mortgage-related training and complex debt types such as Hire Purchase. MABSndI has also developed a number of computer based training programmes to complement face-to-face delivery, optimize return on training resources and allow learning outcomes to be assessed.

## **Approved Intermediary Service**

The Department of Social Protection requested CIB to establish an Approved Intermediary Service to implement the provisions of the Personal Insolvency Act 2013. CIB then requested MABSndI to establish an Approved Intermediary Service Transition Unit (AISTU) on a temporary basis to support the rollout and mainstreaming of the Approved Intermediary Service within MABS (see Chapter 7).



## **Mortgage Arrears and Debt Resolution**

MABSndI continued its work with the Irish Banking Federation (IBF) to liaise with the IBF on matters of concern to the MABS client group. All the major utility creditors have now signed up to the Energy Utility/ MABS Operational Protocol.

## **Community and Money Management Education**

MABSndI continues to work proactively on the development of community and money management education, partnering MABS companies and external organisations to develop initiatives. Strategically, resources are tailored to meet the needs of specific learner groups. While considerable pressure exists on services to focus on their service to active and new clients, they continue to acknowledge the need to support investment in community-based initiatives which place emphasis on debt-prevention measures as a key element of money management.

### **5.5 National Traveller MABS**

National Traveller MABS works to ensure the financial inclusion of Travellers in Irish society, focusing on issues of over indebtedness and exclusion from financial institutions.

A major 3-year review on issues facing Travellers in accessing financial services was formally launched on 4 July 2012 by the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton T.D.

Work started on development of a new module on illegal money lending which is due to launch in mid-2013. In addition, Train the Trainer programmes for money adviser and community health workers were expanded to several new locations across the country. Finally, a major key worker initiative involving 30 community healthcare workers in four locations was introduced to improve information links with and increase referrals to both MABS and CISs. This included use of the “Way of Life” money management programme.

## 6 Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service

The Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service includes the Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline, the [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) website and financial advice for people being offered long-term restructuring proposals by the lenders.

### Mortgage Arrears Helpline

During 2012 the Government developed a range of measures in response to the mortgage crisis. As part of this response, the Citizens Information Board was asked by the Department of Social Protection to set up a Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline, initially for one year, to provide information and signposting in relation to the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) and the supports available for those in mortgage arrears or pre-arrears. This service is funded by the lenders.

The helpline offers independent and confidential information to borrowers in mortgage arrears or at pre-arrears stage. The Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 5pm on 0761 07 4050. The helpline is provided for callers with mortgages on the family home only. The particular target group for this initiative is those who have not so far taken any action to address their difficulties, for example, approaching their lender.

The Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline took its first calls on 31 July 2012 and was formally launched by the Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton TD in September. From 31 July to the end of 2012 it received 1,815 calls.

### Keepingyourhome.ie

Keepingyourhome.ie is a microsite aimed at people who are worried about mortgage repayments or who are in mortgage arrears. Keepingyourhome.ie was rewritten and redesigned in mid-2012 as part of the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service. A mobile version of the website was also developed. In 2012 the site recorded 54,878 users and more than 316,000 pageviews.

## **Panel of Accountants**

The third strand of the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service is a panel of accountants available to provide specified financial advice to borrowers. The advice is provided at the cost of participating mortgage lenders. Borrowers can seek advice when they are presented by their lender with a long-term mortgage resolution proposal. More than 2,000 accountants from across Ireland and Northern Ireland are currently on the panel – listings of these accountants can be found on [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie).

## 7 The Approved Intermediary Service

The Personal Insolvency Act 2012 was signed into law in December 2012. The Act introduces three new debt resolution mechanisms to help mortgage-holders and other people with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. The Insolvency Service of Ireland will oversee these debt resolution processes.

The proposed new mechanisms are:

- A Debt Relief Notice (DRN) to allow for the write-off of debt (generally unsecured and in some cases secured) up to €20,000, subject to a 3-year supervision period. Applications for Debt Relief Notices can only be made through an Approved Intermediary.
- A Debt Settlement Arrangement (DSA) for the agreed settlement of unsecured debt, with no limit involved, normally over 5 years.
- A Personal Insolvency Arrangement (PIA) for the agreed settlement of secured debt up to €3 million (though this cap can be increased) and unsecured debt, with no limit involved, normally over 6 years.

The Board of CIB was requested by the Minister for Social Protection to provide Approved Intermediaries to administer Debt Relief Notices through the MABS network. The Approved Intermediary Service (AIS) will be launched in 2013.

In 2012 a Programme Board was set up to oversee the establishment of the AIS, supported by a Programme team and project team made up of CIB and MABS representatives. The aim is to provide an accessible, competent Approved Intermediary Service to the public via 51 MABS companies in 65 locations. This programme will run for two years and the appointment of a Programme Development Manager to MABndI will oversee the operational aspects.

The work of an Approved Intermediary will be quite detailed with a specified requirement for a minimum of two face-to-face meetings with the debtor. It is estimated that there may be between 3000 and 4000 applications for Debt Relief Notices in the first year and that the most significant demand will be in the first 18 months after enactment of the Personal Insolvency Legislation. A transition unit with 15 full-time trained Approved Intermediaries

will be established for a period of 12 months to ensure sure that there is capacity to meet the needs of people applying for Debt Relief Notices.

Over a two-year period money advisers will be trained as Approved Intermediaries to ensure that service can be provided across the MABS network. The University of Ulster together with MABSndI will develop the accredited module on the Republic of Ireland's (ROI) Personal Insolvency Legislation (this module is equivalent to a level 7 qualification). This accredited training will assist in satisfying the regulatory requirements to be set out by the Insolvency Service of Ireland.

## **8 The National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS)**

The National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS) provides an independent, confidential and free, representative advocacy service that puts the person at the centre and adheres to the highest professional standards.

Independent, representative advocacy empowers and is directed by the people who use it. It is person-centred, accountable, accessible, impartial and independent of service providers, families and other supports. NAS has a particular remit for people with disabilities who are isolated from their community and services, have communication differences, are inappropriately accommodated, live in residential services, attend day services and have limited informal or natural supports. NAS advocates work to standard policies and procedures. They record their work on a confidential case management system.

NAS works to ensure that when life decisions are made, due consideration is given to the preference of people with disabilities and that their rights are safeguarded.

The service is open to all disability groups including people with physical or sensory disabilities, people with intellectual disabilities, people on the autism spectrum and people with mental health difficulties.

### **8.1 Staffing and funding**

The service is managed by five Citizens Information Services in Dublin (Clondalkin), Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim and staffed by five managers, 35 advocates (whole-time equivalent) and five administrators. Total funding for the service was €2,889,001 in 2012. See Appendix 5 for a breakdown of NAS funding. A full list of advocates and the counties which they cover is available on [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

### **8.2 Service demand and statistics**

2012 was the first full year of service for NAS (which was officially launched in March 2011).

During the year the service reported an issue in managing demand and trying to balance casework across disability: intellectual, physical, sensory, mental health, and autism spectrum. As a result a prioritisation policy was developed. This is used in conjunction with the access and eligibility criteria to assess further the vulnerability of the people referred, prioritise among those qualifying under the criteria and direct and link those with less need to alternative supports provided by other agencies.

	2011	2012*
<b>Cases transferred from pilot projects</b>	204	n/a
<b>Cases carried over from previous year</b>	---	571
<b>New clients</b>	643	491
<b>Total client numbers</b>	847	1062
<b>Number on waiting list</b>	10	19
<b>Closed Cases</b>	276	397
<b>Average Clients per Advocate (35)</b>	23	19

\* As per programme report run in January 2013

Figure 2: National Advocacy Service statistics in 2011 and 2012

### 8.3 Service delivery and developments

During 2012 NAS and CIB met and built relationships with key stakeholders at local and national level. NAS also worked to build the skills and experience of staff while improving and developing the structures, policies and procedures to support a high quality service.

NAS continued to connect with residential services for people with disabilities. Reaching those who are disconnected from services within the community remains a challenge and NAS has begun to make contact with primary health care teams and voluntary organisations that would be aware of isolated people with disabilities in their communities. There was an increase in cases with significant human rights issues in core areas of safety, health, neglect, mistreatment and lack of meaningful occupation or community participation, lack of family and other natural supports and lack of choice in housing and accommodation. There has been

an increase in some regions in referrals of people with autism, Asperger's Syndrome and acquired brain injury.

During the year there was also an increase in the number of cases supporting parents with disabilities (usually intellectual disability or mental health issues) involved in child protection processes. Following discussion at the National Advisory Group, CIB has undertaken research into this area to make recommendations on NAS's future involvement in such cases. This report will be available in 2013.

NAS advocates work with people with disabilities to ensure their voices are heard and that they get due process. Sometimes this work may not result in achieving the outcome desired. However the process helps people to get access to information held about them and subsequently explore options and make more informed choices. This can give people more control over their lives and often their finances. Advocates also support people to complain about poor practices. Many cases in 2012 involved supporting people in their move from residential institutions to transitional housing or to semi or fully independent living.

A limited review of NAS was commissioned in 2012 to focus on:

- Good practice in NAS service delivery in the area of effective caseload management
- Issues of governance and accountability for a service working with very vulnerable people
- Whether to recommend that aspects of the Citizens Information Act relating to statutory powers for advocates be introduced or amended.

In late 2012 an extensive consultation took place with CIB, NAS and other key stakeholders across the country. The commissioned company, Round Table Solutions, will report in early 2013.



## 9 Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)

The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) seeks to ensure that quality interpretation services are available to Deaf people in Ireland so they can access public and social services. SLIS provides a referral service by putting booking clients (mainly public service providers) in touch with suitably qualified interpreters.

During 2012 SLIS concentrated on its strategic objectives. These include

- Promoting and advocating for the right to high-quality sign language interpreting services
- Development of quality standards for professional sign language interpreters
- Meeting social interpreting needs
- Developing new technologies to respond to needs of Deaf Community
- Working with stakeholders to provide an emergency response sign language interpreting service

### 9.1 Service delivery and developments

In 2012 President Higgins agreed to become the agency's Patron and SLIS moved offices to the new Deaf Village Ireland complex. Being in the heart of the community allows awareness of the service among Deaf people to increase and also utilises the advocacy skills of the team.

