



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



2018

Annual Report

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil



Vision

An Ireland where everyone is adequately equipped with information and advice in order to realise their rights, delivering, in particular, for the most vulnerable.



Available to all

We will offer independent, impartial, confidential and non-judgemental information, advice, money advice and advocacy accessible to all.



Responsiveness

We will continually listen, reflect and review our services to ensure that they are responsive to changing situations and emerging needs. We will make the best use of new technologies and other opportunities.



Customer service

We are committed to supporting a professional, impartial and timely service that is responsive to people's needs.



Confidentiality

We will respect and promote the right to privacy of individuals.



Focus on quality

We will work to continually improve our processes, products and services to meet the requirements of all our stakeholders.



Excellence

We will seek to achieve superior performance by motivating our staff to deliver products and services that exceed objectives, needs and expectations.



Leadership

We will offer supportive leadership and thought leadership in our areas of expertise in a way that benefits everyone.



Promotion of equality and human rights

We will ensure that promoting equality and human rights underpins all our activities.

Citizens First Strategy

'Enhance citizens' access to consistent and high-quality information, advice, money advice and advocacy to meet their needs, now and in the future.'

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From the Chairperson

This review of 2018 brings home the scope and extent of the extraordinary work of staff, both of CIB and all our delivery services, across so many different areas.

This is the third and last Annual Report under our Statement of Strategy 2015-2018. A key commitment under this plan was to revise the structures of the Citizens Information Services and MABS to better serve people by improving management structures and governance. In 2018, the Citizens Information Board restructured its CIS and MABS services into a more streamlined, regional model of 16 companies, setting them on course to deliver more services, as well as more efficient and modern services for citizens. Much of the work of the Board of CIB involved supporting the Executive throughout the restructuring process and preparing an updated internal strategy that would take advantage of the new arrangements.

We have already begun to see the quality of the service delivery companies being enhanced. In 2019, and over the lifetime of our new Strategic Plan we plan to build on the benefits of restructuring to ensure that we continue to deliver services that citizens need and deserve.

We continue to work with the companies, planning new opportunities for promotion and mobility for staff of the newly-restructured services and the

streamlining of services including, for example, practical measures to replace the multiplicity of supports with a single pension provider, a single payroll provider and a single insurance scheme for MABS and CIS companies. I am satisfied that this major piece of work will result in enhanced service delivery to all citizens who engage with the MABS and CIS services.

While the main focus of activity in 2018 was on restructuring, the Board of CIB engaged proactively in preparing a revised internal strategy with the focus on quality of services. Our aim is to not only reap the dividends of restructuring but at the same time identify new areas where we can develop innovative services reflecting the needs of modern citizens. This is despite the fact that staffing resources allocated to CIB in 2018, reduced at the time of the financial crisis, remain unchanged. This continued to be a major concern in 2018 and endangers our capacity to deliver for citizens.

The part played by volunteers is key to the success of the boards who govern all 21 companies now funded by CIB. I am very pleased at the quality of the new board members, and thankful to previous board members who kept the services going for so many years. At the frontline too, volunteers continue to form a vital element of the service delivered by CIS companies – that role will form part of our ongoing



development of the CIS staffing strategy.

Our website continued to be a very popular public resource in 2018; the work of social policy and the newly formed Social Policy Committee, produced an extensive pipeline of important topics for the Board to bring to the attention of decision-makers at political level. Other developments which we welcomed in 2018 were the introduction of the Irish Sign Language Act, increased budgets for the Sign Language Interpreting Service and the new Patient Advocacy Service within the National Advocacy for People with Disabilities.

The problem of mortgage arrears, though reduced in 2018, is a source of continuing concern, and the Abhaile scheme continued to meet the challenge through dedicated advisors in MABS. CIB continued to engage in research in tandem with other stakeholders in areas such as Brexit, affordable credit, and accommodation for members of the travelling community.

I want to thank the boards and staff of the delivery services for their dedication and professionalism during the course of the year while the management structures underwent change. We are proud that restructuring resulted in no job losses and no diminution of services across our networks.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their work during the year

I would like to thank the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty TD and her staff for their support during 2018.

I would also like to thank Angela Black, the Chief Executive of CIB and all her staff for their continued hard work, professionalism and commitment throughout the year.

Ita Mangan, Chairperson

From the Chief Executive

The Citizens Information Board achieved a significant milestone in 2018 by completing the restructure of 93 of its funded companies – MABS and CIS – into a 16-company regional model.

