

Annual Report 2013

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Chairperson's report

The Citizens Information Board makes a simple commitment - that all our clients 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. To deliver on this commitment we work with a complex network of delivery partners – Citizens Information Services, the Citizens Information Phone Service, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, the Approved Intermediary Service, the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities, the Sign Language Interpreting Service and the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service. During the year Citizens Information Services dealt with almost a million queries from over 600,000 people, MABS worked with over 20,000 new clients and the Citizens Information website had over 14 million visits. We continue to respond to the needs of our clients while ensuring we use the resources available to us efficiently and effectively.

The Citizens Information Board is an organisation that embraces change and seeks to continually improve. It has to, because when we commit to meeting the needs of our clients we also commit to changing as their needs change. One area where there has been great change is that of personal insolvency and the new Approved Intermediary Service (which operates through MABS) commenced operations during 2013. With the help of an Approved Intermediary, an eligible debtor can apply for a Debt Relief Notice which allows for the full write-off of qualifying unsecured debt after a three-year supervision period. I commend MABS and CIB on leading the development of this essential service which took a great deal of work.

Ensuring that all our services are delivered to a high and consistent standard is one strand of our strategic plan. The EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence Award was rolled out to several Citizens Information and MABS services during the year and we expect that all services will have achieved the Gold Star by the end of 2014. I thank services for the enthusiasm with which they have engaged with the quality award process while continuing to meet the daily demands in their services.

During the year I attended a reception at Áras on Uachtaráin on St Patrick's Day with representatives from the Citizens Information Board and our delivery partners. President Higgins paid tribute to the work of the Citizens Information Board and noted that our work is “at the heart of transforming lives and critical to the legitimacy and renewal of our public services.” He also pointed out that organisations like the Citizens Information Board play a hugely important role in creating a truly democratic society by supporting people in realising their rights and entitlements which underpin equal participation in society.

At a time when people have become cynical about the ability of public services to deliver change we are proud of the day-to-day work that goes on all over Ireland ensuring that people have access to information, that they are supported to access their entitlements, that they are helped during difficult times and that their dignity is respected no matter what their circumstances are. I would like to thank

dignity is respected no matter what their circumstances are. I would like to thank the staff of all our delivery partners who continue to carry out their work with great dedication in difficult times, and in the words of President Higgins, I applaud their “generous instinct to reach out to others, respect their essential dignity and empower them to have a voice in society.” In particular the work of the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities gives many very vulnerable people support to have their needs and wishes heard.

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 CIB¹. I would like to particularly thank our network of delivery partners through whom services on the frontline are delivered. Finally, I would also like to thank the Chief Executive, Tony McQuinn, his management team and all the staff of the Citizens Information Board.



Sylvia Longford

¹ A list of current Board members is at:
http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/about/about_board.html

Introduction

This report to the Minister for Social Protection details the Citizens Information Board's activities for the calendar year 2013.



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 citizens² on a wide range of public and social services. CIB's remit includes a focus on vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities.

The Citizens Information Board was established as a statutory body under the [Comhairle Act 2000](#)³. 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
- Support the provision of, or directly provide, advocacy services for people with disabilities

² 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.

³ 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.

- 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, our microsites and assistireland.ie), periodicals (for example, *Relate*, our monthly journal) and other publications.

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 our 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 principles that underpin the on-going development of all our services in the period 2012-2015 include:

- **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

Our delivery partners

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) 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.

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. Citizens Information Services also provide an advocacy service to those who may have difficulties accessing their entitlements.

The **Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)** provides a national telephone service.

The public can also access integrated information directly through the **Citizens Information website (citizensinformation.ie)**.

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 to help them access legal and affordable savings and credit.

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.

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.

Supports for our delivery partners

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) provides direct funding and core developmental supports to its delivery partners. The relationship between CIB

and its delivery partners has been formalised through the introduction of Service Agreements with each of our delivery partners.

“Our clients 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.”

The Service Agreements are three-yearly contracts between CIB and 96 separate companies. These contracts are agreed by the Board of CIB 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 help ensure that t CIB can fulfil 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 funds these services.

Governance framework

CIB provides a range of supports to our delivery partners to ensure compliance with best practice in all aspects of finance, governance, human resources and premises. These include a comprehensive financial control and reporting framework for delivery partners who are getting an operational grant. Delivery partners are supported by a central support unit within the Finance and Administration team providing advice and guidance on accounting, budgeting, procurement, risk management and insurance matters. The CIB internal audit plan includes annual audit coverage of delivery partners on a sample basis.

CIB provides governance support to the boards of delivery partner companies including employer and staff handbooks and guidelines on recruitment. Delivery partner boards have access to industrial relations and human resource advice and support, and to a Professional Trustee service for their occupational pension schemes (all funded by CIB).

A programme of training for the boards of management of delivery partner companies has been delivered for a number of years. Events on this programme in 2013 included *Induction for new Board Members* and training for the reviewer role in PMDS (Performance Management and Development System).

A number of support documents were updated and re-issued 2013 including *Company Law Guidelines for CIB Delivery Partner Companies* and *Good Governance: A Code of Practice for Directors of a CIB-Funded Company*.

Single Point of Telephone Contact pilot project

The Single Point of initial Telephone Contact (SPOTC) pilot project was set up in 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 provide a single point of initial telephone contact for the citizen so that instead of having to work out themselves how best to interact with the broad range of services on offer, they are guided to the most appropriate pathway for their individual needs.

A service delivery model was developed to channel initial telephone calls to a single point and mobilise existing resources within the network to work together to meet the demand. Interim findings indicated that the technology works and that calls can be correctly routed to remote locations. The model provides for a system of quality assurance of telephone service offer for the first time. Areas of the model requiring further testing were identified around deployment and management of service operation. The project also identified areas for further development to be addressed by the wider organization. The initiative was extended to additional services during 2013 and the technology, business process and assumptions tested with the wider pool. The final findings of the pilot will be reported in 2014.



From left, Tony McQuinn, Mrs Higgins, President Michael D Higgins and Sylda Langford

The European Year of Citizens 2013

The European Year of Citizens 2013 aimed to foster the active participation of citizens in the life of the European Union. To mark the year President Michael D Higgins and Mrs Higgins invited representatives from the Citizens Information Board and its delivery partners to a reception at Áras on Uachtaráin on St Patrick's Day (Sunday 17 March 2013). We extract part of the President's speech here:

“The Citizen's Information Board, and its constituent bodies, plays a vital role supporting people in realising their rights and entitlements which underpin equal participation. I have said before that this frontline effort of support and advocacy is not glamorous work, unless, indeed, you tell me otherwise, but this is fundamental work at the heart of transforming lives and critical to the legitimacy and renewal of our public services.

There is nothing more essential, I suggest, to our existence than the opportunity to receive another person in their vulnerability as an equal. To engage as equals requires that we throw off false and self-serving notions of power and status and acknowledge and honour our shared vulnerability as human beings. To meet those who are troubled, fragile and marginalised with empathy is a privilege only we as humans can know, a privilege those of you gathered here today have the opportunity to experience daily.

If we are to continue to transform our society, to build an active and inclusive citizenship, that transformation must be rooted in the best instincts of both the head and the heart. We need people who have a generous instinct to reach out to others, respect their essential dignity and empower them to have a voice in society. Organisations like the Citizens Information Board play a hugely important role in creating a truly democratic society.”

Citizens Information Services

The 42 Citizens Information Services (CISs) around the State deliver information on public and social services. All CISs offer a drop-in service where callers can meet information providers face-to-face. Outreach and mobile services also deliver information to citizens who might not otherwise be able to access it. For example, CISs provide an 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. CISs are supported and funded by the Citizens Information Board. The 42 Citizens Information Services received just under 12.5 million euro in direct funding from the Citizens Information Board in 2013. See Appendix 4 for full details of funding to individual services.

CISs – staffing and statistics

There are 274 paid staff (189.37 whole-time equivalent posts) in CISs. There are 234 employment scheme workers working in CISs (131.94 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 1,126 volunteers (123.71 whole-time equivalents) working in CISs.

In 2013, 637,804 people visited Citizens Information Services (CISs) with almost a million queries

During 2013, there were 637,804 callers to Citizens Information Services (CISs), a 1.4% increase on 2012. The total number of queries was 998,537, a slight increase on 2012. Two-thirds of services reported an increase in caller numbers, while most reported complex queries and more time spent with callers.

Nationality was recorded for 65% of callers (over 416,000 people). Of these, 20% were non-Irish nationals (12% EU nationals and 8% from non-EU countries). These figures are broadly similar to the 2012 nationality profile and indicate continued usage of mainstream information services by migrants.

Social welfare-related queries continue to far outnumber other categories at 45% of all queries. Within this query category, supplementary welfare schemes (particularly rent supplement) and extra social welfare benefits (fuel allowance, free travel, etc.) accounted for 22% of all social welfare queries (11% each). Disability and illness payments also accounted for 11% of social welfare queries and payments for families and children 10%. 'Claiming a social welfare payment', a category covering a range of topics, including multi-faceted and complex claims, accounted for 12% of social welfare queries. The next highest query category after social welfare was money and tax (9% of all queries, as compared with 6% in 2012). The vast majority of these were to do with Local Property Tax (LPT). Employment (8%), health (8%), and housing (6%) were the next highest categories of queries to CISs in 2013.

Introduction of Local Property Tax – an integrated response

A new Local Property Tax (LPT) was introduced in 2013. During the year the Revenue Commissioners issued notifications to almost 2 million households about their LPT obligations. A close working relationship was developed with Revenue during and following the roll-out of the new tax. In particular CIB liaised with Revenue to publish information on LPT on citizensinformation.ie. Subsequently information on Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service number was printed on all Revenue's information materials, letters and notifications. Training on the Local Property Tax was given by Revenue staff to 205 CIS, MABS and CIPS staff as part of the CIB training calendar. This training enabled CIS personnel to give comprehensive information to clients on the new tax.

During the month of April CIPS answered the highest number of calls on record (17, 291). CISs also noted that Local Property Tax queries were particularly high during the second and fourth quarters of 2013, following Revenue communications with householders on the tax. During and after the introduction of the tax a substantial amount of social policy returns on this issue were logged (19% of the total). Apart from social welfare-related topics, no other individual issue has featured so highly in social policy returns. This indicates that Citizens Information Services and CIPS played an important role in assisting the citizen to deal with their concerns around the assessment and payment of the tax. In addition CIB made a submission on the introduction of the LPT to the Revenue Commissioners and to the Department of Finance.