#### Referral service in 2012

Despite the change from a booking service to a referral service, there is still a high level of referral requests. While there has been a decrease in the number of referrals over the past year the nature of these referrals is more complex and often requires the team to advocate for the need to provide an interpreter and inform public services of their duties to do so. More basic assignments are received directly by the interpreters.

Referrals from the medical sector have reduced. This is because in many cases procurement rules require a tendering process. Many hospitals prefer not to engage individuals under a tender as their ability to provide services is more limited than agencies. There has also been

an increase in the award of tenders to spoken language agencies who may not be fully aware of standards or professionals in the field.

<b>2012 Referrals</b>	<b>YTD %</b>	<b>YTD total</b>
<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	13%	<b>178</b>
<b>Legal</b>	10%	<b>141</b>
<b>Medical</b>	17%	<b>237</b>
<b>Private Sector</b>	9%	<b>123</b>
<b>Public Sector</b>	29%	<b>390</b>
<b>Social Interpreting/ Public Events</b>	4%	<b>50</b>
<b>Voluntary Sector (Deaf Remit)</b>	15%	<b>206</b>
<b>Voluntary Sector (Other)</b>	3%	<b>41</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1366</b>

Figure 3: Referral requests received by SLIS in 2012

## Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)

The Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) offers a video-link service to a live Irish Sign Language interpreter. IRIS has been expanding its services and trials are taking place within six identified Citizens Information Services. There was an increase in the number of assignments to IRIS in 2012. There was a 100% increase in public sector use of the service. In addition the service now allows clients to use video-relay calls (based in the new offices in the Deaf Village).

## 10 Providing information

The Citizens Information Board supports the delivery of information through three channels: online, telephone and face-to-face. These three channels work together to ensure that the public have access to information, advice and advocacy services in the way that suits them best. The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a telephone service and the nationwide network of Citizens Information Services (CISs) provides the face-to-face service.

The public can access information directly through the [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website, microsites and [assistireland.ie](http://assistireland.ie). [Citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) is also a key information source for the network of Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS). In 2011 [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) was the main source of information for 59% of queries to CISs. We also produce a range of printed publications – ranging from wallcharts and leaflets to full-length books that cover a topic in depth – which are an effective and popular way to distribute information.

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

The [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) website is designed to provide public service information for Ireland. It provides details on rights and entitlements for the general public in English, Irish and other languages. It is also the primary information source for information providers in Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service, as well as providing useful information for officers in the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS) and other organisations.

Content on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) is divided into fourteen key categories: Social Welfare, Employment, Education and Training, Travel and Recreation, Housing, Moving Country, Money and Tax, Family and Relationships, Health, Justice, Consumer Affairs, Death and Bereavement, Government in Ireland, Environment. Information for over 1,300 documents on the website is produced by staff of the Citizens Information Board using a range of sources including legislation, circulars, press releases, publications and contacts with various

organisations and government departments. Information is available in English and Irish, with many documents also available in Polish, Romanian or French.

A mobile version of the website was developed in 2011 (aimed at devices with small screens) and the site also allows for text-resizing and high contrast display options. Notable changes to the information documents are flagged on the website's *What's New* section, while news of interest to the Voluntary and Community Sector is highlighted in regular updates to the *Voluntary and Community Sector News* section. In order to try present users with the most relevant information, the website includes an extensive 'My Situation' area which features checklists, life event and overview documents, while every document on the site provides direct links to three similar documents.

In addition to the core information documents, [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) includes a database of nearly 8,000 public sector offices (searchable by category or by county and town) and a listing of the Citizens Information Centres throughout Ireland. In 2012 [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) continued to provide a 'forms request' service for forms relating to learner permits and driving licences.

CIB works with the Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD) in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the technical side of [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie).

In 2012 [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) recorded more than 6.6 million users and more than 41 million pageviews. The mobile site won an Ireland eGovernment Award in April 2012 and was nominated for a World Summit Award mobile ([wsa-mobile.org](http://wsa-mobile.org)) in August 2012.

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

## **10.2 Keepingyourhome.ie**

[Keepingyourhome.ie](http://Keepingyourhome.ie) was rewritten and redesigned in 2012 as part of the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service (see Chapter 6). A mobile version of the website was developed and a panel of more than 2,000 accountants was added to the site. In 2012 the site recorded 54,878 users and more than 316,000 pageviews.

## **10.3 Other CIB microsites**

Losinyourjob.ie (aimed at people who are unemployed or being made redundant) recorded 92,701 users in 2012 and more than 268,000 pageviews.

Selfemployedsupports.ie aims to provide information for self-employed people who are living on reduced incomes. The site recorded 57,715 users in 2012 and more than 213,000 pageviews.

## **10.4 Assist Ireland**

The assistireland.ie website provides information on assistive technology (aids and appliances) for older people and people with disabilities in Ireland. The website has a large products directory containing details of over 7,000 products designed to help people to live independently. Each product listing includes details of suppliers of that product.

In 2012 more than 400 new products were added to the assistireland.ie products directory.

Assistireland.ie also has an extensive information section that provides general information on assistive technology. This section details the type of assistive technology that is most relevant in a particular context, for example, assistive technology in communication, education or employment.

In 2012 assistireland.ie recorded 359,851 users and more than 3.4 million pageviews. The assistireland.ie support service dealt with more than 1,400 queries by telephone, email and SMS.

## **Healthcomplaints.ie**

The Citizens Information Board continues to participate in the cross-organisational Health Complaints initiative chaired by CORU (Health and Social Care Professionals' Council). The HSE, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Medical Council, the Irish Patients Association and a number of other organisations in the health and social services sector are also involved in the initiative. A website (healthcomplaints.ie), a suite of publications and a training programme were launched by the group in late 2011.

## **Other online activities**

During 2011 the CIB twitter feed ([twitter.com/citizensinfo](https://twitter.com/citizensinfo)) continued to grow and passed 3,000 ‘followers’ in March 2013. The CIB ‘corporate’ website, [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie), recorded 288,751 users and more than 2.1m pageviews in 2012.

## **10.5 Publications**

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

### **Entitlements for people with disabilities**

Published in June 2012, *Entitlements for people with disabilities* provides information on entitlements, services and supports for people with disabilities, including social welfare, health, tax, housing and legal matters.

### **Entitlements for over sixties**

Published in October 2012, *Entitlements for over sixties* provides information on entitlements, services and supports for older people, including on topics such as social welfare, pensions, health, tax, legal matters and community and residential care. This booklet was published as part of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012.

### **Benefits and Taxes 2012 wallchart and leaflet**

The Benefits and Taxes 2012 wallchart and leaflet summarise benefits in 2012 with comprehensive tables of rates and income thresholds. The Benefits and Taxes leaflet and wallchart are available in Citizens Information Centres. The leaflet and wallchart were also widely distributed to other service providers and information providers for display in public offices.

### **Information for school leavers**

The *Information for school leavers* leaflet was published in March 2012 and distributed to schools around the country. It covers a wide range of topics of interest to school leavers, including options for education and training, social welfare entitlements, tax and employment law.

## Supports and information for the self-employed

During the economic downturn many self-employed people have visited Citizens Information Services with questions about their entitlements following a fall-off in business and a reduction in their income. *Supports and information for the self-employed* aims to answer many of these questions. The leaflet complements the microsite, [selfemployedsupports.ie](http://selfemployedsupports.ie), and is available to download from that site. The leaflet was rewritten in February 2012 and a version of the leaflet in Irish is available from [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

## Keeping your home: tenants

*Keeping your home: tenants* is aimed at tenants who are having difficulty paying rent. Published in November 2012, this leaflet is also available to download from [losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie) and [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie).

## Supports for farmers

This leaflet, first published in 2011, summarises the social welfare supports available for farmers and their families and covers how farm income is assessed. It also covers tax and PRSI for farmers, pensions and pensions for farmers' spouses. It looks at how farm income is regarded in means tests for the Fair Deal Scheme (for nursing home care) and student grants. The leaflet was reprinted in 2012 and an Irish version of the leaflet posted to [citizensinformationboard.ie](http://citizensinformationboard.ie).

## Leaflets on the European Union

In 2012 the Citizens Information Board worked with the European Commission to publish 8 leaflets on the workings of the EU. These are: The EU and its Citizens, How the EU Works, Moving within the EU, The EU's Role in Social and Employment Issues, The EU and Consumers, Equality and Non-Discrimination, The EU and the Environment, EU Funding.

## Relate and EU Supplement

Relate is the Citizens Information Board's monthly journal covering legislation and developments in the broad social services and social policy areas.

During the year Relate covered areas such as the Children Referendum, the Personal Insolvency Bill 2012 and the Student Grant Scheme 2012, as well as more general topics such as pensions and housing. The EU Supplement was published quarterly during the year. It covers significant EU developments in the broad areas of social policy, consumer policy and citizens' rights.

## **Distribution**

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



## 11 Supporting quality services

Assuring the quality of our services and the services delivered by our partners is an important strategic priority for the Citizens Information Board. To reflect this increasing emphasis on quality service to the customer, a new Quality team was set up in 2011 and in 2012 started implementation of a quality assurance framework for all the services provided and funded by CIB. CIB's Training team provides training services nationwide to ensure that information providers deliver high-quality services to their customers. The Advocacy team supports mainstream advocacy in CISs and supports the new National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS).

### 11.1 Quality services

All CIB service teams are involved in developing, providing and supporting a range of high-quality products, resources and supports for those delivering services to the customer – these include websites, publications, training, ICT systems, social policy and research, governance and service delivery supports.

One of the five priorities identified in the Strategic Plan 2012-2015 is 'to implement consistent, high quality service by CIB and our delivery partners – by providing our Services to a high standard'. The introduction of a quality assurance framework and the implementation of agreed standards for the provision of information, advice, advocacy and budgeting is key to meeting this priority.

#### **Gold Star Service Excellence Programme**

During 2012 CIB undertook a public procurement tendering process on eTenders.gov.ie for a suitable quality assurance system. The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Gold Star Service Excellence) programme provided by the Centre for Competitiveness is the selected quality assurance programme.