The network of CIB services is now better aligned with new governance requirements for organisations in receipt of State funding and we have already begun to demonstrate benefits for our citizens. The streamlining of services and reduction of duplication of back office work gives us improved capacity to deliver the services that citizens want and need.

I would like to acknowledge the sterling work of the new regional boards and regional managers as well as the vital co-operation and many years of service we have received from the boards, management and staff of the 93 former service delivery companies. The staff of CIB have been central to completing the project on time and within budget.

Despite many challenges still ahead, the new structure places us in a stronger position to reward that hard work by promoting further service development, innovation and modernisation of services in the years ahead. The quality of information, advice, advocacy and money advice provided by the CIS, advocacy, MABS and Abhaile schemes can thus be assured.

Other challenges we successfully addressed in 2018 included compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation introduced in May. The nature and extent of data exchanges between service delivery companies and clients created a large volume of mandatory and sometimes complex documentation and raised many obstacles on the journey to fulfil the revised GDPR obligations.

We continued to support the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) and were delighted at the confidence shown in them by the Department of Health when they awarded NAS the tender to deliver the new Patient Advocacy Service. We wish them every success and offer our support to deliver that service. We also welcome the extra funding received under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS). This was the first full year of NDIS project development, and we have supported the Sign Language Interpreting Service to provide more interpreting services as a result.

Our collaboration with other Departments, agencies and institutions has been active and fruitful in 2018, leading to social policy engagements across sectors where high quality information and advice provision is key. For example, we have worked



with financial stakeholders through the Personal Micro Credit Task Force, conducted project work with North-South agencies on Brexit, researched with academics for submissions to policymakers ranging from consumer protection issues around moneylending to National Traveller MABS' report on the cost of providing an appropriate standard of mobile accommodation for members of the Travelling community.

The information requirements for modern day living are increasingly complex, yet our website, citizensinformation.ie, which is a key element of the work of CIB, combined with the range of publications we produce, aims to simplify information and advice on social and other related services.

We are mindful of the need to retain core information on our website while acknowledging the need for face-to-face channels, telephone resources through the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and the MABS Helpline. We aim to build upon digital innovations, by investigating the variety of apps and mobile messaging services that citizens use to access information on their rights and entitlements.

Our enthusiasm to continue to deliver services which citizens rely on, and to deliver new and innovative solutions to citizens' needs is undiminished, but this depends on adequate staffing for CIB. We continue to operate under the constraints of the Employment Control Framework, which hampers our ability to deliver more for citizens.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela Black".

Angela Black, Chief Executive

2018 in numbers

A total of
574,096
people

called to Citizens Information Services during 2018 with over a million queries



CIB received

5,922 social policy returns,

highlighting administrative or operational issues around access to payments or services, policy anomalies or gaps in the provision of service



Citizensinformation.ie had more than

13 million users
and almost **11.4 million**
organic searches.

During the year, the website recorded just under

47
million
page
views



CIB made

9 submissions

to government departments and policy forums on a range of topics



The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) dealt with

over 140,195
telephone enquiries

and responded to

over 1,839
Live Adviser enquiries



The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) dealt with

15,387 new clients
and the MABS Helpline had

26,292 calls



Dedicated Mortgage Arrears advisers helped

5,498
borrowers
in late stage
arrears



The Citizens Information Mobile Information Unit spent

83 days
on the road in 2018



ABHAILE

FREE MORTGAGE ARREARS SUPPORT

Abhaile, the mortgage arrears support scheme issued

over 10,000
vouchers

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities provided representative advocacy to

916 people
and supported
2,619 people

with information, advice and other advocacy supports



Ten issues of the
Relate journal

were published, and over

100,000
leaflets

and wallcharts were published and distributed



The Irish Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) handled

6,412
interpreting
assignments



The Citizens Information Board

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) supports the provision of information, advice, advocacy, money advice and budgeting services across a wide range of public and social services. CIB services are delivered in three different ways – online, by phone and in person.

Our mandate is clearly defined through a number of Acts¹:

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

A key role of CIB is to support, promote and develop information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services, and to highlight issues that are raised by the users of those services. We do this through research and by analysing social policy returns from our services.