Volunteers in Citizens Information Services

There were 1,126 volunteers (123.71 whole-time equivalents) working in CISs in 2013. Volunteers complement paid information providers and scheme workers in CISs.

Volunteers who gave over 20 years of service to their community were honoured at a special ceremony in Dublin in December 2013. The contributions of 18 volunteers from CISs in Kilkenny, Kerry, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, Wexford, Tipperary, Offaly and North and East Cork were recognised and each volunteer received a certificate and a commemorative bowl.

The National Volunteer Strategy

The first *National Volunteer Strategy for Volunteers in the CIS 2012-2015* aims to give a framework and direction to volunteer involvement in the CIS, so volunteers can continue to contribute to the provision and development of a national citizens information service of the highest standard. In 2013 an Action Learning Project (ALP) examined what supports would be needed to implement some aspects of the Volunteer Strategy. Six CISs took part in the ALP, all with large numbers of volunteers.

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.

The Citizens Information Board gives financial support to the following organisations to provide information in specialised areas (See Second Tier supports in Appendix 4 for details of funding):

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 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.

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.

Other events and developments

CIB is a key partner in the **Border People Project** (borderpeople.info) which provides practical information for people crossing the border to live, work, retire or study. In 2013 an exchange took place where a CIS information provider and a Citizens Advice advice worker both completed training in the other jurisdiction. Cross-border training for information providers and advice workers also took place.

The EU Commission office in Dublin hosted a visit in October to Brussels for Citizens Information providers and CIB staff. The two-day programme included a visit to the EU Commission offices in Charlemagne where the group was given an overview of all EU Institutions.

An Information Provider's Guide to Drug and Alcohol-Related Queries - a new resource for information providers to assist them in dealing with queries relating to drug/alcohol misuse was launched in September by Alex White TD, Minister of State at the Department of Health. The guide was compiled as part of a training initiative for information providers in Citizens Information Services which was developed by Community Awareness of Drugs (CAD) with CIB and the North Dublin City and County Regional Drugs Task Force. Since the project initiation in 2007 146 information providers have been trained in the area of drugs/alcohol misuse.

Advocacy in CISs

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. The Advocacy Support Worker (ASW) Programme involves the CIB Advocacy team working in collaboration with the five Advocacy Support Workers (ASWs) and their Development Managers to develop resources and support the CIS network to provide consistent quality advocacy to meet customer needs.

Over 2,600 clients received an advocacy service in a CIS in 2013.

Over 2,600 clients received an advocacy service in 2013 and 54% of cases were social-welfare related. Employment-related issues accounted for 24% of cases and housing issues for 7%. The types of advocacy intervention services engaged in were broadly spread across a range of areas. Assistance with appeals was the most significant type of advocacy intervention (27%), followed by general negotiation (17%). The ASW programme developed, user tested and published standards and standardised procedures for CIS advocacy in 2013 (see also Chapter 10 on quality).

Citizens Information Phone Service



The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a comprehensive and confidential information service (based in Cork). The telephone service is provided Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm. CIPS also provides the 'Live Advisor' service, an instant web chat service for people with hearing and speech difficulties. This is open from 9am until 5pm weekdays. Members of the public calling the service pay national call rates from either a landline or a mobile. CIPS receives 100% of its funding from the Citizens Information Board (CIB). CIPS received just over 1.1 million euro in direct funding in 2013.

CIPS is staffed by 1 manager, 2 team supervisors, 17 information officers (whole-time equivalents), 1 senior administrator and 1.1 administrator (whole-time equivalent). CIPS is governed by a Board of Directors. The ten Directors are drawn from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. In addition there are two sub-committees of the Board who deal with financial and human resource matters and report back to the CIPS Board.

CIPS answered 162,080 telephone queries in 2013 which took an average of 5 minutes per call

In 2013, CIPS' information officers answered 162,750 requests for information and advice from the public, of which 162,080 were telephone queries, 323 emails, 347 Live Advisor (web chat accessed via ciboard.ie/liveadvisor). This is an increase of 3% on 2012. The ATT (average time spent on a call) for 2013 was 4 minutes 58 seconds (a five second increase on 2012).

The majority of customer queries were in the areas of Social Welfare (45.4%) and Employment (13.3%) which mirrors the breakdown of queries to the CIS network. The third highest query category during 2013 was Money and Tax (13.2%). Forty eight percent (48%) of Money and Tax queries related to Housing Taxes and Reliefs (this was related to the introduction of the Local Property Tax – see page 10 above). 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.

Providing information - citizensinformation.ie




The citizensinformation.ie website is designed to provide public service information for Ireland. It provides details on rights and entitlements for the general public and is the primary information source for information providers in Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service, as well as providing useful information for staff in the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities and other organisations.

Citizensinformation.ie recorded 14.1 million visits, 719,000 unique monthly visitors and 46.5 million page views in 2013

In 2013 citizensinformation.ie recorded more than 14.1m visits, more than 46.5m pageviews and an average of more than 719,000 unique visitors per month. The mobile version of the website, m.cinfo.ie, recorded more than 93,123 visits, 541,535 pageviews and an average of 5,068 unique visitors per month. CIB continues to syndicate social

welfare information from citizensinformation.ie to the website of the Department of Social Protection, welfare.ie. During the year the website homepage featured the logo of the European Year of Citizens 2013.

CIB continues to work with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the technical side of citizensinformation.ie.

 @citizensinfo During 2013 the CIB twitter feed (twitter.com/citizensinfo) continued to grow and passed 4,000 'followers' in February 2014. The CIB 'corporate' website, citizensinformationboard.ie, recorded 638,892 visits and more than 2.9m pageviews in 2013.

Microsites

Keepingyourhome.ie is a microsite aimed at people who are worried about mortgage repayments or who are in mortgage arrears. Keepingyourhome.ie is one strand of the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service (see Chapter 7). In 2013 the site recorded more than 136,047 visits, 398,075 pageviews and an average of 7,696 unique visitors per month.

Losinyourjob.ie (aimed at people who are unemployed or being made redundant) recorded 135,423 visits, 285,463 pageviews and an average of 8,949 unique visitors per month.

Selfemployedsupports.ie aims to provide information for self-employed people who are living on reduced incomes. The site recorded 127,025 visits, 320,584 pageviews and an average of 8,166 unique visitors per month.



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

In 2013 assistireland.ie recorded 478,715 visits, more than 2.4m pageviews and an average of 25,835 unique visitors per month. The assistireland.ie support service dealt with more than 1,100 queries by telephone, email and SMS. In late 2013 assistireland.ie was redeveloped and redesigned and is now a fully responsive website that adapts to different devices (for example, tablets or mobile phones).

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). Healthcomplaints.ie provides information on how to make a complaint or give feedback about health and social care services in Ireland. 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.

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 (See Chapter 11).

The *Benefits and Taxes 2013* wallchart and leaflet summarise benefits in 2013 with comprehensive tables of rates and income thresholds.

The *Have you lost your job?* Leaflet, published in March 2013, outlines the benefits and supports available for unemployed people and how to access those supports.

The *Information for school leavers* leaflet was published in March 2013 and distributed to schools around the country. It covers a wide range of topics that may be of interest to school leavers, including education and training options, social welfare entitlements, tax and employment law. The leaflet was published as part of the European Year of Citizens 2013.



The *Information for those affected by Bereavement* booklet was published in July 2013 and provides a guide to practical and legal matters following bereavement, including information on financial supports for those who have recently been bereaved.

In 2013 the Citizens Information Board worked with the European Commission to re-publish 8 leaflets on the workings of the EU: *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*.

Know Your Rights columns, consisting of weekly questions and answers on topical issues are distributed monthly to CISs and syndicated in local papers nationally.



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 a wide range of areas including insolvency mechanisms, Local Property Tax, activation schemes, the revised Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears and Budget 2014. The EU Supplement is published quarterly. It covers significant EU developments (particularly social policy, consumer policy and citizens' rights).

CIB publications are distributed to a wide range of organisations and individuals as well as the network of Citizens Information Centres. These include government departments and statutory agencies, MABS offices, health offices, local social welfare offices and Intreo centres, TDs and Senators, the voluntary and community sector and other local networks. All publications are available in PDF on citizensinformationboard.ie – many publications are also available as eBooks.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service

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, in particular low income families and individuals. A key achievement for MABS in 2013 was the establishment of the Approved Intermediary Service following the enactment of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 which established the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI) (see Chapter 6).



MABS Helpline
0761 07 2000
Monday to Friday: 9am - 8pm

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is made up of a network of 53 companies (which include 51 local companies and 2 national companies, MABSndl 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 (MABSndl) 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. The 51 MABS services and NT MABS received just under 16.4 million euro in direct funding from the Citizens Information Board in 2013. MABSndl received 2.3 million euro to support the MABS companies. The total grant for 2013 included additional funding for establishment of the Approved Intermediary Service in MABS (13 companies including MABSndl received additional funding for this purpose – see Chapter 6). See Appendix 4 for full details of funding to individual companies.

MABS staffing and statistics

The 51 MABS companies nationally are staffed by 47 money advice co-ordinators⁴, 97 money advisers, 50 administrators and 12 resource money advisers⁵ (all whole-time equivalent posts).

⁴ Money advice co-ordinators provide money advice for 50% of their time.

The Resource Money Adviser (RMA) role formally began in MABS in March 2012. Nineteen services employ a RMA either on full time or part time basis. 40% of the RMA's time is allocated to supporting another MABS service. The National Traveller MABS (NTMABS) has 4 whole-time equivalent posts. MABSndI has 18 whole-time equivalent posts and an additional temporary post was created for the Approved Intermediary Service. In addition 13 temporary full time money advisers were seconded from MABS services to MABSndI as Approved Intermediaries in 2013.

The MABS service is delivered in three ways:

- On its website (mabs.ie)
- Via the MABS Helpline (1890 283 438)
- Face-to-face with trained money advisers in offices nationwide

**MABS services dealt with
20,552 new clients in 2013**

MABS services dealt with 20,552 new clients in 2013. A further 3,825 sought information about budgeting and money management. The total Active Client caseload on 31 December 2013 was 22,966. The MABS National Helpline dealt with 23,127 calls in 2013. Services saw significant rises in client numbers at the start of the recession but this emerging demand appears to have levelled off in more recent years.