Over two years, finishing in October 2014, the Centre for Competitiveness will provide, implement, support and accredit this quality assurance programme with CIB and its service

delivery partners (42 CISs, CIPS, 51 MABS companies, MABSndI, National Traveller MABS, the MABS Helpline and SLIS)

The programme uses a model of 8 ‘cohorts’ (or groups) with 12-13 services in each cohort. This model facilitates each service to work both individually with the adviser assigned to them by the Centre for Competitiveness and collectively with the other services in their cohort. Each cohort starts with a Cohort Briefing. Then each Service begins to work on the 4 steps in the process as they apply to their Service:

1. **Assessment** – this is a form of benchmarking and involves self-assessment by the service. The results are presented to each service, and strengths and weaknesses are identified.
2. **‘Close the Gap’ Action Plan** – the adviser works with each service, and with each cohort, to agree a ‘Close the Gap’ Action Plan.
3. **Improve** – putting the Action Plan in place over a number of months (usually 3-5 months). The adviser provides support as needed; this can be facilitation, coaching, training and/or network topic meetings as required.
4. **Validation** site visit – the Service is audited by a validator (always a different person to the adviser who has been working with the Service) to assess if the Action Plan has been achieved and if the Service meets the EFQM Gold Star criteria. If the Service passes the Audit and meets the standard, they are awarded the EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence quality mark.

The Project Initiation phase began in November 2012 and the Quality team worked in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Steering Group and with the Centre for Competitiveness in planning the roll out of the EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence programme and the implementation of the draft Quality Service Standards for CISs/CIPS, the draft Quality Standards for MABS and the draft National Standards for Advocacy.

During 2012 work also continued on the updating and development of a range of standardised policies and procedures to support and ensure the delivery of a consistent quality service to our customers.

## **11.2 Training services**

The Citizens Information Board provides training services nationwide to Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and other voluntary and statutory bodies to enhance their information-provision capabilities.

### **National Calendar of Training Events**

In 2012, the Citizens Information Board delivered over 61 courses on the National Calendar of Training Events in over 26 locations throughout the country. More than 1,000 people attended these training events representing the network of Citizens Information Services around the country and other voluntary and statutory organisations.

The National Training Calendar delivers training on information, interpersonal skills, legal and management skills and organisational skills. New courses in 2012 included *Assisting People who present as Homeless*, *Civil Legal Aid and Criminal Aid*, *Dealing with Queries from Self-Employed or those formerly Self-Employed*, *Dignity at Work* and *Giving Information to people who present with Mental Health Difficulties* and *Training and Education Options*.

### **Award of FETAC Certificates**

One hundred and fifty one Information Providers completed the CIB Information Providers Programme by taught, distance learning and recognition of prior learning formats. There are two modules accredited by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications: L32072 Information, Advice and Advocacy Practice and L32073 Social and Civil Information. These learners were awarded (FETAC) Component Certificates by the Chair of the Citizens Information Board, Sylda Langford in a special ceremony in October 2012.

One hundred and twenty four of the newly qualified information providers work in Citizens Information Services (CISs); 1 in the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and 1 in the National Advocacy Service (NAS). The remaining 25 work in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

## **Recognising experience: acknowledging learning**

In 2012 the Information Providers Programme continued to be offered through three formats; the conventional taught delivery mode, through distance learning and through Recognition of Prior learning. This latter option is suited to information providers who have a long involvement with information provision and have developed a range of skills and knowledge in the role but have no formal accreditation in information provision.

In 2012 14 learners from Citizens Information Services in Donegal, Kerry, Mayo, Dublin, Offaly, Wicklow and Newbridge MABS completed the Information Providers Programme through Recognition of Prior learning.

## **Advocacy Practice Programme (APP)**

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) accredited Advocacy Practice Programme (APP) run by the Citizens Information Board outlines the legal background to advocacy, explains its elements and key principles, develops the skills required by a good advocate and allows students to apply these skills in a range of areas.

The first APP was delivered in 2008 at different venues throughout the country. Twenty three learners received Continuous Professional Development Certificates with 10 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits that are recognised at Level 7 on the NFQ. Since then two further cycles of the APP with 10 ECTS were delivered together with some additional assignments for previously certified DIT advocates to obtain the 5 additional ECTS for the practical element of their work. Currently there are 76 learners awaiting certification from the DIT for 5 additional ECTS for the new Practice Module to 15 ECTS which is a combination of the original Training Programme and the new Advocacy Practice Module and equates to a DIT Continuous Professional Development Diploma.

## **New Certificate in Management Skills for Managers in Advocacy Services**

The Citizens Information Board in collaboration with the School of Business Studies and Humanities at the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown (ITB) has developed an innovative accredited training programme, *Management Skills for Managers of Advocacy*

*Services.* Fourteen CIS Development Managers have completed the part-time course delivered by ITB staff at their campus in Blanchardstown.

The modules include *Advocacy: Case Review and Supervision* and *Human Resource Management*. The award is a Special Purpose Certificate at level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and consists of 20 ECTS credits (European Credit and Accumulation Transfer System).

## Training for Boards of Service Delivery Partners

The Citizens Information Board and MABSndI together developed a number of training courses aimed at the members of the Boards of service delivery partners.

- **Financial Controls and Introduction to Risk Management training**  
This course was designed to equip participants with the skills to meet the financial controls and reporting requirements of CIB and to identify risks and how they might be managed. There were 61 participants on the course from 42 MABS and CIS services – 25 MABS and 17 CISs. Participants included chairpersons, treasurers, board members and development managers. A review of the evaluation forms completed following the training indicated that participants felt that this training should be made available to all Board members.
- **The Board as Employer**  
This course was designed to give participants increased understanding and awareness of their roles and responsibilities as employers. There were 55 participants from 39 MABS and CIS services – 18 CIS participants from 13 services and 37 MABS participants from 26 services
- **Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)**  
Representatives of MABS, CISs, NAS and SLIS participated in a series of training events on the implementation of the PMDS system

## 11.3 Advocacy services

In the context of its legislation, the Citizens Information Board defines advocacy as “a means of empowering people by supporting them to assert their views and claim their entitlements and where necessary representing and negotiating on their behalf.” Advocacy is delivered through the Citizens Information Service (CIS) network (see Chapter 3) and the National

Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS), which is based in five CISs, one in each region (see Chapter 8).

The Advocacy team provides support and oversight to both mainstream and disability advocacy. It develops and implements the CIB strategic plan with regard to advocacy, devise advocacy standards, policies and procedures, deploy resources and oversee the development of advocacy services. The team manages and resources the case management system, [advocacycase.ie](http://advocacycase.ie) which provides data on all advocacy cases. The team prepares policies and procedures in partnership with CIS and NAS services. It liaises with the Training team in arranging advocacy training for both CIS and NAS staff and with the Finance team in overseeing service budgets.

## **Speaking up for Advocacy**

*Speaking up for Advocacy* is an occasional newsletter published by the Citizens Information Board. The newsletter addresses advocacy issues and details projects and research relating to advocacy.

## 12 Influencing social policy

The Citizens Information Board has a responsibility to channel critical information about the experiences and needs of citizens to relevant government departments, state agencies and other bodies. In this role it acts as an intermediary between the citizen and the state, communicating policy issues that emerge from the experience of our service delivery partners. CIB continued its social policy role in 2012 through the production of relevant social policy reports and submissions reflecting current policy issues aimed at informing and influencing policy decision making and debate. We also maintained our membership of advisory and consultative groups and engagement in research projects.

### ***12.1 Evidence-based work***

CIB has a statutory role to provide information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and to highlight issues which are of concern to users of those services. CISs and CIPS record and report indicative policy issues that emerge from their work with the public. Indicative cases might illustrate a problem with the policy itself (for example, an anomaly, gap or inconsistency that leaves people without a service or support that they need) or with the way in which policy is administered on the ground (for example, processing delays, information deficits, communication breakdowns or failures to treat people respectfully or courteously). These social policy returns provide useful data that ‘gets behind’ the statistics and demonstrates how policy impacts on people’s lives. Social policy feedback with illustrative, non-identifying case study material also comes through the National Advocacy Service (NAS); this material is particularly useful with regard to the impact of social policy on people with disabilities.

The relative uniformity of returns made by CISs and CIPS during 2012, indicate a number of issues that are consistently problematic for the public in their interactions with state services and supports. It is possible to see the emergence (and in some cases, the subsequent fall-off) of specific issues for the public who subsequently access information, advice and advocacy from CIBs delivery partners. This was evident during 2012 in particular, with the rise and fall in the recording of queries around medical card processing delays (due to the centralisation of processing), money and tax (due to the new household charge and communications from

Revenue to pensioners around tax compliance), Rent Supplement in relation to the impact of changes to maximum rent limits and the processing changes within the new Central Rent Units, and latterly, problems associated with the processing of third level grant applications through SUSI.

## **12.2 Statistical overview of 2012**

During 2012, CISs made 2,598 social policy returns and CIPS made 642 (a total of 3,240). Most CIS returns concerned Social Welfare (59%), followed by Health (10%), Housing (7%) and Money and Tax (6%). Within the Social Welfare category, Supplementary Welfare Schemes (including Rent Supplement), Disability and Illness, Families and Children and Carers were the most common areas of concern. While services raised a wide range of issues, the policy issue most frequently reported and crossing most of the query categories (e.g. social welfare, housing or health) was that of lengthy delays in processing applications and appeals and otherwise unsatisfactory administrative processes.

[CIB's Social Policy Quarterly Reports \(SPQRs\)](#) contain a selection of the most frequently highlighted social policy issues indicated in social policy records from CISs and CIPS. Statistics are provided on the number of returns received by social policy category. These reports continued to be published online during 2012 and distributed to relevant agencies, departments and personnel as a resource for partner organisations and others who are active in research and policy work.

A number of training events took place in 2012, designed to develop the capacity of information and advocacy workers to identify and capture social policy issues, and promote evidence-based analysis of the issues affecting clients of our services. During 2012, the CIB Social Policy and Research team provided training both through the National Training Calendar (see also Chapter 11) and on a tailored basis to individual services. A new Social Policy module was also developed for the Information and Advocacy Providers Programme (IAAP). Other capacity building measures included the provision of small grants (typically up to €3,500) to service delivery partners either working alone or in collaboration with other groups, who wish to undertake a piece of social policy work.

*Social Policy Update*, a monthly social policy newsletter which focuses on the social policy work of CIB and of our frontline services was further developed to provide information and comment on national social policy news and activity.



## **12.3 Policy submissions in 2012**

A number of policy submissions were made in 2012 covering a wide spectrum of issues and concerns.