Our services

CIB delivers support in various ways:

- Information is available directly to the public through the Citizens Information website, citizensinformation.ie, and our periodicals and publications (see page 24)
- The nationwide network of **Citizens Information Centres (CICs)** allows members of the public to meet one of our advisers face to face and to get free, impartial and confidential information on a range of social and public services
- **The Citizens Information Service (CIS)** provides an **advocacy service** to people who may have difficulties in claiming or using their entitlements (see page 30)

¹ The Comhairle Act 2000, as amended by the Citizens Information Act 2007, and the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008.

- The public can also seek advice and information through the **Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)** (see page 40)
- The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** offers free, confidential and independent assistance for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt. The MABS services are supported by **MABS National Development**. In addition, **National Traveller MABS (NTMABS)** advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers and helps them to access legal and affordable savings and credit (see page 48).
- **Abhaile**, the mortgage arrears support scheme, helps homeowners to resolve their problems with home mortgage arrears and to stay in their homes where possible. Abhaile provides free financial and legal advice and help from experts, which is accessed through MABS (see page 46).
- The **National Advocacy Service (NAS) for People with Disabilities** meets the needs of people with disabilities who are in vulnerable situations (see page 50)
- The **Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)** provides Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreting services directly through remote interpreting, as well as by arranging referrals (see page 54).

Providing support

CIB works very closely with each of these delivery services to ensure the public gets the very best service possible. We also work to ensure our services comply with best practice in all aspects of finance, governance, human resources and premises management.

We provide infrastructure and supports to help the services deal with citizens' enquiries and link in with local communities. We ensure high quality by setting and monitoring standards; providing ICT services, equipment and infrastructure; putting in place training, including expert advice; and offering a range of other supports such as websites and publications.

CIB has set out a comprehensive financial control and reporting framework for those delivery services that receive an operational grant. This framework ensures that appropriate services are provided in return for funding.

Service level agreements between CIB and each of our delivery services clearly set out both parties' commitments. These agreements include delivery, governance, financial controls, HR practices, data protection, reporting guidelines, evaluation and monitoring. Our internal audit process makes recommendations on updating practices and improving compliance with the governance and reporting requirements.

We also provide support for the delivery services in a number of areas. This includes supplying staff handbooks and guidelines on recruitment, including the drafting of employment contracts. Separately, CIB offers support to delivery services on industrial relations and human resources, and our Professional Trustee service provides services advises on their occupational pension schemes (funded by CIB). An Employee Assistance Programme is available to all delivery services. Guidance and support is provided in relation to all aspects of premises and facilities management.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Data protection audits were carried out across CIB and all delivery services in 2018. New measures were put in place and training provided for all CIS staff in advance of the GDPR deadline in May 2018.

Staff

At the end of 2018, CIB had 73.5 whole-time equivalent staff (and 3 additional staff under the Abhaile project). Our head office is in Dublin and we have main offices in Dublin, Cork, Kilkenny, Limerick and Galway.

Financial statements

CIB's financial statements for 2018 will be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and will be published on citizensinformationboard.ie when the audit is complete.

Strategic Plan 2015-2018: Citizens First

Our three-year strategic plan for the period 2015-2018 took a 'Citizens First' approach to our work, and aimed to ensure that CIB and our delivery services met the needs of citizens in the most effective way possible.

Citizens First Strategy

'Enhance citizens' access to consistent and high-quality information, advice, money advice and advocacy to meet their needs, now and in the future.'

During the lifetime of the plan, our priorities were:

- To provide high quality consistent services to citizens, supported by robust quality assurance mechanisms
- To revise the structures of CIS and MABS to better serve the citizen by improving management structures and governance, maximising effective use of resources and ensuring consistent quality of services
- To provide targeted interventions to support the needs of our citizens in very vulnerable situations through specialist services
- To improve awareness of the range of services provided by CIB and our delivery services, particularly with regard to accessibility of services to citizens
- To highlight issues of concern so that policy and administration of public services is continually enhanced
- To continue to develop our staff, volunteers and board members through appropriate supports, with a particular emphasis on the key role of volunteering

Restructuring our services

A key objective of the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan was to revise the structures of the Citizens Information Service (CIS) and MABS to better serve the citizen by improving management systems and governance, maximising effective use of resources and ensuring consistent quality of services.

In 2017, the Board of CIB decided to restructure the network of 42 Citizens Information Services and 51 Money Advice and Budgeting Services into 16 regional companies. During 2018 this project was successfully completed, including the transfer of the staff, assets and liabilities of 93 CIS and MABS companies into the 16 new regional companies.