47% of new clients were in the age group 26-40 with 46% aged between 41- 65. Over half (55%) were female. The majority of new clients are reliant on social welfare payments (57%) of whom 25% are in receipt of jobseekers' payments and 11% in receipt of One-Parent Family Payment. 27% of clients are employed and 4% are self-employed. 37% had no second income coming into the household. Almost half of new clients are mortgaged. One fifth are in private rented accommodation and 14% in rented local authority accommodation.

The total amount owed by new clients to creditors on 31 December 2013, based on the debt they had when they first came to MABS was €620 million with 76.7% owed to banks/financial institutions. In most cases more than one debt is recorded for individual clients. The average level of recorded debt for new clients is €30,200. Personal loans are 50% of the recorded debts for new clients, followed by utilities debts (28%) and credit card debts (27%). Mortgage debts account for 21% of overall debts.

Waiting times for appointments have been reducing for the majority of services as improved systems for managing demand have been implemented. In all services emergency clients are met promptly and supported (over 4,000 in 2013). The average waiting time per service at the end of 2013 was 4.67 weeks (23 days). Over 30 services (60%) have a waiting time of 4 weeks or less, 8 services have a waiting time of above 4 weeks but no more than 6 weeks, and 12 have a waiting

⁵ In October 2013, CIB submitted a proposal to the Dept. of Social Protection to continue the RMA programme and for retention of the 12 posts. In January 2014, CIB received sanction for the retention of these temporary posts for a further two-year period (March 2014 –March 2016).

time greater than 6 weeks. CIB is working with services with above average waiting times to put in place processes and practices to manage and reduce the waiting periods. This includes in some cases the temporary allocation of additional resource money advice staff to deal with waiting lists.

National Traveller MABS

The Citizens Information Board initiated a review of the role, functions and structure of National Traveller MABS in 2013. The review was completed at the end of the year. Among the recommendations and findings, the report stated that NTMABS should continue as a specialized support agency within MABS, but develop a more ambitious, strategic role. It should re-conceptualise its community education model to focus more on debt prevention. The report recommended that NTMABS should take on a formal but very limited casework function which is focused on complex and strategic cases critical to financial inclusion and financial literacy, sharing and disseminating the learning with MABS, CISs and CIB.

In 2013, NTMABS published a major study titled *Debt and Dying – understanding and addressing the impact of funeral costs for travellers in Ireland*. In November, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin hosted an event with representatives of traveller organisations which sought to begin a community conversation on this important issue. NTMABS also launched a new DVD *A Deal's a Deal* on moneylending.



Derek Teeling & Helen McKenna, Finglas/Cabra MABS, with Tony McQuinn CIB, receiving their EFQM Gold Star award from Matt Fisher, EFQM, Brussels.

The Approved Intermediary Service

The Personal Insolvency Act 2012 was signed into law in December 2012. The Act introduced 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 oversees these debt resolution processes. The Board of CIB was requested by the Minister for Social Protection in 2012 to provide Approved Intermediaries for the processing of Debt Relief Notices as legislated for in the Act.

An Approved Intermediary⁶ has been authorised by the Insolvency Service of Ireland to submit applications for a Debt Relief Notice on behalf of eligible debtors. A Debt Relief Notice (DRN) is one of the new insolvency schemes set out in the Personal Insolvency Act 2012. It allows up to €20,000 of qualifying debt to be written off for certain insolvent people who have no income, whose assets fall below the relevant threshold and who have no prospects of being able to pay off their debts in the next three years. After a period of three years the money a person owes to creditors listed on the DRN will be cleared and during the three year supervision period the named creditors cannot take any legal or debt collection action against the debtor. Debtors can only apply for a DRN through an Approved Intermediary.

By the end of 2013, 91 appointments had taken place and by early January, 35 people were scheduled to submit their Debt Relief Notice to the ISI.

CIB in conjunction with MABSndI developed an Approved Intermediary service through MABS. Initially a Transition Unit was established under MABSndI. On 17 June 2013, 13 money advisers were seconded to MABSndI to work in the newly established Approved Intermediary Service Transition Unit. Initially the money advisers were seconded for 1 year but this was extended to June 2015 pending rollout of the Approved Intermediary Service across MABS companies. Seminars took place in the summer for MABS board members on company authorisation and Debt Relief Notices. A debtor can be screened and an appointment arranged through any local MABS office or the MABS helpline.

⁶ An Approved Intermediary can be an individual or an organisation. In the case of MABS, following legal advice, it was decided to apply for corporate authorisation as an Approved Intermediary and this was endorsed by the Insolvency Service (ISI).

In conjunction with University of Ulster, MABSndI developed an accredited training module for Approved Intermediaries and 110 money advisers and money advice coordinators successfully qualified as accredited Approved Intermediaries (AIs). Training was designed and held for all MABS staff on eligibility screening for Debt Relief Notice (DRN) and a new Appointment system was developed for Approved Intermediary appointments with debtors. All staff attended training on a complete overview on the Personal Insolvency Legislation and they are fully briefed on Debt Settlement Arrangements (DSA), Personal Insolvency Arrangements (PIA) and changes to bankruptcy.

Extensive work was carried out in developing a process for DRN application and in conjunction with MABSndI, CIB sought legislative change to implement a more workable process which mitigated the risk to debtors and MABS/CIB. Two amendments were made to the Personal Insolvency Act in 2013, in the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 and the Companies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 which gave effect to these changes.

Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service

During 2012 the Government developed a range of measures in response to the mortgage crisis. One of these was the Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service. The Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service has three strands – all aimed at helping people understand their options if they are in mortgage arrears or think they are at risk of going into arrears on their home. CIB is responsible for two of these components, and provides information on its website about the panel of accountants that is available to debtors for mortgage advice.

Keepingyourhome.ie

The website keepingyourhome.ie is the key online access portal for comprehensive mortgage arrears information. [Keepingyourhome.ie](http://keepingyourhome.ie) is a microsite aimed at people who are worried about mortgage repayments or who are in mortgage arrears. In 2013 the site recorded more than 136,047 visits, 398,075 pageviews and an average of 7,696 unique visitors per month.

The Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline

The Citizens Information Board set up a Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline in 2013 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 helpline received 6,881 calls in 2013. The helpline was provided for callers with mortgages on residential property only. The particular target group for this initiative was those who had not so far taken any action to address their difficulties, for example, approaching their lender.

**The helpline received
6,881 calls in 2013.**

A panel of accountants

A panel of over 2,000 accountants (made up of members of accountancy bodies) listed on keepingyourhome.ie are available to provide advice for mortgage holders when a lender presents them with a long-term proposal to restructure the mortgage on their home. A mortgage holder can select an accountant from the panel and their lender will pay for the service. This service was put in place following an agreed protocol between recognised accountancy bodies, participating mortgage lenders, the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Finance and the Central Bank.

The National Advocacy Service

The National Advocacy Service (NAS) provides an independent, confidential and free, representative advocacy service for people with disabilities.



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

During 2013 NAS continued the process of establishing its role as an independent voice for vulnerable, isolated people with disabilities across the disability spectrum, physical, intellectual, people with mental health difficulties, people with acquired brain injury and people on the autism spectrum. People with disabilities may get in touch with NAS directly. Enquiries are also welcome from family, friends or services on behalf of people who may be unable to request support themselves. The NAS national telephone number is 0761 07 3000.

In 2013 the service was managed by five Citizens Information Services in Dublin (Clondalkin), Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim and was staffed by five managers, 35 advocates (whole-time equivalent) and five administrators. (In 2014 a National Advocacy Service Board was established. The National Advocacy Service is now provided through four regions and a national office based in Dublin.) NAS received just over 3 million euro in direct funding from the Citizens Information Board in 2013 (see Appendix 4 for full details).

NAS client statistics	2011	2012	2013
On books at start of period	206	573	667
New cases	650	495	397
Closed cases	291	411	399
Total NAS clients worked with during the year	856	1068	1063
Initial enquiries	748	872	861
Waiting list	34	20	20
Average clients per advocate	23	31	30

Figure 1: National Advocacy Service statistics in 2011, 2012 and 2013

The total client numbers show a very small reduction from 1068 in 2012 to 1063 in 2013. This is due to the increasing complexity of cases presenting to NAS.

In late 2012 CIB contracted Round Table Solutions to carry out a limited review of NAS. The review looked at issues of governance and accountability for a service working with vulnerable people and good practice in caseload management. The report was published in March 2013 and concluded that NAS had a committed passionate staff and managers who were all working well together and with CIB but that there was a drift to a regional rather than a national service with each region delivering the service differently. It recommended that CIB establish the National Advocacy Service as a national company, with one national Board as the employer. During 2013 NAS prepared for the move into this structure.

NAS Service Delivery

In 2013 NAS continued to promote the advocacy service in ways that would reach people within NAS's remit, in particular in residential institutions. People living in residential institutions and congregated settings remain most in need of advocacy due to restrictive practices that can significantly interfere with their rights. In 2013 NAS reported an increase in referrals of parents with intellectual disabilities or mental health difficulties involved in child protection or welfare investigations. There was also an increase in enquiries and referrals from people with autism and acquired brain injury and significant referrals from vulnerable young adults living without adequate supports in the community, young people with acquired or progressive disabilities facing inappropriate placements in nursing homes and an increasing number of cases where there was suspected financial abuse.

As services move to implement the recommendations of the HSE report *Time to Move on from Congregated Settings; A Strategy for Community Inclusion*, NAS receives more enquiries from, or on behalf of, people who wish to leave their residential provider and are seeking support to have their voice heard and their choices acknowledged in the move.

It is evident in reports, from feedback, outcomes logged in the electronic case management system and anonymised case studies that advocates have achieved substantial outcomes for the people with disabilities they have represented and significant improvements in their quality of life during 2013.

NAS Conference 'Equal Citizenship – Partners in Progress'

NAS held its first conference in Dublin Castle on September 9, 2013. The conference was opened and addressed by the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD. In the context of the European Year of Citizens and the rights that come with EU citizenship the conference considered practical and innovative ways of supporting people with disabilities to be involved in decision making and have meaningful access to life, work and leisure in their community.

Three people who have used the advocacy service spoke about their experience of advocacy and how they were supported by NAS advocates to have their voices heard and their choices respected. The keynote speaker, Sally Warren, spoke from her own experience in the UK of working to ensure that people with learning disabilities have the supports they need to live 'an ordinary life' in all its richness and diversity.