### **Submission on Working Age Supports to the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare**

This submission focused on cross-cutting issues identified by CIB service delivery partners relating to working age supports. These refer mostly to specific household situations where social welfare replacement rates result in people being only marginally better off if they take up low-paid or part-time employment. Many of the queries dealt with by services reflect the multi-faceted nature of peoples' engagement with the social welfare system. The main disincentives to employment identified by CIB delivery partners are: the fact that jobseekers' payments are calculated according to days rather than hours worked; the withdrawal of Rent Supplement; different treatment of married and co-habiting couples in the income tax and social welfare codes; in-work costs (childcare, transport); impact of the Universal Social Charge; loss of a medical card and administrative delays in processing payments, particularly in respect of reclaiming benefits lost in a return-to-work situation. A number of case examples illustrated the experiences of clients of CISs and CIPS.

### **Submission on Draft Standards for Residential Centres for people with disabilities**

CIB has experience of the difficulties and challenges faced by people with disabilities from its involvement in delivering the National Advocacy Service (NAS). The Standards are extensive and cover a wide range of daily living, organisational and administrative matters and this is very welcome. However, some gaps were highlighted in the submission including the need for standards relating to how the voice of residents is captured, what charges in residential services cover, what constitutes 'extras' and what the responsibility of the resident is in this regard and a need for further exploration as to how the advocacy support role for people with disabilities in residential settings might be developed.

### **Submission on Rent Supplement**

In 2012 services dealt with over 21,000 Rent Supplement queries nationally and the level of policy related feedback has been high. A CIPS sample survey in September 2012 of 200

callers with Rent Supplement queries produced the following statistics: rental limits too low to secure accommodation (29%); unable to contact departmental staff to respond to queries (over 21%); low income workers unable to get assistance with rent because of full time work rule of 30 hours (15%); delays in processing claims (13%); lack of clarity about which office is processing claims (11%) and gaps in coverage 9%. The submission to the Department of Social Protection identified problems with the current administrative arrangements for processing Rent Supplement applications through the new central rent units as well as concerns relating to the impact of the reduction in maximum rent levels and disincentives for some in low income full-time employment who are not eligible for support under the scheme.

## **Submission on Domiciliary Care Allowance**

The review of the operation of the Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) was announced in July and was undertaken by a Group appointed by the Minister for Social Protection. The review considered the policy objectives and legal provisions of the Scheme as well as administrative processes, medical assessment reviews and appeals. CISs handled over 27,000 queries in relation to disability and illness payments in 2012 and issues concerning Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) featured prominently in social policy feedback. An important consideration in reviewing the DCA is that the payment be assessed against the overall level of support services for families with children with disabilities. Concerns raised in this submission related to the application process and impact of delays, medical assessment criteria, the support needs of children with significant disability, DCA as a gateway payment for other supports, the communication of decisions to families and the current appeals process.

In addition to the above CIB made the following formal submissions to government:

- HSE Service User Feedback Consultation
- Draft Standards for Residential Centres for People with Disabilities
- Personal Insolvency Bill (MABSndI in conjunction with CIB)
- Nursing Homes Support Scheme
- Draft National Consent Policy
- Reform of the State's Employment Rights and Industrial Relations Structures and Procedures
- Proposed Changes to Payments for Young People with a Disability

## Submission on the Personal Insolvency Bill

A submission on the Personal Insolvency Bill prepared by MABSndI in conjunction with CIB was made to the Minister for Justice and Equality. The submission drew attention amongst other things to the need for financial inclusion measures to ensure that those subject to insolvency arrangements and debt relief are not excluded from financial services. The submission also sought clarification on essential household income and recommended the introduction of a pre-action protocol for voluntary debt settlement arrangement as well as a right of appeal for debtors.

A joint Pre Budget Submission highlighted key concerns relating to the impact of cumulative cuts on indebted households. Collaborative work was undertaken in relation to research to support the MABS casework process. Feedback and case studies from MABS informed the CIB social policy report *Hard Times for the Self Employed: Citizens Information and MABS Experience* which was launched by the Minister for Social Protection in May 2012.

## 12.4 Social policy reports

CIB continued to undertake social research on topics of particular concern to people getting welfare benefits and services and on the issues emerging in social policy feedback from services.

In May 2012 Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection, launched a CIB social policy report on the issues facing self-employed people. *Hard Times for the Self-employed: The Citizens Information and MABS Experience* highlighted a number of key policy and administrative issues that arise out of the interactions of self-employed people with the social welfare system. A growing number of the clients of CIB supported services in recent years were self-employed people who were either unemployed or had experienced a major reduction in income. Many of these report high levels of indebtedness. A range of issues arising from those experiences were described and analysed in the Report and proposals for addressing these issues are included.

Other work undertaken in 2012 included a social welfare appeals report and work on the personal finances and charges impacting on people with disabilities in residential institutions.

Debt-related policy concerns featured significantly throughout the year with the publication of personal insolvency legislation and engagement with a range of consultations on the legislation.

## **Membership of consultative committees and networks**

A key part of CIB's social policy work involves participating in a range of policy fora, which influence policy debate. In 2012, CIB continued to participate in the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare established by the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD. CIB is also a member of the Disability Consultative Forum set up by the Department of Social Protection and within this context a range of issues around disability payments and supports were raised with the Department in 2012. Other networks with which we engaged during 2012 include the Social Policy Network which brings together voluntary and statutory agencies involved in policy work.

As part of CIB's wider remit we participated in the Commission on Credit Unions which was established to review the future of the credit union movement and make recommendations in relation to the most effective regulatory structure for credit unions. The Commission issued its report in March 2012.

## **12.5 Research**

### **MABS Casework Research**

Research was commissioned in the last quarter of the year from Ipsos MRBI to take an in-depth look at the caseload and casework of MABS services with a view to documenting the complexity of the work currently being undertaken by MABS with its active caseload. This research will provide data and related insight into the level and scale of interventions on behalf of clients and the nature of engagement with creditors.

### **Role and Contribution of Employment Programmes in CISs**

Work began at the end of 2012 on research into the role and contribution of employment programmes to the work of CISs. This independent research was commissioned following a public tendering process and is being supported by a Steering Group involving a number of CISs. The research is focused on CE schemes in particular, which are a highly valued and central element in the delivery of services by CISs.

## 13 Organisational supports

The Citizens Information Board fulfils important aspects of its mandate through its delivery partners: the network of Citizen Information Services, the Citizens Information Phone Service and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). The CIB provides a range of supports and services to these organisations. These supports include finance, ICT, corporate governance, legal and human resources (HR) support.

### **13.1 Finance and Administration**

The Finance and Administration team provides support to CIB in the areas of Finance, Risk Management, Procurement, value for money and general administration. The team ensures appropriate systems and procedures are in place to protect resources, demonstrate value for money (VFM) and comply with public financial procedures.

The team also provides supports to CIB's delivery partners in the preparation and monitoring of budgetary and accounting returns to CIB.

The Board has an internal audit function, established under the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. This function is currently outsourced under contract to Capita plc, which provides internal audit services to the Board under the direction of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board. The work of the internal auditor is based on an annual internal audit plan prepared for the Committee by the internal auditor, who reports to the Committee at least six times per annum on progress in implementing the plan. The internal audit plan also includes provision for the internal audit of CIB's delivery partners.

### **13.2 Information and Communications Technology**

The Citizens Information Board's ICT strategy is implemented by the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team. This team also manages and supports the day-to-day operational needs of the Citizens Information Board (CIB), Citizens Information Services (CISs), the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS), the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS).

## **MABS upgrades**

All MABS companies have had their communication and hardware infrastructure fully upgraded in 2012 and into 2013. The companies now share a connected network, with a new e-mail system. Critical data is stored centrally, and covered with enterprise level backup.

## **Print management**

In 2012 a project began to implement managed print services in all of our offices. Obsolete and costly desktop printers will be largely replaced with shared Multi-Function Copiers, providing a significant saving in maintenance and supplies. Staff will be required to authenticate any print out, either by PIN or swipe card, so usage can be tracked and privacy maintained.

## **CIB Intranet – Connect**

Our new collaborative intranet site went live in 2012. As well as providing traditional intranet resources (news, documents), the site includes social media aspects.

## **Delivery Partners Intranet – Infonet**

A new Infonet for delivery partners went live in 2012.

## **13.3 Human Resources and Governance**

The Human Resource and Governance team support both CIB and its delivery partners in the areas of Human Resource management, industrial relations, governance and premises.

### **Organisation change**

The organisation continues to be impacted by reductions in staffing levels which are part of the wider public sector response to the economic crisis. During the 2012 period staffing levels reduced to 82.2 whole time equivalent posts. This was a reduction of 8% since 2009 and was lower than the 84 post limit set by Government for the year. Further reductions are envisaged in the period up to and including 2015. The outcome figure for 2012 will assist CIB in meeting the requirement by year end 2013 to achieve a staffing level of 77 whole time equivalent posts. This will represent a loss of 14% of staff by the end of 2013. The ongoing efforts of staff to deliver on the huge and expanding programme of work already outlined in this report in the face of such a depletion of staffing resources is a testament to the calibre of

staff employed by CIB. An additional 6 temporary posts were seconded from the Department of Social Protection to CIB to staff the Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline.

## **Sick leave and absence management**

Historically CIB has experienced relatively low levels of sick leave. CIB is required to report to the Department on its sick leave rates using measures and definitions which are common to all public and civil services. In 2012 the lost time rate in 2012 was 2.25% of available workdays. This shows a significant decline in the rates for previous years. The 2012 lost time rate of 2.25% compares favourably with external benchmarks. The cost of absences in CIB in 2012 was €98,391.05. This amounts to a notional saving of €27,685.25 or a 22% reduction in cost.

CIB also undertook additional measures towards the end of 2012 to further reduce sick leave including introducing a Managing Absence Policy which outlined CIB's commitment to supporting employees' health and welfare at work and to supporting staff while on sick absence and which also introduced a number of procedural changes for reporting and monitoring sick absences. From 1 November, 2012, the Department of Social Protection instructed that new terms for Self Certified (Uncertified) Sick Leave should be applied to staff in CIB, this has been complied with in full.

## **Performance Management**

2012 was the first full year of implementation of a revised PMDS process which includes the linking of performance to pay and promotion and which targets training specifically around grade specific competencies.

## **Training for CIB staff**

Five in-house briefings were organised in 2012 on topics of direct relevance to the work of CIB staff, including one on the Personal Insolvency Bill. CIB went out to tender for training in seven IT and other work-related topics which were delivered in 2012. Staff attended courses delivered by nineteen external training providers. Seven staff availed of funding under the refund of fees scheme. In addition to formal training, a pilot coaching group was set up and informal training took place with staff coaching their colleagues on request. The courses organised and delivered to CIB staff amounted to 41.5 training days.