The transfer was completed in two phases. The first transfers took place on 16 April 2018, when 38 (18 CIS and 20 MABS) companies transferred to six (three CIS and three MABS) new regional companies. The second transfer took place on 1 October 2018, with 55 (24 CIS and 31 MABS) companies transferring to 10 (five CIS and five MABS) new regional companies.

During 2018:

- The union members of both the CIS and MABS voted in favour of the transfer to the new regional companies. Directors for the 16 new regional boards were recruited and the companies were incorporated with the Companies Registration Office (CRO).
- Sixteen new regional manager posts were created, advertised and filled
- We organised and delivered induction training for regional managers
- We held regional information briefings for chairpersons and managers of the 93 companies on the transfer process, including the completion of the business transaction legal paperwork
- Separate information sessions were held for the new companies on the requirements of the transfer and the associated legal paperwork
- We produced simplified transfer plans and, with our external project managers, provided direct support to boards and managers
- We helped the companies transfer existing pension schemes to the new companies correctly. Over 200 different pension schemes were identified during this process.

- All companies were also briefed on the liquidation process and all Phase 1 companies are now in liquidation. The Phase 2 companies are all expected to enter into liquidation by the second quarter of 2019.

The aim of the restructuring was to improve the governance arrangements for CIB-funded services and to optimise the benefits from operating a more modern and streamlined citizen-focused service delivery model. As a result of the restructuring of the companies, there is now:

- A single insurance scheme for MABS and CIS regional companies
- One payroll provider for MABS and CIS regional companies
- New service-level agreements in place for all the new companies, in line with best governance practice and current legislation

During 2018, MABS and the CIS maintained a full level of service. There were no job losses or centre closures as a result of the restructuring of services. CIB has been working closely with the new boards and regional managers to establish the new companies and ensure they can deliver their services effectively.

In 2019, CIB will build on the new regional model to support the introduction of more shared services and frameworks for delivery services. We will also help the employer union forums for CIS and MABS services to revise or develop staff handbooks and staffing strategies.

PR and promotion

Support and promotion of our services remains a key strategic aim. Our websites (citizensinformation.ie, mabs.ie and citizensinformationboard.ie) give easy access to information about all our services, including Citizens Information Services (CISs), Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS), the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) and the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS).

The scale of our network strengthens our brand awareness. Sixteen new regional companies and their boards of management oversee and manage 115 Citizens Information Centres (CICs) and 60 MABS offices nationwide. CIB provides high-street signage for MABS and CISs.

Our services have extensive partnership networks at regional and local level. They include joint initiatives with organisations such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), St. Vincent de Paul, the Irish Prison Service, refugee and immigrant groups, Family Resource Centres, the Green Ribbon Campaign (mental health) and Traveller groups. CISs and MABS are involved in outreach work and take part in local promotional events and activities.

A Know Your Rights column distributed by CIB regularly appears in local print media and acts as the catalyst for numerous local radio slots.

National campaigns and events

CIB also manages communications campaigns at national level. National campaigns encourage members of the public experiencing difficulty to seek advice or information.

In 2018, campaign activity included radio advertisements broadcast across national and local radio stations on the wider theme of Circle of Life and specific themes such as Working Family Payment and Maternity Benefit. Posters and leaflets linked to campaign themes were distributed to all local offices. The campaign included digital partnerships with key websites on such themes as disability benefits and entitlements, employment rights and benefits, and older people.

In late October, a journal.ie article covered the impact of the Budget under the headings of Family, Older People, Housing and Social Welfare. In addition, 15 promotional videos were produced with the assistance of Citizens Information staff, for promotion on various social media platforms.

Our services are also promoted annually at national events where there is a high footfall, including the National Ploughing Championships, the national 50 Plus Expo, and the Which Course Exhibition in Croke Park.

Citizens Information PR campaign in 2018

Radio



Heard by
3.5m people
June to November

Posters



Over
600,000
reach

Video



Over
100,000
reach

Digital



JOE



Over
1.1 million
reach

Over
20,000
reach



20,000
article views

11,000
article views

Partnerships

Some key partnership initiatives continue to promote awareness of both Citizens Information and MABS. For example, the Abhaile free mortgage arrears support service works with the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Insolvency Service of Ireland and the Legal Aid Board. The key point of access to the service is the MABS Helpline number 0761 07 2000.