Two short animation films describing the advocate's role and the experience of one of the users of the service were launched at the conference (available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMqVafsbAKgxAmv8C8XxbAA>). The films provide an accessible description of how advocacy works and how it can support people to live fuller lives.



Pictured at the NAS conference - from left: Louise Haughney, Ben North, NAS Manager, Jane Fennessy, and Sally Warren, Paradigm UK (keynote speaker).

The Sign Language Interpreting Service

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. SLIS received €284,658 in direct funding from the Citizens Information Board in 2013. During 2013 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
- Working with stakeholders to provide an emergency response sign language interpreting service

In 2013 the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD officially launched the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) in the SLIS offices. The Deaf Village Ireland campus remains a central point of contact for Deaf people accessing the services of SLIS and IRIS.

Referral service in 2013

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 increased in 2013. In 2013 SLIS received 1,258 referrals and an additional 160 referrals on access and advocacy issues and emergency calls.

Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)

The Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) offers a video-link service to a live Irish Sign Language interpreter. There was a 400% increase in IRIS appointments overall and a 230% increase in public sector use of the service. In addition the service allows clients to independently use IRIS as a video-relay system to place calls to mainstream services. The service increased its operating hours from two to three days - 10am to 4pm. IRIS received 404 bookings in 2013 (51 of these were demonstration or trial bookings).

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. A dedicated team develops and implements CIB's quality strategy while all CIB service teams are involved in developing, providing and supporting high-quality products, resources and supports for our delivery partners and those who deliver services – these include the range of websites, publications, training, ICT systems and the social policy and research, governance and service delivery supports. CIB provides training services nationwide to ensure that information providers deliver high-quality services to their customers.

Regional service delivery

The Citizens Information Board provides a range of supports to Citizens Information Services (CISs), Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) and to the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) through its regional network and from central development and support services (see Chapter 12). These include organisational development, company law requirements, strategic planning, budget plans, financial reporting, HR management, premises issues and monitoring and evaluation of service delivery, information publications, training, advocacy and accessibility, and central support on information and communications technology (ICT).

In particular the Citizens Information Board's Service Delivery Team leads, manages and co-ordinates the delivery of CIB's strategy and annual workplan throughout the network of CISs and MABS. The team supports and monitors the implementation of individual service workplans against agreed deliverables. The team works closely with all our delivery partner services to understand the service processes and procedures, client issues, service demand and the supports needed to improve service delivery and quality and to support CIB's relationship with services.

EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence Programme

In late 2011 CIB selected the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Gold Star Service Excellence programme provided by the Centre for Competitiveness as the quality assurance programme for CIB and our delivery partners. This is a customised entry-level quality programme with a strong focus on customers. Over two years, the Centre for Competitiveness will provide, implement, support and accredit this quality assurance programme with

all CIB's delivery partners (42 CISs, CIPS, 51 MABS, MABSndI, National Traveller MABS, NAS, SLIS) and CIB itself.

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 Advisor assigned to them by the Centre for Competitiveness and collectively with the other services in their Cohort. Each Service works through a 4 stage process to achieve validation: **Self-Assessment – 'Close the Gap' Action Plan – Improve – Validation** site visit.

The roll-out of the programme began in January 2013, with three national briefings for all services. Cohort 1 commenced in April 2013, and each subsequent Cohort started at 2-monthly intervals. Rollout was supported by the Quality Assurance Programme Board. By December 2013, 62 services were at various stages of the process and 18 of those had achieved the EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence award. The programme is being rolled out incrementally and all services aim to achieve the EFQM Gold Star Quality Mark by the end of 2014.

Quality standards and resources

The work of developing and updating quality standards and resources, to support the CIS and MABS networks to provide consistent high quality service to customers, continued during 2013. Quality standards and related resources for MABS services were developed by the MABS Quality Assurance (QA) Working Group. The *QA Standards for MABS* were completed in early 2013 and provided to MABS services. The group also continued its work on developing related policies and procedures.

The Quality Standards Joint Working Group (QSJWG) involves CIB working with representatives of the CIS network to develop and provide standards and standardised procedures which will support services to provide consistent and high quality information and advice/assistance to customers. The CIB Advocacy team worked with the Advocacy Support Worker Programme (ASW) to develop quality standards for advocacy work in CISs. Integrating the work of both groups, the *Quality Service Standards for CISs* was completed in mid-2013.

In addition, both groups developed, updated and published a range of standardised procedures for use in CISs and the Advocacy team worked with the Developing Policies Group to update and publish a range of overarching policies to cover both CIS and NAS work.

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 and governance capabilities.

Information, Advice and Advocacy Programme (IAAP)

The new CIB Information, Advice and Advocacy Programme (IAAP) was launched in April 2013. Aimed primarily at information providers in Citizens Information Services the IAAP leads to the new Quality Qualifications Ireland

(QQI) Advanced Certificate in 'Information, Advice and Advocacy' (level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications). Year 1 of the IAAP is focused on skills in information provision while Year 2 is focused on advocacy skills. The Programme can be taken by 'Blended Learning' or, in the case of experienced learners, by 'Recognition of Prior Learning'. A new online learning platform using the Moodle Learning Management System has been introduced. A number of classroom tutorials were held in Dublin, Athlone and Cork to complement online learning. Currently 95 learners are undertaking the programme.

A separate IAAP was delivered for graduates of the earlier Information Providers Programme to build on their existing FETAC components to achieve the QQI Advanced Certificate.

Certificate in Management Skills for Managers of Advocacy Services

On 28 February 2013, fourteen development managers from Citizens Information Services (CISs) across Ireland were presented with the first Special Purpose Certificate in Management Skills for Managers of Advocacy Services (Level 7, National Framework of Qualifications).

CIB developed the accredited programme in collaboration with the School of Business Studies and Humanities at the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown. The course is funded by CIB. The course includes content on the management of representative advocacy services and on human resource management. Another 14 participants undertook the programme in 2013. In 2013 the programme was opened to the Third Age Advocacy Service for older people and five advocates from this service took part.

Training in MABS

MABS continue to provide technical support to staff of MABS services on case management issues and contribute to training events for staff. 2013 was the first year of the roll out of the new fully dedicated third level qualification for Money Advisers. Twenty four participants enrolled for the Advanced Diploma in Money Advice through the University of Ulster. All staff have been trained on the Personal Insolvency legislation and the screening of debtors for Debt Relief Notice (DRN) (see also Chapter 6).

National Calendar of Training Events

The National Training Calendar delivers training on information, interpersonal skills, legal and management skills and organisational skills.

In 2013, the Citizens Information Board delivered 39 courses (82 training events) on the National Calendar of Training Events. 1,683 people attended these training events. The majority of participants came from Citizens Information Services although other voluntary and statutory organisations also took part.

A particular feature of the 2013 training calendar was courses which directly responded to the impact of new legislation on CIS clients. These courses included *Personal Insolvency Legislation* (350 participants) and *Local Property Tax* (205 participants). The calendar also featured a number of courses for receptionist/administrative personnel in CISs. These courses included *Interpersonal Skills for Receptionists*, *Using Office Systems within a CIS* and *Supporting Information Giving within a CIS*. Other new courses in 2013 included *Dealing with Recovery of*

Overpayments and Citing Legislation and Case Law in Employment and Social Welfare Cases. These courses are examples of training offered at an advanced level responding to the needs of information providers who are dealing with increasingly complex queries. In 2013 CIB also responded to a number of requests for specific targeted training in a number of areas including:

- Training events to prepare for the Child Protection Designated Person role held between September and December 2013 at venues in Cork, Dublin, Sligo, Athlone and Kilkenny.
- A *Practical Management Skills for Managers* programme delivered over 4.5 days with two (optional) modules. All of the sessions were interactive and involved individual tutor presentations, group activities and role plays. Nine managers completed the programme.
- *How to Induct a New Board Member.* This governance training enabled chairpersons/company secretaries of delivery partner companies to undertake a comprehensive induction process with new Board members. It was attended by 26 people from both MABS and CIS Boards.
- *Performance Management and Development System (PMDS):* Representatives of MABS, CISs, NAS and SLIS (134 in total) participated in a series of training events on the implementation of the PMDS system

Training Resources

The Training Services team has developed a new Training Resource, *How Can We Help You? - The Interview.* This is a short film for training new information providers in Citizens Information Services. The video can be used with elements from the Communications module of the Information, Advice and Advocacy Programme (IAAP) on Moodle. It was produced by Young Irish Filmmakers. The setting for the interview is the Kilkenny Citizens Information Centre. This is the first in a series of training resources for information providers. **'How Can We Help You? – The Interview'**: see <http://vimeo.com/85458827>



Recipients of the Special Purpose Certificate in Management Skills for Managers of Advocacy Services

Influencing social policy

The Citizens Information Board is charged with providing information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services, and also with highlighting issues which are of concern to users of those services.

When someone contacts a Citizens Information Service seeking information, advice or assistance about a particular public service or benefit, staff record the details of the query. In some cases, a particular query may indicate an underlying problem or concern with a policy, practice or piece of legislation. Such cases are recorded as ‘social policy feedback’. The Citizens Information Board compiles and considers this feedback and uses the data when drafting social policy reports, submissions and research papers.

The number of citizens (over 1 million each year) that contact CIB delivery partners with queries and problems makes it possible to spot trends and analyse concerns. CIB uses this data to highlight issues of concern to relevant government departments, state agencies and other bodies. The feedback that CIB channels from citizens to relevant governments and agencies is of particular importance given CIB’s statutory role in providing information on the effectiveness of social policy and services. The nature and extent of this feedback is also important within the context of the rapidly evolving policy landscape of recent years that has seen many citizens and families struggle and this, in turn, has shown the importance of having a strong evidence-base in formulating and influencing policy.

Data analysis and reporting

Social policy feedback takes the form of ‘social policy returns’ identifying and describing the issue. These returns are submitted to CIB monthly.

During 2013, CISs and CIPS information staff submitted 3,140 social policy returns to CIB. Most of the returns were concerned with social welfare (54%), followed by money and tax (18%), health (8%) and housing (6%). Issues concerning supplementary welfare schemes formed the largest category in social welfare, and the majority of these were on Rent Supplement. 2013 saw a substantial increase in the number of returns on housing taxes – this was connected with the introduction of the Local Property Tax (see also page 10).