The ICT team have a specialist training budget and attended 10 additional specialised IT courses.

## **Partnership**

The Citizens Information Board's Partnership process brings together management, unions and staff to consult and work together on issues that affect the working of the organisation. Secretarial and administrative support to Partnership and its committees continues to be provided through the HR & Governance team. Partnership aims to foster joint ownership of the Citizens Information Board's objectives and commits all partners to improving the quality and efficiency of services. The Partnership Steering Group dealt with a number of important issues during the year. Partnership continues to allow for a formalised consultation between staff, unions and management and to work on the basis of consensus decision making.

## **Official Languages Act**

Information on the CIB Irish language scheme is available on both the internet and in the staff resource pack. All content on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) and [losingyourhome.ie](http://losingyourhome.ie) is in Irish. The CIB's microsites ([losingyourjob.ie](http://losingyourjob.ie), [keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) and [selfemployedsupports.ie](http://selfemployedsupports.ie)) are also fully bilingual. An email address, [eolas@ciboard.ie](mailto:eolas@ciboard.ie), is in place for Irish language queries. Irish language awareness is included in the staff induction checklist. The number of calls and queries received through Irish remains very low.

## **HR and Governance support to delivery partners**

CIB procured and oversaw the rollout of external support contracts to all service delivery partner companies and to CIB. On-going direct assistance to delivery partner companies was also provided where required particularly in terms of supporting recruitment and engaging with employer representative groupings.

## **Service Agreements**

Formal service agreements to cover the period 2012 were signed by all companies. Drafting of a 2013 service agreement was completed by year end following which a consultation process started.



## **Premises**

On-going support was provided to delivery partners and to CIB office locations with regard to sourcing, fit out, refurbishment and leasing arrangements during the year. There was a particular focus on accessibility issues and moving towards co-location of services wherever possible. CIB provided significant levels of support to 16 separate premises developments and also reviewed all lease arrangements entered into during the year.

## **Pension Trustee Services**

A centrally procured Professional Pension Trustee service was rolled out and continues to support delivery partners to comply with the requirements of the Pensions Acts.

## **Employee Assistance Programme**

A centrally tendered Employee Assistance Programme is in place to support both CIB staff and Delivery Partner staff. The service provides confidential support and counselling to assist staff who may be experiencing difficulties at work or at home.

## ***13.4 PR and promotion***

### **PR and promotion**

Citizens Information and MABS brand promotion continued throughout 2012. Both services continued to see a high demand for their service with the growing number of people out of work and the associated difficulties of coping with job loss, claiming benefits and managing debt.

A campaign to promote awareness of the Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline included flyer production, radio, print and digital advertisements.

A campaign to promote awareness of both the CIS and MABS and their new 0761 government network numbers was tendered for and awarded at the end of 2012. It includes national radio, outdoor media and digital elements as well as local area marketing.

Brand awareness continues with attendance at key events such as the National Ploughing Championships, the Over 50's Show, the National Brainwave Conference and Which Course Exhibition. An Information Awareness campaign continues with the joint MABS/Citizens Information leaflet displayed in over 2,000 Health outlets nationwide.

Promotional materials including roll up stands, leaflets, posters and stationery were updated to reflect the change of all CIB services to 0761 network. A suite of volunteer promotion materials were also developed. Roll out of premises signage for both MABS and Citizens Information continues with a move toward joint service provision. For example, all three services (CIS, MABS and NAS) are now co-located in the premises in Killarney making cross-referral easier.

## **Media coverage**

The National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS) continued the process of establishing its role as an independent voice for vulnerable, isolated people with disabilities following its launch in 2010. Promotional materials were developed and media protocols were developed. The work was highlighted with significant coverage in the Irish Times. The Money Advice and Budgeting Service also received significant media coverage on debt issues in all national papers and Michael Culloty was interviewed on both regional and national radio stations including RTE Radio1, Newstalk, Today FM the UTV network and TV3.

## **13.5 Energy usage in 2012**

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

In 2012, throughout its 12 premises, CIB consumed

- 346 MWh of electricity
- 10,819 M<sup>3</sup> of gas

This represents a slight increase in energy usage from the previous year and can be mainly attributed to the increase in usage in CIB's Head Office in Townsend St. due to the longer colder winter experienced along with an increase in the installation of ICT infrastructure.

## **Actions planned for 2013**

CIB intends to try to improve our energy performance by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Continue to purchase energy efficient office equipment as far as possible.
- Continue to raise energy awareness in CIB by regularly sending reminders to staff to switch PCs to power-save mode after a shorter time of non-use, shut down PCs at night and weekends etc.

## Appendix 1 Customer Service Charter

The Citizens Information Board provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), the Citizens Information Phone Service and the network of Citizens Information Services. We are responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and provide advocacy services for people with disabilities. We put the citizen at the centre of everything we do and this Charter sets out the principles that underpin our services.

We are committed to...

### 1. Clear, comprehensive and accurate information

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

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

### 2. Prompt, courteous and efficient responses

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

The Customer Service Action Plan and the Customer Communications and Customer Complaints Procedures set out principles of good communications practice that staff are reminded to adhere to in their dealings with customers – including timeliness of response to written, telephone and other communications. The Citizens Information Board's switchboard remains open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. The Citizens Information Phone Service provides service from 9am to 8pm on Monday to Friday.

### 3. Equality and diversity

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

In 2012, the Citizens Information Board worked with other agencies to ensure that information reached a range of customer groups including older people, people with disabilities, lone parents, migrants and migrant workers.

### 4. Choice

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

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

- On its website ([mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie))
- Via the MABS Helpline (0761 07 2000 9 am-8 pm Monday to Friday)
- Face-to-face with trained Money Advisers in offices nationwide.

The Citizens Information Board also published a range of printed materials in 2012 (see Chapter 10 above).

### 5. Access

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

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

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

## 6. Official languages

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

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

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

## 7. Consultation and evaluation

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

Project groups consisting of representatives from the Citizens Information Board and Citizens Information Services worked together in 2012 on a range of issues related to the development of the network and the delivery of services on the ground.

## 8. Internal customers

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

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

## 9. Co-ordination

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

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

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

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

## 10. Appeals

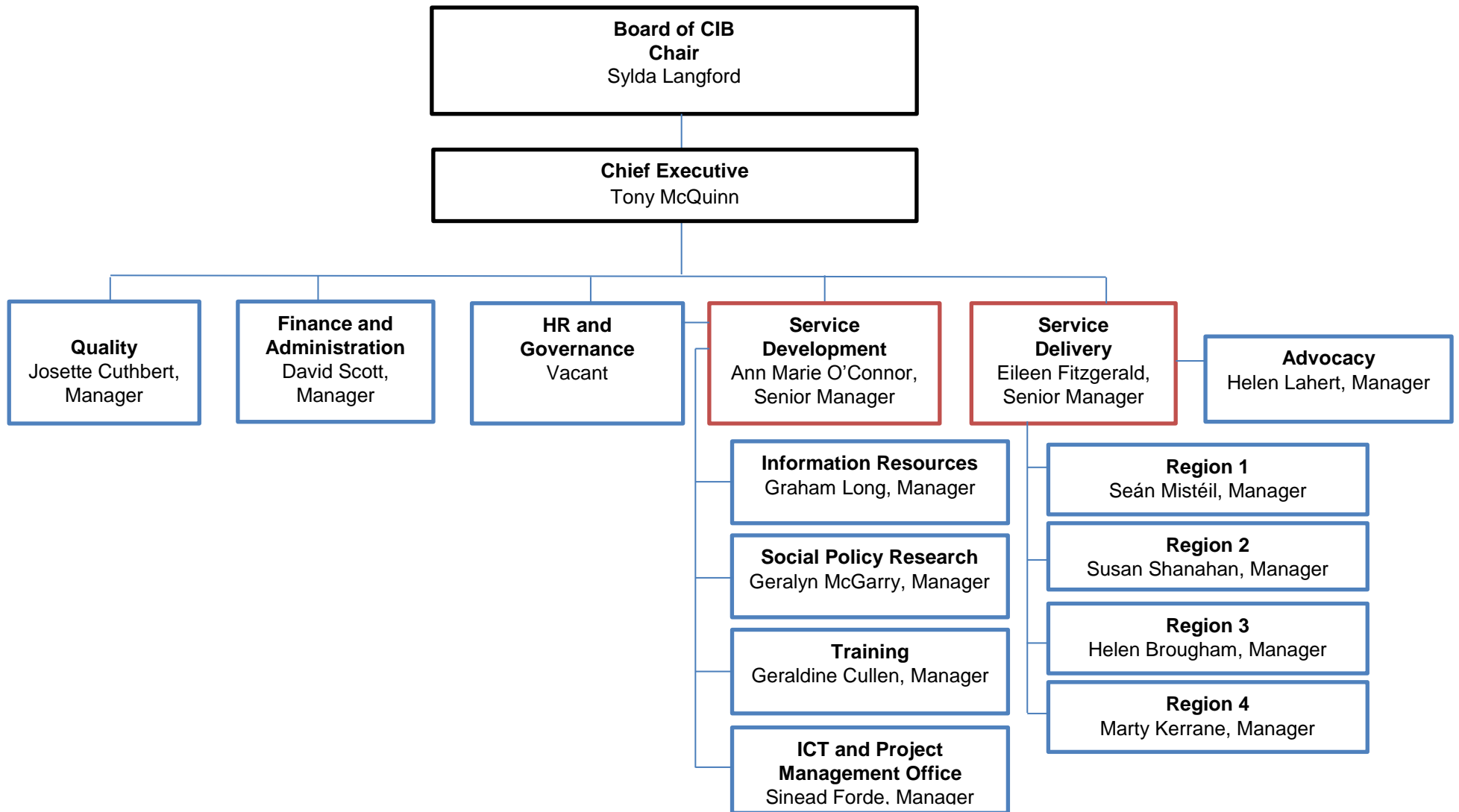
**We will maintain an accessible and transparent appeal and review system where appropriate.**

A Customer Service Officer is in place.