Media coverage

We actively engage with the media to highlight the value and importance of our services. For example, we sought media opportunities to tell people why we were restructuring the CIS and MABS and to make them more aware of the activities of both services. These opportunities included a slot on the RTE Radio 1 Morning Ireland radio programme for the Chief Executive and on the News at One.

Other reports that received coverage included the *Deaf Research Report* on the experiences of the Deaf community in accessing public and social services in Ireland (see page 21). The research was timely and relevant in view of the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act, which gives State recognition to the indigenous language of the Deaf community. There was also the pre-budget submission entitled *Barely Getting By*, which highlighted the total of over one million queries we had received on citizens' concerns ahead of Budget 2019.

Social policy and research

Staff in Citizens Information Centres (CICs) submit a report known as a social policy return (SPR) to CIB when they feel that a client is experiencing particular difficulty in trying to access social or public services. Individual cases can indicate a broader difficulty or concern with a policy, practice or piece of legislation.

The data, evidence and insights these frontline services send us every day can show the impact of government spending, policy and the administration of policy. In fulfilling our statutory role, we use this data to highlight issues of concern so that policy and the administration of public services can be continually improved.

During 2018, 5,922 SPRs were submitted to CIB (4,910 from CISs and 1,012 from CIPS). This was an overall increase of 21% on the returns submitted in 2017. The evidence helped us to get a clear picture of the problems that people were facing in accessing public services during 2018 and we used this evidence to make recommendations to government, in consultations, to regulators and to other organisations on how to improve policy and the administration of policy.

During 2018, 5,922 SPRs were submitted to CIB (4,910 from CISs and 1,012 from CIPS).

Much of the social policy feedback submitted to us continued to focus on the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social welfare-related matters. The most common concerns during 2018 were communications difficulties with particular departments (such as social welfare, housing and health) and also with delays in processing and information gaps. Specifically, over two-thirds of the feedback about social welfare payments or schemes mentioned these types of difficulties. The remainder of the cases

focused on policy anomalies or gaps in the provision of services. This data provides CIB with a strong evidence base for our policy submissions.

Policy submissions

During 2018, CIB made a number of submissions on different areas of social and public policy. Most of these were in response to invitations by government departments and covered topics such as the National Digital Strategy, State Pension reform, and moneylending and consumer protection.



Pictured at the launch of the Citizens Information Board Annual Report 2017 are Board members: Ian Power, Tina Leonard and Nicola Walshe.



Pictured at the launch of the research report on the information needs of the Deaf community were from left: Angela Black, CIB Chief Executive, Regina Doherty TD, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and Anne Coogan, Chair of the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS).

Each of these submissions was drafted using different elements of the data provided by our delivery services. This broad base of evidence is central in helping us to identify emerging issues that people are facing, in relation to benefits or services.

A key submission we make every year is the pre-budget submission, which provides a useful insight into the range of issues that our delivery services are involved in. In *Barely Getting By*, we highlighted citizens' concerns ahead of Budget 2019 and made recommendations in areas that included housing, debt and affordable credit, welfare supports, and the provision of benefits and services.

The submission describes the main difficulties affecting the people who use information, advocacy and money advice services; many of whom are barely getting by. Supports delivered through public services are essential

in enabling them to cope with limited means in difficult circumstances. Drawing on over 100,000 housing queries presented to CIBs, the submission called for greater rent regulation and increased supports to help vulnerable households to access suitable accommodation.

We continue to keep services informed and updated on policy matters by providing training and distributing a two-monthly newsletter – Social Policy Update – which provides information on CIB and news, activities and resources on national social policy.

Research

In February 2018 Regina Doherty TD, the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, launched a CIB research report on the experiences of the Deaf community in accessing public and social services and related information on rights and entitlements.



This report examined the current provisions by public agencies for meeting the needs of the Deaf community and identified the main issues in developing more accessible services. This is particularly relevant in the context of the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act, which gave State recognition to the indigenous language of the Deaf community.

The report shows how members of the Deaf community have faced severe difficulties in accessing public information in their preferred language and consequently in realising their rights. A common concern in the Deaf community is the lack of awareness among public organisations of how the needs of the Deaf community differ from those of Hard of Hearing people.

See page 36 for details of social policy returns to CISs in 2018.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a means of empowering and supporting people to reach the outcome they want and, where necessary, representing and negotiating on their behalf. It generally means representing someone's view or helping them to secure their rights or entitlements.

CIB provides advocacy services to the public through the national network of Citizens Information Services (CISs) and the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities.