During 2013, administration-based issues (delays, access barriers, information deficits) were the main concerns reported by information staff. Access or administrative barriers accounted for 22% of all returns, while ‘information

deficits' were 18% of all social policy returns. During 2013, processing delays continued to be reported, but there was a noted reduction in these returns during the year – in fact, returns recording 'delays' as the primary concern stood at 15% which is the first time in nearly three years that this figure has dropped below 20%. Other issues highlighted by CIS and CIPS staff during 2013 included 'policy anomalies' (at 18%) and 'gaps or inconsistencies in provision' (14%). The data captured by information providers and the (often complex) stories that were told by the service users in these cases reveals the extent to which policy can, and does, impact on people's lives.

CIBs *Social Policy Quarterly Reports* (SPQRs) contain a variety of case studies that illustrate the most frequently highlighted social policy issues and a statistical analysis of the returns. The SPQRs are published online quarterly.

During 2013, CIB worked to develop information providers' capacity to identify and capture social policy issues through training events and inputs. CIB also continued to develop the capacity of service delivery partners by providing small scale grants for services that have a particular interest in social policy work.

CIB's electronic bulletin *Social Policy Update* is a monthly social policy newsletter which aims to inform frontline information, advice and advocacy staff of current thinking, practice and service developments within policy arena.

Policy submissions

During 2013 CIB made a number of policy submissions to a variety of state bodies and review groups. Many of these were in response to invitations by government departments or working groups.

November 2013: Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on the *Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill 2013*.

October 2013: Submission (with MABSndI) to the Pensions Boards consultation on *defined contribution pensions*.

July 2013: CIB's *Pre-budget Submission* set out the social protection concerns and related tax issues identified by services providing information, advice and advocacy and also concerns relating to indebted clients identified by MABS. The submission focussed in particular on fuel poverty, the cost of schooling, and problems with Rent Supplement as an effective housing and income support. It also noted that the cumulative effect of recent budgets and increasing unemployment are reflected in the complex queries received from the public.

April 2013: Submission to *Review Group on Transport and Mobility Supports*. **April 2013:** Submission (prepared by MABSndI) to the Central Bank's *Review of the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears*.

March 2013: Submission on *Back to School Costs* to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection.

See

http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/social/social_submissions.html for details of all submissions made by the Citizens Information Board.

In 2013, CIB continued to participate in a number of policy fora and network initiatives - these include the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare, the Disability Consultative Forum, and the Social Policy Network.

Research

In 2013 CIB undertook research focusing mainly on the service delivery concerns of delivery partners.

MABS casework research

Research commissioned by CIB on the nature of client casework in MABS and undertaken by Ipsos MRBI was completed in mid-2013. The research was supported by a Steering Group which included MABS money advisers and co-ordinators and representatives from MABSndl.

The research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the level and type of engagement by MABS with clients and with creditors on clients' behalf, in order to identify factors impacting on MABS engagement with clients and key issues relating to client casework. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address the research objectives including two key elements – casework diaries to collect systematic real time data on the extent and type of casework interactions over a defined period and in-depth qualitative interviews to explore the experiences and perspectives of money advisers and clients. A high response rate was achieved - 90% of services engaged and there was a 69% return rate of completed diaries.

The report provides an overview of the context in which services are operating and the broader policy and regulatory environment, maps the Money Advice casework process and considers casework models and the extent and nature of client and creditor contact and makes recommendations to enhance the casework process.

MABS clients and mortgage debt



A report was also prepared by MABSndl on MABS clients and mortgage debt. This report (*A Profile of MABS clients in Mortgage Difficulty*) was based on a sample of almost 6,000 cases. It found that this group is primarily made up of households with children, located in urban areas and headed by people between the ages of 41 and 65. It also found that MABS clients in difficulty with their mortgage were more likely to be unemployed, to have multiple debts in addition to the mortgage, and to be mortgaged to a mainstream lender.

Research in CISs

In 2013, CIB also engaged in social research on topics that are of particular concern to users of its service delivery partners.

Employment support schemes and service delivery in CISs

CIB commissioned a study on the role and contribution of employment support schemes to service delivery within the CIS network in 2013. The research had a particular focus on Community Employment (CE) Schemes because the majority of scheme workers in the network are on CE and because significant changes

were taking place in these schemes. The high level of dependency on CE workers to deliver core services in certain services presents significant challenges for CISs in both the short-term and longer-term.

The research considered the overall nature of engagement of employment scheme workers in CISs, including their role in face-to-face work and in advocacy and provides a profile of employment programme workers (socio-economic, skill base, work/life experience). The role and contribution of CE to the development of the CIS model, the benefits to various stakeholders from the use of these schemes and the blocks/barriers to recruiting and retaining employment programme workers as well as resource implications are explored in the research report.

Older people and their information needs



CIB funded Co Wicklow CIS to conduct a study of the information needs of older people - *Information in Transition: The information, advice and advocacy needs of older people in the technology and information age*. The report sought to establish what types of information older people in County Wicklow are looking for, how they access this information and who they look to for support in both accessing and acting on this information. Although focussed on older people in County Wicklow, the research has broader relevance for agencies and personnel who are working with marginalised or hard-to-reach, older people and can help to inform the delivery of services in an age-friendly manner to this group.

Organisational and governance supports

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 Business Services Limited, 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.

Human Resources and Governance

The Human Resources and Governance team supports internal HR and governance and provides advice, support and resources in these areas to the Board's delivery partner companies.

Internal HR

The Citizens Information Board's Partnership steering group brings together management, staff and union interests. In 2013 the HR & Governance team in consultation with CIB Partnership updated CIB's Staff Resource Pack. A learning and development strategy was approved and is included in the Staff Resource Pack. It describes the three levels of learning and development needs within CIB at organisational, team and individual levels, along with the roles, responsibilities and processes involved.

During the year training was provided for staff on a wide range of topics including *Plain English*, *eLearning*, *Selection & Interviewing Skills*, *Procurement* and IT skills. The system for recording and monitoring sick absences in CIB was reviewed and updated during the year. The analysis of sick absences in CIB in 2013 showed an absence rate of 1.56% of the total number of available working

days in 2013. This compares very favourably with both private and public sector organisations in the same period.

Work was undertaken on revised draft CIB pension schemes (main scheme and spouses and children) and submitted to the Department of Social Protection for approval. Information booklets on the CIB Pension Scheme were reviewed and updated and a briefing on the CIB Superannuation Schemes was organised for all staff members.

A one-day event took place in Dublin Castle for all CIB staff in April 2013. The event involved three distinct elements - a briefing for staff on pensions; a facilitated session providing an opportunity to take an objective view of the organisation's work in the context of reducing staff numbers; and a presentation in relation to employee wellbeing which included techniques for managing stress.

Delivery partner governance supports

Employer and staff handbooks and guidelines for delivery partners were revised to reflect current legislation and best practice in consultation with employer and union representative groups.

An Employee Assistance Programme funded by CIB is provided for both CIB employees and for the employees of delivery partner companies. Other supports to delivery partner companies include the funding of a Professional Trustee Service in relation to occupational pension schemes and direct access to outsourced HR support. CIB continues to support recruitment in delivery partner companies and to provide assistance in other areas of HR as requested.

A number of resource documents in the area of governance were updated and distributed to delivery partner companies, including *Company Law Guidelines* and *Good Governance: A Code of Practice for Directors of a CIB-funded Company*.

Public Sector Reform Programme

The Citizens Information Board continues to implement Government initiated reforms including implementation of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 (the Haddington Road Agreement), revisions to the pay and conditions of CIB staff and compliance with employment control framework (ECF) requirements. Staff numbers continue to reduce in line with the ECF. At December 2013, staff numbers were 74.7. This is below the ECF target of 77 posts. This was due to a number of retirements during the year and to the redeployment of a number of staff to other organisations. Further reductions to a target of 72 whole-time equivalent posts are required by end 2015.

Premises

The HR & Governance Team has responsibility for CIB-owned and leased premises and supports and assists delivery partners with leasing arrangements, accessibility issues, premises moves and refurbishment. Co-location of premises between CISs and MABS is examined wherever possible taking account of lease requirements and budget availability to achieve a reduction in the number of premises and the need to provide support and in the interests of customer service.

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 CIB and our delivery partners.

ICT Review

In 2013 an independent review was carried out on the ICT service within CIB and a number of recommendations were made in the areas of service delivery, availability management, capacity management and IT service business continuity. Progress was made on the implementation of these recommendations which included establishing a cloud based mail platform to improve resilience of email and the development of an ICT Business Continuity Plan for the organisation.

Print Management

A print management project was rolled out to all service delivery partners in 2013. Prior to this all services had their own arrangements for photocopying and printing. Multi-functional copiers were installed in each office, networked to each computer. Multi-functional copiers can carry out a number of functions such as printing, scanning, photocopying and faxing. Maintenance and toner replacement is now controlled by a central contract and has resulted in significant savings across the network. Security and audit measures were also introduced which requires staff to use either a PIN or swipe card to authenticate print outs.

Asset Management

A new asset management solution to manage the PC and Notebook environment of CIB and its delivery partners was introduced in 2013 and has been deployed across most of the network with full network coverage completion expected by the end of 2014. The solution ensures computers are kept up-to-date and secure and provides inventory reports of all the hardware it manages on the network

Infonet Development

Much work was completed during 2013 on the Delivery Partner Intranet – called Infonet. The CIB Resources section was improved and development began on the MABS Resources section of the site.

PR and promotion



Promotion of the Citizens Information and MABS brands included a nationwide awareness campaign of the new 0761 telephone numbers. The campaign included advertisements on radio, outdoor media, digital and print. Localised DL leaflets with the same brand message were also produced and distributed to all CISs as part of the campaign. Brand awareness also continued with attendance at key events such as the National Ploughing Championships, The Over 50s Show, Which Course Exhibition and Bloom. Joint promotions took place with the HSE, Threshold, Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) and the EU Commission. An Information Awareness campaign

continued with the joint MABS/Citizens Information leaflet displayed in over 2,000 health outlets nationwide. Advertisement continues in publications including Public Sector Times and the national telephone directories.

Promotional materials

Promotional materials including posters, leaflets, pens, post-its and banner stands were produced and updated to include the new opening times for CIPS. The Annual Review was produced in partnership with the Information Resources team providing a corporate overview of the work of the organisation. The roll out of high street signage for both MABS and Citizens Information continues.