## 11. Comments and complaints

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

## Appendix 2 Organisational chart





## Appendix 3 Citizens Information Board Offices

### Head Office

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

### Dublin 7

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

### Cavan

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

### Dundalk

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

### Tallaght

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

### Tullamore

Bridge Centre  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly  
Telephone: +353 761 076 295

### Kilkenny

4 The Parade  
Kilkenny  
Telephone: +353 761 079 620

### Waterford

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

### Limerick

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

### Cork

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

### Castlebar

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

### Letterkenny

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

# Annual Report 2012

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



## **Galway**

4th Floor Dockgate, Merchants Road

Galway

Telephone: +353 761 079 660

## **Sligo**

1st Floor, Harbour View House

16 Holborn Street

Sligo

Telephone: +353 761 079 550



## Appendix 4 Board members

- Sylda Langford (appointed March 2010)
- Michael Butler (appointed March 2010)
- Martin Naughton (appointed March 2010)
- Josephine Henry (appointed March 2010)
- Noeline Blackwell (appointed March 2010)
- Pat Fitzpatrick (appointed March 2010)
- Michael McGuane (appointed March 2010)
- John Sheehy (appointed March 2010)
- Sandra Ronayne (appointed March 2010)
- Sean Sweeney (appointed December 2010)
- Eugene McErlean (appointed September 2011)
- Fiona Ward (appointed November 2011)
- David Stratton (appointed November 2012)

### Audit and Risk Committee

- Sylda Langford
- Martin Naughton
- Michael Butler
- Noeline Blackwell
- Josephine Henry
- Pat Fitzpatrick
- Eugene McErlean (Chair)
- Fiona Ward

### Finance Committee

- Sylda Langford
- Martin Naughton
- Michael Butler (Chair)
- Noeline Blackwell
- Michael McGuane
- John Sheehy
- Fiona Ward



## Appendix 5 Grants in 2012

Citizens Information Services (CISs),	Grant, €
Ballyfermot	256,858
Blanchardstown	230,391
Carlow	208,810
Cavan	192,249
Clare	280,137
Clondalkin	315,205
Cork City North	177,798
Cork City South	343,258
Crumlin	243,145
Donegal	671,959
Dublin 2,4,6	224,193
Dublin 8 & Bluebell	295,620
Dublin City Centre	561,290
Dublin City North Bay (KARE)	119,450
Dublin North West (Finglas)	286,762
Dublin Northside	290,166
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	232,375
Fingal (North County)	318,191
Galway	427,346
Kerry	377,549
Kilkenny	197,082
Laois	219,785
Leitrim	240,888
Limerick	337,039
Longford	241,164
Louth	248,586
Mayo	370,686
Meath	352,459
Monaghan	272,245
North & East Cork County	249,850
North Kildare	247,190
Offaly	275,943
Roscommon	270,042
Sligo	286,408
South Kildare	231,344
Tallaght	335,122
Tipperary	476,314



Waterford	269,941
West Cork Co.	225,861
Westmeath	307,698
Wexford	354,773
Wicklow	293,179
<b>Total CISs</b>	<b>12,356,350</b>

<b>Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)</b>	<b>Grant, €</b>
<b>Total CIPS</b>	<b>1,320,000</b>

<b>Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)</b>	<b>Grant, €</b>
Arklow	246,311
Athlone	175,924
Ballymun	390,121
Blanchardstown	364,946
Bray	359,935
Carlow	367,700
Cavan	284,058
Charleville	202,538
Clare	297,153
Clondalkin	377,034
Cork	536,902
Drogheda	184,665
Dublin 10 & 20	339,666
Dublin 12 Area	294,429
Dublin North City	280,624
Dublin North East	256,555
Dublin South East	284,236
Dun Laoghaire	318,897
Dundalk/Oriel	257,528
Dundrum/Rathfarnham	345,983
Fingal (North County)	322,868
Finglas/Cabra	351,795
Kerry	452,080
Kildare	490,498
Kilkenny	294,750
Laois	222,516
Leitrim	218,274
Liffey South West	364,879

Limerick	398,098
Longford	191,889
Meath	322,218
Monaghan	270,062
Mullingar	209,539
National Traveller MABS	345,371
North Cork	302,249
North Donegal	373,652
North Galway	225,197
North Mayo	225,567
North Tipperary	283,759
Offaly	226,430
Roscommon	197,196
Sligo	256,389
South Donegal	160,729
South Galway	532,851
South Mayo	308,463
South Tipperary	378,736
Tallaght	365,965
Waterford	509,784
West Cork	294,696
West Donegal	129,801
West Waterford	143,996
Wexford	340,526
<b>Total MABS</b>	<b>15,876,028</b>
<b>MABS ndl</b>	<b>1,795,213</b>
<b>Total MABS incl MABSndl</b>	<b>17,671,241</b>

<b>Advocacy Support Worker Programme (ASW)</b>	<b>Grant, €</b>
Clondalkin CIS	47,200
Longford CIS	49,275
Offaly CIS	49,275
West Cork County CIS	49,275
Clare CIS	49,275
<b>Total</b>	<b>244,301</b>

<b>National Advocacy Service (NAS)</b>	<b>Grant, €</b>
Clondalkin CIS	625,000
Westmeath CIS	508,000



Offaly CIS	528,001
Waterford CIS	572,000
Leitrim CIS	656,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,889,001</b>

<b>Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)</b>	<b>Grant, €</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>285,342</b>

## **Appendix 6 Financial Statements: Year ended 31/12/12**



## Board members and other information

Board Members:	Noeline Blackwell	(appointed March 2010)
	Michael Butler	(appointed March 2010)
	Laurie Cearr	(appointed March 2007, term ended March 2012)
	Pat Fitzpatrick	(appointed March 2010)
	Josephine Henry	(appointed March 2010)
	Sylda Langford	(Chair, appointed March 2010)
	Eugene McErlean	(appointed September 2011)
	Michael McGuane	(appointed March 2010)
	Martin Naughton	(appointed March 2010)
	Sandra Ronayne	(appointed March 2010)
	John Sheehy	(appointed March 2010)
	David Stratton	(appointed November 2012)
	Sean Sweeney	(appointed December 2010)
	Patricia Walsh	(appointed March 2007, term ended March 2012)
	Fiona Ward	(appointed November 2011)
	Margaret Zheng	(appointed September 2007, term ended August 2012)

Address: Georges's Quay House  
43 Townsend Street  
Dublin 2

Secretary: Brian Murphy

Solicitors: Mason Hayes and Curran  
South Bank House  
Barrow Street  
Dublin 4

Kilcullen and Associates  
183 Lower Rathmines Road  
Dublin 6

Bankers: AIB  
Bankcentre Branch  
P.O. Box 1121  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin 4

Auditors: Comptroller and Auditor General  
Treasury Block  
Dublin Castle, Dublin 2

## Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General



**Comptroller and Auditor General**

**Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas**

### Citizens Information Board

I have audited the financial statements of the Citizens Information Board for the year ended 31 December 2012 under the Citizen Information Acts 2000 and 2007. The financial statements, which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein, comprise the statement of accounting policies, the income and expenditure account, the statement of total recognised gains and losses, the balance sheet, the cash flow statement and the related notes. The financial statements have been prepared in the form prescribed under Section 22 of the 2000 Act, and in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland.

### Responsibilities of the Members of the Board

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

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

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

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

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

### Scope of Audit of the Financial Statements

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

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

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

In addition, I read the Board's annual report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, I consider the implications for my report.

### Opinion on the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the financial statements, which have been properly prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland, give a true and fair view of the state of the Board's affairs at 31 December 2012 and of its income and expenditure for 2012.

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

### Matters on which I report by exception

I report by exception if

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

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

**Seamus McCarthy**  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
3 October 2013

## Statement on Internal Financial Control

### Responsibility for System of Internal Financial Control

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

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

### Key Control Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Annual Review of Controls

I confirm that for the year ended 31 December 2012 the Board conducted a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial controls.

Signed on behalf of the Board,



Sylva Langford, Chairperson, Board of the Citizens Information Board


Date..... 24/09/2013

## Statement of Board's Responsibilities

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

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

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

  
.....  
Sylda Langford  
Chairperson

  
.....  
Josephine Henry  
Board Member

Date: 24/09/2013  
.....

## Statement of Accounting Policies

### 1. Basis of Accounting

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

Citizens Information Services (CISs) are delivered through independent companies who operate under an agreement with the Citizens Information Board and the relationship of principal and agent does not apply. Consequently, the assets and liabilities of these companies are not included in the financial statements.

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

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

### 2. Accounting Period

The Financial Statements cover the period 1 January to 31 December 2012.

### 3. Income Recognition

State grants are accounted for on a cash receipts basis. Other Income is accounted for on an accruals basis.

### 4. Fixed Assets and Depreciation

- (i) Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, except where a revaluation has taken place. Assets that have been revalued are stated at valuation less accumulated depreciation.
- (ii) Fixed assets are depreciated at annual rates estimated to write off the assets over their useful lives. Depreciation is charged at half the annual rate in year of purchase. Depreciation is at the following rates:

Computer Equipment	Straight-line	33⅓%
Office Equipment	Straight-line	20%
Office Furniture	Straight-line	12½%
Vehicles	Straight-line	25%
Premises - Owned	Depreciated according to the economic life of each property	40 years (2.5%)
Premises - Leased	Depreciated according to the economic life of each property	25 years (4.0%) for George's Quay House 40 years (2.5%) for all other leased premises

- (iii) The Board has a policy of revaluing its owned Premises Assets every five years. A revaluation on the basis of Economic Use Value at 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 was carried out by an independent firm of property consultants.
- (iv) Where an asset has been revalued the depreciation charge is based on the revalued amount and the remaining useful economic life of the asset.
- (v) The gain or loss arising on the disposal or retirement of a fixed asset is determined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the carrying amount of the asset and is recognised in the income statement.

## 5. Pensions

An updated draft superannuation scheme for the Citizens Information Board under Section 15 of the Comhairle Act 2000 was submitted to the Department of Social Protection for approval on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 and is awaiting approval. At present staff of the Citizens Information Board who were formerly staff of the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB) who retire receive superannuation benefits under the terms of the Local Government Superannuation Scheme; staff who were formerly staff of the National Social Service Board (NSSB) receive benefits under the terms of the Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme; and staff who have been employed by the Citizens Information Board subsequent to its establishment and who retire receive benefits in line with the terms of the Nominated Health Agencies Superannuation Scheme.