CIS advocacy is a partnership between the client and the information provider. The information provider works with the client, representing or amplifying their voice, to help them to access their rights and entitlements. Advocacy can include writing letters with or on behalf of the client, negotiating with third parties on the client's behalf, supporting and representing the client in meetings with third parties, and supporting and representing the client up to and through a formal hearing.

See page 38 for details of advocacy in CISs in 2018 and see the National Advocacy Service on page 50.



"...if it wasn't for Citizens Information and their helpful staff, my life and that of my family would be unbelievably hard".

Feedback from CIS customer

Providing information – websites and publications

Citizensinformation.ie

Our key information website, citizensinformation.ie, provides public service information for Ireland. The public can use the website to find out about their rights and entitlements. It is the primary information source for information providers in the CISs and CIPS, and also provides useful information for officers in MABS and other organisations.

In 2018, the website had over 13 million users, just under 47 million page views and almost 11.4 million organic searches².

We gather information from various government departments and agencies to make sure that users have the information they need, presented in an easy-to-understand way.

The most popular documents on the website in 2018 were:

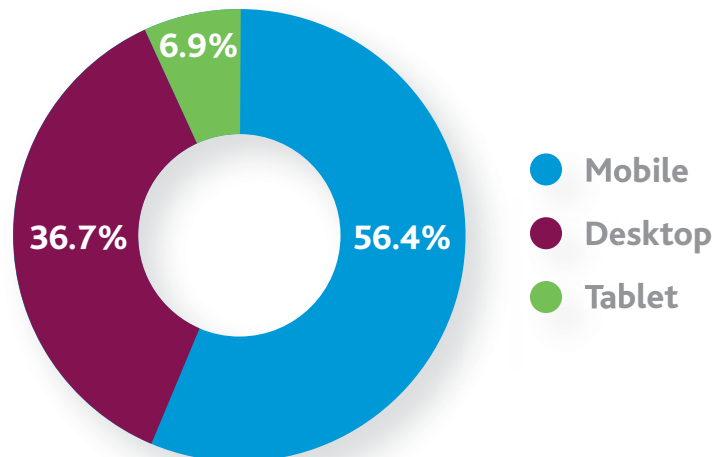
1. Irish citizenship through birth or descent
2. State Pension (Contributory)
3. Working Family Payment
4. Rest periods and breaks
5. Medical cards
6. Carer's Allowance
7. Visa requirements for entering Ireland
8. Illness Benefit
9. How your tax is calculated
10. Registering to vote

² In late 2017, Google Analytics was added to citizensinformation.ie and we have used Google Analytics to report on traffic to the website in this report. Using Google Analytics, citizensinformation.ie recorded 13 million users (an average of 1,091,000 users per month), over 46.7 million page views and 11.4 million organic searches in 2018. Using our previous web statistics package (AW Stats), citizensinformation.ie recorded an average of 920,000 visitors per month, over 21 million visits and over 60 million page views in 2018 – this is a slight increase on the figures for 2017. Note that Google Analytics does not record 'visits' and records page views differently.

World-wide visitors to citizensinformation.ie

Country	Users	Country	Users
Ireland	7,400,251	Nigeria	60,552
United Kingdom	2,310,895	Netherlands	47,421
United States	1,179,396	Italy	44,596
India	342,073	New Zealand	40,233
Canada	182,224	Malaysia	40,137
Australia	169,595	Pakistan	39,498
Philippines	112,289	Kenya	38,083
South Africa	110,349	Unit. Arab Emirates	37,145
Germany	83,099	Poland	35,791
Spain	80,983	Brazil	31,636
France	70,023		

2018





Ita Mangan, Chair, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty and Angela Black, Chief Executive pictured at the launch of CIB's Annual Report 2017.

Brexit

Immediately following the UK referendum in June 2016, there was a spike in web traffic and subsequent growth in traffic from the UK to the citizensinformation.ie website. Over the following years, there was a substantial increase in website traffic from the UK (in 2018, 17.6% of website traffic was from the UK).

So, looking at the patterns of traffic to the website and combining this with the data coming in from our services, especially services in border areas, we developed appropriate responses. We added content to our online guide to Brexit that focused on the questions people were asking including 'What it means?', 'Next steps?' and 'Brexit and you'. Later in the year, we added additional documents on Brexit and tracked searches from UK users (these

cluster around Irish citizenship and passports).