Energy usage in 2013

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. Heating and lighting account for the main energy usage in CIB. In 2013, throughout its 12 premises, CIB consumed:

- 386 MWh of electricity
- 88 MWh of gas

This represents an overall improvement on energy performance of 9.3% over 2012. In 2013 CIB raised awareness of energy conservation by reminding staff to switch PCs to power-save mode after a shorter time of non-use and to shut down PCs at night and weekends and adopted print management solutions to save on printing and to reduce waste.

Actions planned for 2014

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 among staff.



Appendix 1: Customer Service Charter

The Citizens Information Board provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through 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 the National Advocacy Service 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 website and associated microsites. In addition, the Citizens Information Board provides QQI-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. The Citizens Information Board's switchboard remains open from 9am to 5.30 pm Monday to Thursday and 5pm on Friday. The Citizens Information Phone Service operates from 9am to 8pm on Monday to Friday.

3. Equality and diversity

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

In 2013 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 and MABS services in a variety of ways – online, by telephone and face-to-face. The MABS service is delivered in three ways: The Citizens Information Board also published a range of printed materials in 2013 (see Chapter 4 above).

5. Access

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

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 allows people using mobile devices to access content. The 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) also meets the guidelines. Contact our Access officer, Helen Brougham at accessofficer@ciboard.ie.

6. Official languages

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

Information on citizensinformation.ie, losingyourjob.ie, keepingyourhome.ie and 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.

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 2013 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

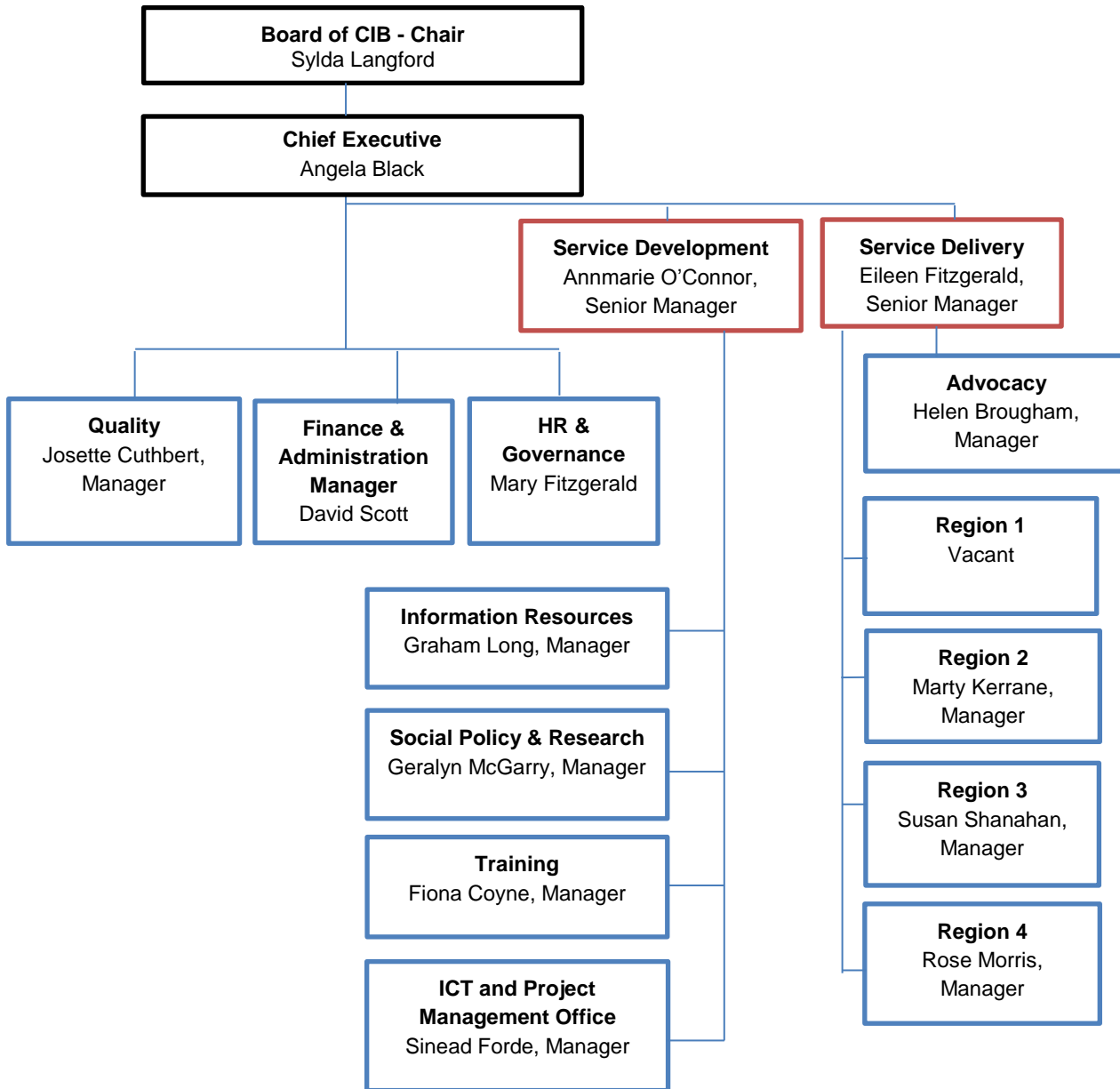
We will maintain an accessible and transparent appeal and review system where appropriate.

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 Geraghty at the address below or 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	Limerick 6th Floor, River Court Business Centre Cornmarket Square, Limerick
Dublin 7 Park House 191-193 North Circular Road, Dublin 7	Waterford 14 Gladstone Street, Waterford
Cavan Elm House, Elm Bank Cootehill Road, Cavan	Cork 101 North Main Street, Cork
Dundalk 4 Adelphi Court, Long Walk Dundalk, Co. Louth	Castlebar Garvey House, Castle Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Tallaght Hainault House, The Square Tallaght, Dublin 24	Letterkenny Port Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Tullamore Level One, Bridge Centre Tullamore, Co. Offaly	Galway 4th Floor Dockgate, Merchants Road, Galway
Kilkenny 4 The Parade, Kilkenny	Sligo 1st Floor, Harbour View House 16 Holborn Street, Sligo

Appendix 4: Grants in 2013

Grants to Citizens Information Services (CIS)	
Ballyfermot CIS	262,205
Blanchardstown CIS	259,701
Carlow CIS	210,264
Cavan CIS	253,849
Citizens Information Phone Service	1,123,244
Clare CIS	245,119
Clondalkin CIS	317,443
Cork City North CIS	178,473
Cork City South CIS	344,513
Crumlin CIS	260,000
Deafhear	59,500
Donegal CIS	687,937
Dublin 246 CIS	235,000
Dublin 8 & Bluebell CIS	295,000
Dublin City Centre CIS	575,789
Dublin North Bay (KARE) CIS	123,894
Dublin Northside CIS	204,180
Dublin Northwest CIS	314,809
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown CIS	239,999
Fingal (North County) CIS	313,740
Galway CIS	417,000
Kerry CIS	363,820
Kilkenny CIS	205,600

Laois CIS	220,244
Leitrim CIS	247,032
Limerick CIS	319,013
Longford CIS	255,000
Louth CIS	256,476
Mayo CIS	388,478
Meath CIS	351,739
Monaghan CIS	272,245
North & East Cork County CIS	287,822
North Kildare CIS	239,823
Offaly CIS	275,942
Roscommon CIS	270,042
Sligo CIS	274,000
South Kildare CIS	223,179
Tallaght CIS	330,440
Tipperary CIS	482,070
Waterford CIS	281,543
West Cork County CIS	228,218
Westmeath CIS	316,187
Wexford CIS	344,773
Wicklow CIS	305,591
Total	13,660,936

Grants to Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)	
Arklow & District MABS	247,273
Athlone MABS	122,661
Ballymun MABS	390,121
Blanchardstown MABS	360,305
Bray MABS	362,386
Carlow MABS*	396,527
Cavan MABS	284,058
Charleville MABS*	277,395

Clare MABS	287,369
Clondalkin MABS	382,708
Cork MABS	579,547
Drogheda MABS	199,223
Dublin 10 & 20 MABS	401,198
Dublin 12 MABS	301,244
Dublin North City MABS	288,082
Dublin North East MABS	256,566
Dublin South East MABS	303,211
Dun Laoghaire MABS	224,238
Dundalk/Oriel MABS	257,528
Dundrum/Rathfarnham MABS*	394,212
Fingal (North County) MABS	322,868
Finglas MABS	351,795
Kerry MABS	517,021
Kildare MABS	490,497
Kilkenny MABS	290,263
Laois MABS	220,609
Leitrim MABS	218,183
Liffey South West MABS	377,563
Limerick MABS	331,749
Longford MABS	214,176
MABS National Development Limited*	2,306,018
Meath MABS	299,857
Monaghan MABS	270,062
Mullingar MABS*	248,550
National Traveller MABS	298,482
North Cork MABS	312,249
North Donegal MABS*	435,165
North Galway MABS*	284,159
North Mayo MABS	218,127

North Tipperary MABS	265,604
Offaly MABS*	287,280
Roscommon MABS*	244,003
Sligo MABS*	303,507
South Donegal MABS	155,002
South Galway MABS	521,467
South Mayo MABS*	358,893
South Tipperary MABS	386,206
Tallaght MABS	346,146
Waterford MABS*	628,894
West Cork MABS	245,845
West Donegal MABS	108,168
West Waterford MABS*	190,484
Wexford MABS	331,706
Total	18,696,450
Note: Companies with an asterisk (*) received additional funding in 2013 for the setting up of the Approved Intermediary Service.	

Grants to the National Advocacy Service (NAS)	
Clondalkin CIS	669,308
Leitrim CIS	666,000
Offaly CIS	590,518
Waterford CIS	606,132
Westmeath CIS	527,000
Total	3,058,958

Grants to Advocacy Support Worker Programme (ASW)	
Clare CIS	62,313
Clondakin	60,313
Longford CIS	83,058
Offaly CIS	62,313
West Cork County CIS	62,313
Total	330,310

Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)	
Total	284,658

Second Tier Supports	
Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)	90,000
Immigrant Council of Ireland	36,032
Integration & Social Inclusion Centre of Ireland	25,000
Threshold	50,000
Treoir	36,500
Total	237,532

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

Financial Statements: Year ended 31/12/13

Board Members and Other Information

Noeline Blackwell	(appointed March 2010)
Michael Butler	(appointed March 2010)
Pat Fitzpatrick	(appointed March 2010, resigned June 2014)
Josephine Henry	(appointed March 2010)
Sylda Langford	(Chair, appointed March 2010)
Eugene McErlean	(appointed September 2011, reappointed April 2014)
Michael McGuane	(appointed March 2010)
Martin Naughton	(appointed March 2010)
Sandra Ronayne	(appointed March 2010)
Simonetta Ryan	(appointed March 2014)
John Sheehy	(appointed March 2010)
David Stratton	(appointed November 2012)
Sean Sweeney	(appointed December 2010)
Fiona Ward	(appointed November 2011, resigned February 2014)

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

Secretary: Mary Fitzgerald

Solicitors: Philip Lee Solicitors
7/8 Wilton Terrace
Dublin 2

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 2013 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 2013 and of its income and expenditure for 2013.