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

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

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

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

## 6. Capital Account

The Capital Account represents:

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

## 7. Leased Assets

### (a) Finance Leases

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

### (b) Operating Leases

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

## Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2012

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>Income</b>			
State Funding	1	45,816,915	45,217,388
Other Income	2	288,158	293,421
Net Deferred Funding for Pensions	22 (c)	1,833,000	1,440,000
		-----	-----
		47,938,073	46,950,809
Transfer from Capital Account	20	284,798	271,869
		-----	-----
		<b>48,222,871</b>	<b>47,222,678</b>
		-----	-----
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Salaries	3	5,178,232	5,415,739
Board Members' Fees and Expenses	4	66,550	87,891
Pension Costs	22 (a)	1,939,000	1,226,000
Administration Costs	5	2,435,684	2,361,835
Regional Services	7	14,361,436	14,464,939
Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)	8	17,795,182	17,288,446
Quality	9	50,488	6,515
Information Resources	10	253,233	219,975
Social Policy and Research	11	142,241	167,500
Information and Communications Technology	12	1,381,315	1,932,945
Advocacy	13	3,546,295	3,317,437
Training	14	242,581	150,395
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline	15	186,617	-
		-----	-----
		<b>47,578,854</b>	<b>46,639,617</b>
		=====	=====
(Deficit) / Surplus for the Year		644,017	583,061
Surplus at 1 January		1,383,688	800,627
		-----	-----
Surplus at 31 December		2,027,705	1,383,688
		=====	=====

The results for the period relate to continuing operations.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

.....  
Sylva Langford  
Chairperson

.....  
Josephine Henry  
Board Member

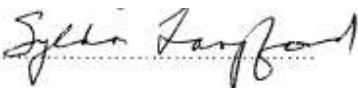
Date.....

24/09/2013

## Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses for the year ended 31 December 2012

	Note	€	2012 €	€	2011 €
(Deficit) / Surplus for the Year			644,017		583,061
Unrealised Surplus on Revaluation of Land and Buildings					-
Actuarial Gain on Pension Liabilities	22 (b), (e)				
i. Experience (Loss) / Gain on Pension Liability		(1,100,000)		(1,099,000)	
ii. Changes in Assumptions underlying Present Value		(5,505,000)		(1,784,000)	
iii. Actuarial (Loss) / Gain on Pension Liabilities			(6,605,000)		(2,883,000)
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding	22 (b), (e)		6,605,000		2,883,000
<b>Total Recognised Gains / (Losses) for the Year</b>			<b>644,017</b>		<b>583,061</b>

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

.....  
  
 Sylva Langford  
 Chairperson

.....  
  
 Josephine Herry  
 Board Member


Date: 24/09/2013



## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2012

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>16</b>	8,466,818 =====	8,751,616 =====
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors and Prepayments	<b>18</b>	896,786	580,396
Bank and Cash on Hand		1,379,255 -----	1,019,792 -----
		2,276,041 -----	1,600,188 -----
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due within One Year	<b>19</b>	(248,336) -----	(216,500) -----
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		2,027,705	1,383,688
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities Before Pensions</b>		<b>10,494,523</b>	<b>10,135,304</b>
Deferred Pension Funding	<b>22 (c)</b>	32,600,000	24,162,000
Pension Liabilities	<b>22 (d)</b>	(32,600,000) -----	(24,162,000) -----
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>		<b>10,494,523</b> =====	<b>10,135,304</b> =====
<b>Represented by</b>			
Capital Account	<b>20</b>	8,466,818	8,751,616
Income and Expenditure Account		2,027,705 -----	1,383,688 -----
		<b>10,494,523</b> =====	<b>10,135,304</b> =====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

  
.....  
Sylda Langford  
Chairperson

  
.....  
Josephine Henry  
Board Member

Date: 24/09/2013  
.....

## Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2012

Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>Reconciliation of Surplus for the Period to Net Cash from Operating Activities</b>		
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	644,017	583,061
Transfer (from) / to Capital Account	(284,798)	(271,869)
Depreciation	372,196	337,932
(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors	(316,390)	(9,169)
(Decrease) / Increase in Creditors	31,836	(50,664)
	-----	-----
<b>Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities</b>	<b>446,861</b>	<b>589,291</b>
	=====	=====
<b>Cash Flow Statement</b>		
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities	446,861	589,291
<b>Capital Expenditure:</b>		
Acquisitions	(87,398)	(66,063)
	-----	-----
<b>Increase / (Decrease) in Cash for the Year</b>	<b>359,463</b>	<b>523,228</b>
	=====	=====
<b>Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movement in Net Funds</b>		
Movement in Net Funds for the Year	359,463	523,228
Net Funds at 1 January	1,019,792	496,564
	-----	-----
<b>Net Funds at 31 December</b>	<b>1,379,255</b>	<b>1,019,792</b>
	=====	=====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 25 form part of these financial statements.

.....  
Sylva Langford  
Chairperson

.....  
Josephine Henry  
Board Member

Date: 24/09/2013

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>1. State Funding</b>			
State Funding was received from Vote 37 – Office of the Minister for Social Protection as follows:			
A.36 Grant		45,743,000	45,113,622
Other State Funding:			
The Health Service Executive – Contribution to Integrated Information Services		73,915	103,766
		<b>45,816,915</b>	<b>45,217,388</b>
<b>2. Other Income</b>			
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline		216,772	-
Sales of Information Material		-	1,574
Training Fees		4,900	15,350
Premises Rental and Services		-	3,040
Reimbursement of Staff Secondments		853	36,784
Grants Returned – Community & Voluntary Sector Advocacy		-	176,464
Other Income		65,633	60,209
		<b>288,158</b>	<b>293,421</b>
<b>3. Salaries †</b>			
Regional Services		1,029,503	1,100,335
Quality		451,889	484,250
Information Resources		736,843	734,150
Social Policy and Research		235,872	232,857
Information and Communication Technology		491,118	482,602
Advocacy		241,256	241,849
Training		658,414	727,610
Management Services		1,333,337	1,412,086
		<b>5,178,232</b>	<b>5,415,739</b>

† The average number of staff employed by the Citizens Information Board in the period was 78.9 (2011, 81.5). In addition 8 staff were seconded to the Board from the Department of Social Protection in 2012. €266,188 (2011, €279,511) was deducted from staff by way of pension levy and was paid over to the Department of Social Protection.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

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

	Number of meetings Attended	2012	
		Fees €	Expenses €
Noelene Blackwell	7/8	-	-
Michael Butler	6/8	5,985	-
Laurie Cearr (term ended March 2012)	1/2	1,443	-
Pat Fitzpatrick	6/8	5,985	1,171
Josephine Henry	5/8	5,985	-
Sylda Langford (Chair)	8/8	-	-
Eugene McErlean	7/8	5,985	-
Michael McGaune	8/8	5,985	3,195
Martin Naughton	6/8	5,985	-
Sandra Ronayne	8/8	5,985	-
John Sheehy	8/8	5,985	2,998
David Stratton (appointed November 2012)	2/2	-	-
Sean Sweeney	5/8	5,985	2,435
Patricia Walsh (term ended March 2012)	0/2	1,443	-
Fiona Ward	8/8	-	-
Margaret Zheng (term ended August 2012)	5/5	-	-
		56,751	9,799

The Chief Executive received salary payments of €117,641 (2011, €117,570). No bonus payments were made in the year. The Chief Executive received payments of €718 (2011, nil) in respect of travel and subsistence. The Chief Executive is a member of an unfunded defined benefit public sector scheme and his pension entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements in the public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme.

5. Administration Costs	Note	2012	2011
		€	€
Accommodation and Establishment	6	1,436,819	1,429,642
Travel and Subsistence		138,059	159,890
Stationery and Office Supplies		44,668	58,096
Postage		76,671	97,801
Consultancy and Reports		101,050	39,704
Legal Fees		32,983	7,108
Public Relations		10,478	1,077
Seminars and Meetings		19,458	19,893
Insurance		117,212	129,512
Board Publications and Miscellaneous		5,851	10,564
Affiliation Fees		5,667	12,812
External Audit Fees		17,000	13,630
Internal Audit Fees		35,609	27,336
Bad Debts		4,000	724
Depreciation		372,196	337,932
Interest and Charges		1,003	867
Other		16,960	15,247
		2,435,684	2,361,835

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>6.</b>	<b>Accommodation and Establishment</b>		
	Rent and Rates	1,181,531	1,198,840
	Light and Heat	74,023	63,237
	Maintenance and Security	178,412	167,565
	Archiving	2,853	-
		<b>1,436,819</b>	<b>1,429,642</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Regional Services</b>		
	(i) Citizens Information Grants		
	Region 1 - Dublin	3,161,227	2,905,457
	Region 2 - Mid West and North East	2,095,580	3,263,060
	Region 3 - South East	2,131,718	2,042,500
	Region 4 - South and South West	2,565,828	2,048,587
	Region 5 - West and North West	2,439,248	2,199,591
	(ii) Central Support to Citizens Information Services		
	Conferences, Seminars and Meetings	20,122	18,635
	Materials, Support and Evaluation	-	3,669
	Advertising and Promotion	149,923	90,697
	Network Support	72,896	73,380
	(iii) Citizens Information Phone Service	1,320,001	1,291,754
	(iv) Mobile Units	18,393	22,679
	(v) Information Supports	386,500	381,500
	(vi) Integrated Information Services Development	-	29,851
	(vii) Regional Training and Development	-	93,579
		<b>14,361,436</b>	<b>14,464,939</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)</b>		
	(i) MABS Grants		
	Region 1 - Dublin	5,601,939	5,380,638
	Region 2 - Mid West and North East	3,024,109	3,507,835
	Region 3 - South East	2,617,082	3,354,718
	Region 4 - South and South West	3,507,837	2,435,588
	Region 5 - West and North West	2,927,268	2,525,840
	(ii) Central Support to MABS		
	Advertising and Promotion	89,776	50,527
	MABS National Executive Committee & National Management Forum	8,509	14,246
	Network Support	18,662	19,054
		<b>17,795,182</b>	<b>17,288,446</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>9. Quality</b>			
Quality Standards Accreditation Programme		48,821	3,515
Customer Consultation/Service Development		1,667	3,000
		-----	-----
		<b>50,488</b>	<b>6,515</b>
		-----	-----
<b>10. Information Resources</b>			
Assist Ireland Website Development		25,537	23,221
Online Information - Translations		28,099	12,658
CIB Website Development		6,128	5,735
Public Relations, Promotion and Advertising		-	9,169
Database Development		-	125
Publication Grants		2,050	3,850
Publications		182,019	138,232
Information Initiatives			26,985
Miscellaneous		9,400	-
		-----	-----
		<b>253,233</b>	<b>219,975</b>
		-----	-----
<b>11. Social Policy and Research</b>			
Research Support		48,888	61,731
Disability and Information Research		52,843	59,276
Social Policy Reports		28,369	28,436
Social Policy Grants		11,100	13,450
Miscellaneous		1,041	4,607
		-----	-----
		<b>142,241</b>	<b>167,500</b>
		-----	-----
<b>12. Information and Communication Technology</b>			
Telecommunications		568,921	514,036
Software and Licensing		83,315	82,694
Hardware provided to Citizens Information Services and Money Advice and Budgeting Services		148,310	328,962
Support		260,888	212,845
ICT Projects		319,881	794,408
		-----	-----
		<b>1,381,315</b>	<b>1,932,945</b>
		-----	-----