The top documents accessed by UK users in 2018 included:

- **Applying for or renewing an Irish passport** - 72.5% of traffic was from the UK
- **Common Travel Area between Ireland and the United Kingdom** - 57.38% traffic from the UK compared to 28.92% for Ireland
- **Irish citizenship through birth or decent** - 55% of traffic was from the UK
- **Residence rights of UK citizens** - 49.54% traffic from the UK compared to 28.66% from Ireland
- **Guide to Brexit** - 35.32% of traffic in 2018 was from the UK compared to 31.44% from Ireland

Citizensinformationboard.ie

Citizensinformationboard.ie is CIB's corporate website. It sets out the work of CIB and its delivery services, and serves as a base for CIB to publish documents under a Freedom of Information publication scheme.

Keepingyourhome.ie

Keepingyourhome.ie is a microsite with information for people who are worried about mortgage repayments or who are in mortgage arrears. It also hosts the details of accountants who can provide advice on mortgage resolution proposals.

Assistireland.ie

Assistireland.ie provides information on assistive technology (aids and appliances) for older people and people with disabilities in Ireland.

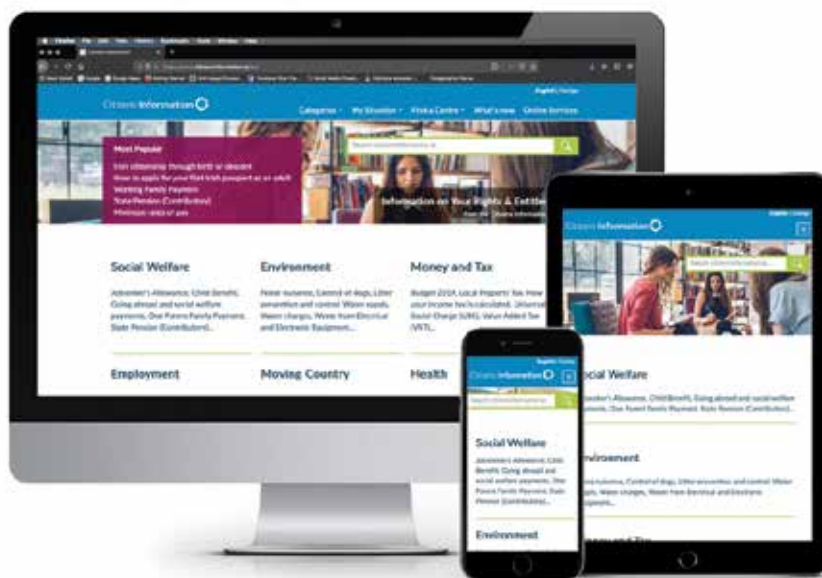
Publications

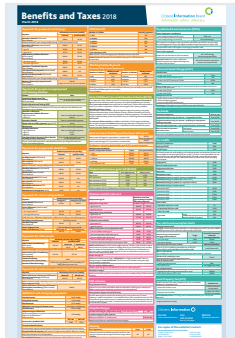
CIB publishes a range of information leaflets each year. We also publish advocacy, research and social policy reports to highlight and analyse issues identified by our services.

Most of the leaflets we produced in 2018 were printed by the Revenue Print Centre.

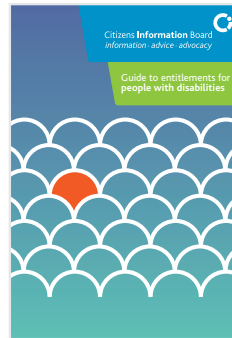
All our publications are available across the Citizens Information network and are distributed to other service providers and information providers for display in public offices. These include government departments and statutory agencies, MABS offices, local social welfare offices and health offices, TDs and senators, the voluntary and community sector, and other local networks.

PDF versions of all publications are available on citizensinformationboard.ie.

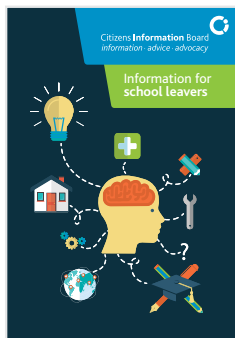




The **Benefits and Taxes 2018** wallchart and leaflet summarise benefits in 2018, with comprehensive tables of rates and income thresholds.