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
27 February 2015

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 2013 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: 18.02.2015

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

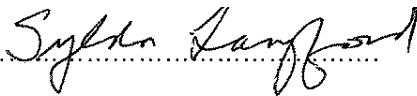
Statement of Board's Responsibilities

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.....

18/02/2015

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 2013.

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 Market Value and Existing Use Value at 31st December 2013 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 23rd 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.

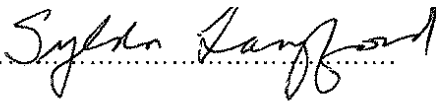
CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

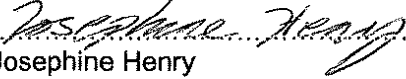
Income and Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
Income			
State Funding	1	46,461,319	45,816,915
Other Income	2	495,107	288,158
Net Deferred Funding for Pensions	23 (c)	2,373,000	1,833,000
		-----	-----
Transfer from Capital Account	21	49,329,426	47,938,073
		100,653	284,798
		-----	-----
		49,430,079	48,222,871
		-----	-----
Expenditure			
Salaries	3	5,120,707	5,178,232
Board Members' Fees and Expenses	4	64,758	66,550
Pension Costs	23 (a)	2,439,000	1,939,000
Administration Costs	5	2,301,222	2,435,684
Regional Services	8	14,087,803	14,361,436
Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)	9	18,830,993	17,795,182
Quality	10	166,407	50,488
Information Resources	11	175,263	253,233
Social Policy and Research	12	168,230	142,241
Information and Communications Technology	13	1,574,860	1,381,315
Advocacy	14	3,795,451	3,546,295
Training	15	275,355	242,581
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline	16	343,903	186,617
		-----	-----
		49,343,952	47,578,854
		=====	=====
Operating Surplus for the Year		86,127	644,017
Impairment Loss	17	(714,370)	-
		-----	-----
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year		(628,243)	644,017
Surplus at 1 January		2,027,705	1,383,688
		-----	-----
Surplus at 31 December		1,399,462	2,027,705
		=====	=====

The results for the period relate to continuing operations.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

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 Sylda Langford
 Chairperson

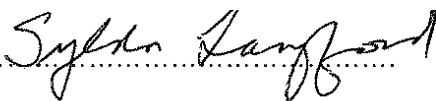
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 Josephine Henry
 Board Member

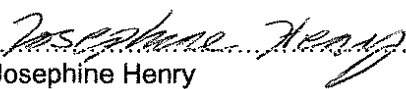
Date..... 18/02/2015

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

	Note	€	2013 €	€	2012 €
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year			(628,243)		644,017
Unrealised (Loss) / Gain on Revaluation of Land and Buildings	17		(2,803,193)		-
Actuarial Gain on Pension Liabilities	23 (b), (e)				
i. Experience (Loss) / Gain on Pension Liability		2,473,000		(1,100,000)	
ii. Changes in Assumptions underlying Present Value		-		(5,505,000)	
iii. Actuarial (Loss) / Gain on Pension Liabilities			2,473,000		(6,605,000)
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding	23 (b), (e)		(2,473,000)		6,605,000
Total Recognised Gains / (Losses) for the Year			(3,431,436)		644,017

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

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 Sylda Langford
 Chairperson

.....

 Josephine Henry
 Board Member

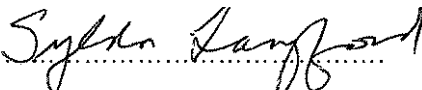
Date..... 18/02/2015


CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
Fixed Assets	17	4,848,602 =====	8,466,818 =====
Current Assets			
Debtors and Prepayments	19	874,419	896,786
Bank and Cash on Hand		1,586,012	1,379,255
		-----	-----
		2,460,431	2,276,041
		-----	-----
Current Liabilities			
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due within One Year	20	(346,599)	(248,336)
		-----	-----
Net Current Assets		2,113,832	2,027,705
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities Before Pensions		6,962,434	10,494,523
Deferred Pension Funding	23 (c)	32,500,000	32,600,000
Pension Liabilities	23 (d)	(32,500,000)	(32,600,000)
		-----	-----
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		6,962,434	10,494,523
		=====	=====
Represented by			
Capital Account	21	4,848,602	8,466,818
Income and Expenditure Account		2,113,832	2,027,705
		-----	-----
		6,962,434	10,494,523
		=====	=====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

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 Sylva Langford
 Chairperson

.....

 Josephine Henry
 Board Member

Date..... 18/02/2015

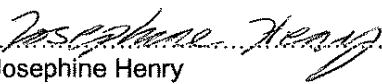
CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD

Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
Reconciliation of Surplus for the Period to Net Cash from Operating Activities			
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		(628,243)	644,017
Impairment Loss		714,370	-
Transfer (from) / to Capital Account		(100,653)	(284,798)
Depreciation		337,891	372,196
(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors		22,367	(316,390)
(Decrease) / Increase in Creditors		98,263	31,836
		-----	-----
Net Cash Inflow / (Outflow) from Operating Activities		443,995	446,861
		=====	=====
Cash Flow Statement			
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities		443,995	446,861
Capital Expenditure:			
Acquisitions		(237,238)	(87,398)
		-----	-----
Increase / (Decrease) in Cash for the Year		206,757	359,463
		=====	=====
Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movement in Net Funds			
Movement in Net Funds for the Year		206,757	359,463
Net Funds at 1 January		1,379,255	1,019,792
		-----	-----
Net Funds at 31 December		1,586,012	1,379,255
		=====	=====

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Notes 1 to 26 form part of these financial statements.

..... 
 Sylda Langford
 Chairperson

..... 
 Josephine Henry
 Board Member

Date..... 18/02/2015

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
1. State Funding			
State Funding was received from Vote 37 – Office of the Minister for Social Protection as follows:			
A.36 Grant		46,387,404	45,743,000
Other State Funding:			
The Health Service Executive – Contribution to Integrated Information Services		73,915	73,915
		-----	-----
		46,461,319	45,816,915
		-----	-----
2. Other Income			
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline		343,903	216,772
Training Fees		8,275	4,900
Premises Rental and Services		5,080	-
Reimbursement of Staff Secondments		81,918	853
Other Income		55,931	65,633
		-----	-----
		495,107	288,158
		-----	-----
3. Salaries			
Regional Services		982,247	1,029,503
Quality		428,261	451,889
Information Resources		743,793	736,843
Social Policy and Research		256,255	235,872
Information and Communication Technology		474,462	491,118
Advocacy		235,169	241,256
Training		626,846	658,414
Management Services		1,373,674	1,333,337
		-----	-----
		5,120,707	5,178,232
		-----	-----

The average number of staff employed by the Citizens Information Board in the period was 77.2 (2012, 78.9). In addition 10 staff were seconded to the Board from the Department of Social Protection in 2013: 1 to Regional Services, 2 to Management Services and 6 to the Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline (see Note 16). €257,807 (2012, €266,188) was deducted from staff by way of pension levy and was paid over to the Department of Social Protection.

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

	Number of meetings attended	2013 Fees €	2013 Expenses €
Noelene Blackwell	6/8	-	-
Michael Butler	7/8	5,985	-
Pat Fitzpatrick	4/8	5,985	1,708
Josephine Henry	7/8	5,985	-
Sylda Langford (Chair)	8/8	-	-
Eugene McErlean	8/8	5,985	-
Michael McGaune	7/8	5,985	3,940
Martin Naughton	5/8	5,985	-
Sandra Ronayne	7/8	5,985	-
John Sheehy	8/8	5,985	3,247
David Stratton	8/8	-	-
Sean Sweeney	8/8	5,985	1,998
Fiona Ward	8/8	-	-
		-----	-----
		53,865	10,893
		-----	-----

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

4. (cont) The Chief Executive received salary payments of €116,385 (2012, €117,641). No bonus payments were made in the year. The Chief Executive received payments of €483 (2012, €718) in respect of travel and subsistence. The Chief Executive is a member of an unfunded defined benefit public sector scheme and his pension entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements in the public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme.

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
5. Administration Costs			
Accommodation and Establishment	6	1,259,963	1,436,819
Travel and Subsistence		151,294	138,059
Stationery and Office Supplies		35,233	44,668
Postage		82,845	76,671
Consultancy and Reports	7	101,167	101,050
Legal Fees		82,901	32,983
Public Relations		21,213	10,478
Seminars and Meetings		15,710	19,458
Insurance		147,141	117,212
Board Publications and Miscellaneous		3,326	5,851
Affiliation Fees		10,933	5,667
External Audit Fees		19,300	17,000
Internal Audit Fees		24,435	35,609
Bad Debts		4,654	4,000
Depreciation		337,891	372,196
Interest and Charges		1,399	1,003
Other		1,817	16,960
		----- 2,301,222 -----	----- 2,435,684 -----
6. Accommodation and Establishment			
Rent and Rates		1,072,643	1,181,531
Light and Heat		82,565	74,023
Maintenance and Security		100,637	178,412
Archiving		4,118	2,853
		----- 1,259,963 -----	----- 1,436,819 -----
7. Consultancy and Reports			
Strategy Development		-	55,166
Review of MABS National Development Ltd.		14,760	3,690
Review of National Traveller MABS		2,998	-
Revaluation of Land and Buildings		9,225	-
Estate Agency Services		5,228	-
Pension Trustee Services for Delivery Partners		24,163	22,140
Pension Support Services		3,123	3,149
HR Support Services for Delivery Partners		20,785	5,432
Employee Assistance Programme		15,235	10,066
Payroll Processing Services		5,650	-
Other		-	1,407
		----- 101,167 -----	----- 101,050 -----