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
<b>13. Advocacy</b>			
Grant Support for Community & Voluntary Sector Advocacy		-	27,309
National Advocacy Service – Establishment Costs		-	104,490
Grant Support to National Advocacy Service			
Region 1 - Dublin		625,000	608,090
Region 2 - Mid West and North East		528,001	464,465
Region 3 - South East		508,000	451,795
Region 4 - South and South West		572,000	528,553
Region 5 - West and North West		656,000	608,170
Grant Support to Advocacy Support Worker Programme		244,301	294,404
Grant Support to Sign Language Interpreting Service		285,342	104,000
Advocacy Support, Research and Development		87,651	86,161
Access & Advocacy Support – Inclusion Ireland		40,000	40,000
		<b>3,546,295</b>	<b>3,317,437</b>
<p>Under the Disability Strategy and Citizens Information Act 2007 the Citizens Information Board was given a remit to provide advocacy for people with disabilities. An independent evaluation of the pilot programme of 46 advocacy projects for people with disabilities in the Community and Voluntary sector acknowledged the effective work of the projects but recommended restructuring the service to deliver better value with the same resources.</p>			
<b>14. Training</b>			
Training Resources		38,387	34,079
Training Services		127,403	40,270
Staff Training		33,211	46,710
Advocacy Training		20,136	16,713
Supporting Volunteers		23,444	12,623
		<b>242,581</b>	<b>150,395</b>
<b>15. Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline</b>			
Salaries and Pensions		106,455	-
Telecommunications		35,305	-
Administration and Support		41,302	-
Travel Expenses		563	-
Staff Training		1,250	-
Public Relations and Promotion		1,742	-
		<b>186,617</b>	<b>-</b>

The Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline Project is an initiative funded by the banking sector established as part of the Government's response to the mortgage crisis. The Helpline was established on 31 July 2012, initially for 1 year, to provide information and signposting in relation to the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears and the supports available for those in mortgage arrears or pre-arrears. The costs of the Helpline are being funded by mortgage lenders. The Helpline has been extended for a further 6 months to 31 December 2013. Not disclosed above is an amount of €30,155 on office fixtures and fittings costs for the Helpline which has been capitalised and is disclosed under Note 16.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

16. Fixed Assets	Premises		Motor Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Office Furniture	Total
	Owned	Leasehold					
<b>Cost / Revaluation</b>	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Balance at 1 January 2012	6,265,000	3,523,465	171,405	407,126	695,297	703,941	11,766,234
Additions	-	-	-	57,243	-	30,155	87,398
Disposals	-	-	-	(3,318)	(12,766)	-	(16,084)
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 December 2012	6,265,000	3,523,465	171,405	461,051	682,531	734,096	11,837,548
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>							
Balance at 1 January 2012	587,090	692,829	171,405	356,644	695,297	511,353	3,014,618
Charge for the year	141,948	104,082	-	60,023	-	66,143	372,196
Disposals during the year	-	-	-	(3,318)	(12,766)	-	(16,084)
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 December 2012	729,038	796,911	171,405	413,349	682,531	577,496	3,370,730
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
<b>Net Book Value</b>	5,535,962	2,726,554	-	47,702	-	156,600	8,466,818
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Balance at 31 December 2011	5,677,910	2,830,636	-	50,482	-	192,588	8,751,616
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

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



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

### 17. Property

#### a) Freehold Land and Buildings

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

Location	Net Book Value as at 31.12.12 €
Cork	1,063,873
Dublin	3,972,254
Letterkenny	185,794
Sligo	91,239
Tralee	222,803
	-----
	<b>5,535,962</b>
	=====

#### b) Leasehold Property

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

Location	Expiry Date	Break Clause	Annual Rent €
<b>Head Office – Dublin</b>			
43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2	2032	2013	681,197
<b>Regional Offices</b>			
Castlebar	2012	-	12,348
Cavan – Elm House	2015	-	11,773
Cavan – Magnet House	2028	2013	22,855
Dundalk – Long Walk	2012	-	3,380
Dundalk – Long Walk	2029	2014	50,400
Galway	2025	2015	39,400
Kilkenny	2050	-	40
Limerick	2012	-	14,201
Sligo	2012	-	12,500
Tallaght	2019	-	89,495
Waterford	2028	2013	62,500
			-----
			<b>1,000,089</b>
			=====

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

	2012		2011
	€	€	€
<b>18. Debtors and Prepayments</b>			
Debtors			
Trade Debtors	18,386		80,865
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline Debtor	216,772		-
Other Debtors	14,985		15,664
	-----		-----
	250,143		96,529
Prepayments	646,643		483,867
	-----		-----
	<b>896,786</b>		<b>580,396</b>
	=====		=====

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

19. Creditors and Accruals		2012 €		2011 €
PAYE and PRSI Creditors		134,797		129,071
Trade Creditors		113,539		87,429
		----- <b>248,336</b> =====		----- <b>216,500</b> =====
20. Capital Account	€	2012 €	€	2011 €
Balance at 1 January		8,751,616		9,023,485
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account: Capital Expenditure in the year	<b>16</b>	87,398	66,063	
Released on Disposal of Fixed Assets	<b>16</b>	-	-	
Amortisation in line with Asset depreciation	<b>16</b>	(372,196) -----	(284,798) -----	(337,932) -----
		-----		-----
• <b>Balance at 31 December</b>		<b>8,466,818</b> =====		<b>8,751,616</b> =====

## 21. Comparative Figures

Changes to the layout of the notes to the financial statements have been made to reflect organisational changes. Certain comparative figures have been re-grouped or re-analysed on the same basis as the current year under Notes 5, 10 and 13 accordingly.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

### 22. Pension Costs

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

	2012	2011
	€	€
Current Service Cost	1,200,000	698,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities	1,300,000	1,119,000
Employee Contributions	(561,000)	(591,000)
	-----	-----
	<b>1,939,000</b>	<b>1,226,000</b>
	=====	=====

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

	2012	2011
	€	€
Pension Liability at 1 January	24,162,000	19,839,000
Current Service Cost	1,200,000	698,000
Other Finance Income (Interest Costs)	1,300,000	1,119,000
Actuarial (Gain) / Loss	6,605,000	2,883,000
Pensions Paid in the Year	(667,000)	(377,000)
	-----	-----
<b>Pension Liability at 31 December</b>	<b>32,600,000</b>	<b>24,162,000</b>
	=====	=====

#### (c) Deferred Funding Asset for Pensions

The Board recognises these amounts as an asset corresponding to the unfunded deferred liability for pensions on the basis of the set of assumptions described above and a number of past events. These events include the statutory basis for the establishment of the superannuation schemes, and the policy and practice currently in place in relation to funding public service pensions including contributions by employees and the annual estimates process. The Board has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet such sums in accordance with current practice. The deferred funding asset for pensions as at 31 December 2012 amounted to €32.600m (2011: €24.162m).

#### Net Deferred Funding for Pensions in year

	2012	2011
	€	€
Funding Recoverable in Respect of Current Year Pension Costs	2,500,000	1,817,000
State Grant Applied to Pay Pensioners	(667,000)	(377,000)
	-----	-----
	<b>1,833,000</b>	<b>1,440,000</b>
	=====	=====

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

### 22. Pension Costs (cont.)

cont.

- (d) The Citizens Information Board operates a defined benefit superannuation scheme for staff. The results set out below are based on an actuarial valuation of the liabilities in respect of the Citizens Information Board staff as at 31 December 2012. This valuation was carried out by an independent actuary using the projected unit method.

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

Assumption	2012	2011
Discount rate	5.50%	5.00%
Salary increase assumption	4.00%	Nil
Pension increase assumption	4.00%	Nil
Price inflation	2.00%	2.00%
Member age 65 (male current life expectancy)*	22.0	23.2
Member age 65 (female current life expectancy)*	25.0	24.6

On the basis of these assumptions, and using the projected unit method prescribed in FRS 17, the value of the accrued liabilities in respect of Citizens Information Board staff at 31 December 2012 was estimated at €32.600m (compared with €24.162m as at 31 December 2011).

### (e) History of Defined Benefit Obligations

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Defined Benefit Obligations	32,600	24,162	19,839	23,485	22,234
Experience (Gains) / Losses on Scheme Liabilities	1,100	1,099	(2,092)	(186)	(213)
Percentage of Scheme Liabilities	3.00%	4.54%	(10.50%)	(0.79%)	(0.96%)

The cumulative actuarial gain recognised in the Statements of Total Recognised Gains and Losses amounts to €2,158m.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2012 (cont.)

### 23. Commitments

#### (a) Operating Leases

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

	2012 €	2011 €
Lease of Office Accommodation		
Expiring after one year and before five years	54,202	54,202
Expiring after 5 years	945,887	956,681
	----- <b>1,000,089</b> =====	----- <b>1,010,883</b> =====

### 24. Board Members – Disclosures of Transactions

In the normal course of business the Citizens Information Board may enter into contractual arrangements with undertakings in which the Citizens Information Board Members are employed or otherwise interested. The Citizens Information Board adopted procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Finance in relation to the disclosure of interests by Board Members and these procedures have been adhered to by the Citizens Information Board during the year. There were no such disclosures of interests in the year.

### 25. Approval of Financial Statements

The Board of the Citizens Information Board approved these Financial Statements on 24/09/2013