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
8. Regional Services			
(i) Citizens Information Grants			
Region 1		4,260,921	4,229,599
Region 2		3,109,525	2,968,440
Region 3		2,377,155	2,380,565
Region 4		2,790,091	2,814,997
(ii) Central Support to Citizens Information Services			
Conferences, Seminars and Meetings		13,114	20,122
Materials, Support and Evaluation		3,556	-
Advertising and Promotion		99,576	149,923
Network Support		47,790	72,896
(iii) Citizens Information Phone Service		1,123,244	1,320,001
(iv) Mobile Units		25,299	18,393
(v) Information Supports		237,532	386,500
		-----	-----
		14,087,803	14,361,436
		-----	-----
9. Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)			
(i) MABS Grants			
Region 1		4,391,629	4,315,555
Region 2		5,349,898	5,213,811
Region 3		2,626,542	2,548,666
Region 4		4,022,363	3,804,990
(ii) Central Support to MABS			
Conferences, Seminars and Meetings		1,626	-
Advertising and Promotion		69,551	89,776
MABS National Executive Committee & National Management Forum		18,215	8,509
Network Support		45,151	18,662
(iii) MABS National Development Ltd.		2,306,018	1,795,213
		-----	-----
		18,830,993	17,795,182
		-----	-----
10. Quality			
Quality Standards Accreditation Programme		152,811	48,821
Customer Consultation/Service Development		13,596	1,667
		-----	-----
		166,407	50,488
		-----	-----
11. Information Resources			
Assist Ireland Website Development		19,675	25,537
Online Information - Translations		18,267	28,099
CIB Website Development		5,851	6,128
Publication Grants		-	2,050
Publications		125,468	182,019
Miscellaneous		6,002	9,400
		-----	-----
		175,263	253,233
		-----	-----

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
12. Social Policy and Research			
Research Support		50,001	48,888
Disability and Information Research		62,223	52,843
Social Policy Reports		37,790	28,369
Social Policy Grants		12,380	11,100
Miscellaneous		5,836	1,041
		----- 168,230 -----	----- 142,241 -----
13. Information and Communication Technology			
Telecommunications		716,611	568,921
Software and Licensing		70,545	83,315
Hardware provided to Citizens Information Services and Money Advice and Budgeting Services		31,960	148,310
Other Hardware		21,941	-
Support		564,357	260,888
ICT Projects		169,446	319,881
		----- 1,574,860 -----	----- 1,381,315 -----
14. Advocacy			
New National Advocacy Service – Establishment Costs		4,613	-
Grant Support to National Advocacy Service			
Region 1 - Dublin		669,308	625,000
Region 2 - Mid West and North East		527,000	528,001
Region 3 - South East		590,518	508,000
Region 4 - South and South West		606,132	572,000
Region 5 - West and North West		666,000	656,000
Grant Support to Advocacy Support Worker Programme		336,572	244,301
Grant Support to Sign Language Interpreting Service		284,658	285,342
Advocacy Support, Research and Development		61,096	87,651
Access & Advocacy Support – Inclusion Ireland		38,396	40,000
Conferences, Seminars and Meetings		11,158	-
		----- 3,795,451 -----	----- 3,546,295 -----

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 review of the existing structure of the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities recommended restructuring the Service as a single entity with a national board of management to deliver better value with the same resources. Accordingly a new company called the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities was established on 25 November 2013. The company will take over service delivery on 1 June 2014.

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
15. Training			
Training Resources		3,512	38,387
Training Services		198,457	127,403
Staff Training		50,039	33,211
Advocacy Training		14,221	20,136
Supporting Volunteers		9,126	23,444
		275,355	242,581
16. Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline			
Salaries and Pensions		179,847	106,455
Telecommunications		-	35,305
Administration and Support		59,080	41,302
Travel Expenses		100	563
Staff Training		2,575	1,250
Public Relations and Promotion		102,301	1,742
		343,903	186,617

The mortgage arrears information helpline project was established in July 2012 in response to the mortgage crisis. The costs were funded by mortgage lenders and the helpline was operated by staff seconded from the Department of Social Protection. Funding for the helpline ended on 31 May 2014 and seconded staff returned to the parent department. Operation of a specific helpline ceased on that date and it is now subsumed under the general MABS helpline.

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013

17. Fixed Assets	Premises		Motor Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Office Furniture	Total
	Owned	Leasehold					
Cost / Revaluation	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Balance at 1 January 2013	6,265,000	3,523,465	171,405	461,051	682,531	734,096	11,837,548
Additions	-	-	-	237,238	-	-	237,238
Disposals	-	-	-	(36,431)	-	-	(36,431)
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 December 2013	6,265,000	3,523,465	171,405	661,858	682,531	734,096	12,038,355
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Accumulated Depreciation							
Balance at 1 January 2013	729,038	796,911	171,405	413,349	682,531	577,496	3,370,730
Charge for the year	138,399	100,148	-	58,620	-	40,724	337,891
Disposals during the year	-	-	-	(36,431)	-	-	(36,431)
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Balance at 31 December 2013	867,437	897,059	171,405	435,538	682,531	618,220	3,672,190
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Net Book Value	5,397,563	2,626,406	-	226,320	-	115,876	8,366,165
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
(Loss) / Gain on Revaluation	(3,517,563)	-	-	-	-	-	(3,517,563)
Revaluation at 31 December 2013	1,880,000	2,626,406	-	226,320	-	115,876	4,848,602
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
	====						
Balance at 31 December 2012	5,535,962	2,726,554	-	47,702	-	156,600	8,466,818
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

- i. The Board has a policy of revaluing its owned premises every 5 years. At 31 December 2013 the buildings were valued at €1.9m. The carrying value at end 2013 was €5.4m. The depreciated historic cost was €2.7m. As required by FRS15 the loss of €3.5m has been recognised as follows:
- €0.7m of the loss has been charged to the Income and Expenditure account representing the difference between the valuation and the depreciated historic cost.
 - €2.8m of the loss has been recognised in the STRGL representing the difference between the carrying value and depreciated historic cost.
- ii. The value of Premises Leasehold assets relates to capitalised expenditure on the Leasehold Property listed under Note 18(b).

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013****18. Property****a) Freehold Land and Buildings**

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

Location	Net Book Value as at 31.12.13 €
Cork	340,000
Dublin	1,300,000
Letterkenny	80,000
Sligo	50,000
Tralee	110,000

	1,880,000
	=====

b) Leasehold Property

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

Location	Expiry Date	Break Clause	Annual Rent €
Head Office – Dublin			
43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2	2032	2013	681,197
Regional Offices			
Castlebar	2017	-	6,396
Cavan	2015	-	11,773
Dundalk	2029	2014	50,400
Galway	2025	2015	39,400
Kilkenny	2050	-	40
Limerick	2013	-	14,201
Sligo	2015	-	13,000
Tallaght	2019	-	89,495
Waterford	2028	2013	62,500

			968,402
			=====

19. Debtors and Prepayments

	2013 €	2012 €
Debtors		
Trade Debtors	31,609	18,386
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline Debtor	315,638	216,772
Other Debtors	14,329	14,985
	-----	-----
	361,576	250,143
Prepayments		
	512,843	646,643
	-----	-----
	874,419	896,786
	=====	=====

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

20. Creditors and Accruals		2013		2012
		€		€
PAYE and PRSI Creditors		219,025		134,797
Trade Creditors		127,574		113,539
		-----		-----
		346,599		248,336
		=====		=====
21. Capital Account	€	2013	€	2012
		€	€	€
Balance at 1 January		8,466,818		8,751,616
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account:				
Capital Expenditure in the year	17	237,238	87,398	
Released on Disposal of Fixed Assets	17	-	-	
Amortisation in line with Asset depreciation	17	(337,891)	(100,653)	(372,196)
		-----	-----	(284,798)
Unrealised (Loss) / Gain on Revaluation of Land and Buildings	17	(3,517,563)		-
		-----		-----
Balance at 31 December		4,848,602		8,466,818
		=====		=====
22. 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 7 and 8 accordingly.

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013****23. Pension Costs****(a) Analysis of Total Pension Costs Charged to Expenditure**

	2013	2012
	€	€
Current Service Cost	1,170,000	1,200,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities	1,800,000	1,300,000
Employee Contributions	(531,000)	(561,000)
	-----	-----
	2,439,000	1,939,000
	=====	=====

(b) Movement in Pension Liability during the financial year

	2013	2012
	€	€
Pension Liability at 1 January	32,600,000	24,162,000
Current Service Cost	1,170,000	1,200,000
Other Finance Income (Interest Costs)	1,800,000	1,300,000
Actuarial (Gain) / Loss	(2,473,000)	6,605,000
Pensions Paid in the Year	(597,000)	(667,000)
	-----	-----
Pension Liability at 31 December	32,500,000	32,600,000
	=====	=====

(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 2013 amounted to €32.500m (2012: €32.600m).

Net Deferred Funding for Pensions in year

	2013	2012
	€	€
Funding Recoverable in Respect of Current Year Pension Costs	2,970,000	2,500,000
State Grant Applied to Pay Pensioners	(597,000)	(667,000)
	-----	-----
	2,373,000	1,833,000
	=====	=====

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013****23. cont. Pension Costs (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 2013. 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	2013	2012
Discount rate	5.50%	5.50%
Salary increase assumption	4.00%	4.00%
Pension increase assumption	4.00%	4.00%
Price inflation	2.00%	2.00%
Member age 65 (male current life expectancy)*	22	22
Member age 65 (female current life expectancy)*	25	25

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 2013 was estimated at €32.500m (compared with €32.600m as at 31 December 2012).

(e) History of Defined Benefit Obligations

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Defined Benefit Obligations	32,500	32,600	24,162	19,839	23,485
Experience (Gains) / Losses on Scheme Liabilities	2,473	1,100	1,099	(2,092)	(186)
Percentage of Scheme Liabilities	8.00%	3.00%	4.54%	(10.50%)	(0.79%)

The cumulative actuarial gain recognised in the Statements of Total Recognised Gains and Losses amounts to €4,631m.

CITIZENS INFORMATION BOARD**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2013****24. Commitments**

Operating Leases

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

	2013	2012
	€	€
Lease of Office Accommodation		
Expiring after one year and before five years	45,370	54,202
Expiring after 5 years	923,032	945,887
	-----	-----
	968,402	1,000,089
	=====	=====

25. 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.

26. Approval of Financial Statements

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

18/02/2015