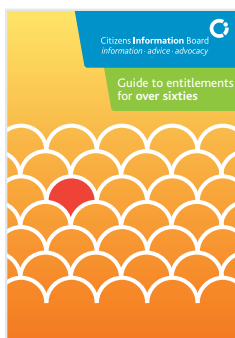
The **Guide to entitlements for people with disabilities** leaflet provides an overview of entitlements for people with disabilities.



The **Information for school leavers** leaflet is distributed to schools around the country. It summarises topics that are relevant to school-leavers, including options for education and training, social welfare entitlements, tax and employment law.



The **Information for those affected by bereavement** leaflet provides a guide to practical and legal matters following a bereavement and includes information on the financial supports available for those who have recently been bereaved.



The **Guide to entitlements for over sixties** leaflet provides an overview of entitlements for older people.



CIB also collaborated with Teagasc on a booklet, **Supports for farmers**, which was launched at the National Ploughing Championships in September.

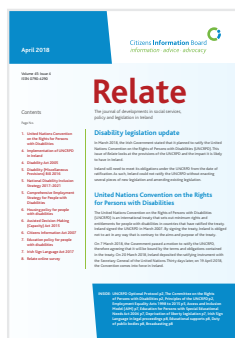


Pictured at the National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore at the launch of the Citizens Information Board/Teagasc booklet on 'Supports for Farmers' are the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins with Grainne Griffin, Senior Manager and Cathy Gerrard, Information Resources Manager.

Know Your Rights columns

Each month, we produce four question-and-answer Know Your Rights columns. These columns are published widely in local newspapers across the country.

Relate



Relate is our bi-monthly journal which covers legislation and developments in the broad social services and social

policy areas. During 2018, *Relate* covered a wide range of topics including farming in Ireland, government policies and strategies relating to housing, the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its implementation in Ireland, the regulation of charities, employment law updates, the planning system in Ireland, air passenger rights and consumer rights when travelling abroad.

In addition, *Relate* covered current State pension provision in Ireland and the main changes to the pension system set out in *A Roadmap to Pensions Reform 2018-2023*. It also provided legislation updates on the Mediation Act 2017, Domestic Violence Act 2018, Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, Data Protection Act 2018 and Budget 2019.

Citizens Information Services (CISs)

Citizens Information Services (CISs) provide free, impartial and confidential information, advice and advocacy services to the public. On the ground, services are provided from a national network of Citizens Information Centres (CICs).

In 2018, the nationwide network of CISs underwent restructuring and the number of regional companies was reduced from 42 to eight (see page 15). Once the new companies were established,

regional boards were appointed and regional managers were recruited with responsibility for overseeing delivery of a regional workplan, maximising resources and driving a consistent approach to service delivery within the region.

The services faced considerable challenges and changes while winding down and fulfilling the legal and financial requirements of transfer to the new companies. Throughout this time,



Citizens Information Regional Managers at the launch of CIB's Annual Report 2017. Front row from left: Lorraine O'Donovan, Susan Ryan, Jennifer Moroney Ward and Sharon Dillon. Top row from left: Noel O'Connor, Simon Monds and Diarmuid O'Sullivan. Missing from photograph: Mary Watters, Regional Manager Dublin North, CIS.



Pictured at the National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore: Back left to right: Philip Judge, Manager, Offaly CIS; Evan O'Sullivan, Marketing Officer, Abhaile; Bobby Barbour, Communications Manager, Abhaile. Front left to right: Bernie Keenaghan, Offaly MABS, Katie Goodwin, CIB, Nicole Boyle McBride, Abhaile and Mary Errity, Offaly MABS.

CISs continued to deliver information, advice and advocacy services to the public, to network locally and to support specific CIS developments.

Operational grants of €13.29 million were paid to the network of CISs in 2018 (see Appendix 9).

Staffing

At the end of 2018, there were 206 whole-time equivalent posts (WTEs) in the CIS network. There were 201 employment scheme workers (equivalent to 109.5 WTEs), which was a slight increase on the number of employment scheme workers in 2017. There were 990 volunteers (112 WTEs), down from 1,027 volunteers at the end of 2017.

Training

The eLearning team develop and make available online training courses for CIS staff and volunteers. In 2018, the CIB Learning Hub, which hosts the eLearning and Training Resources department, was redesigned. This was an important technical and architectural change, which will establish a future shared learning platform for all CIB service areas, including CISs, MABS, NAS, SLIS and CIB.

Essential Training for Information Providers (ETIP) 2018 was open to all CIS staff and volunteers who completed CIS induction training in their local CIC. ETIP provides training in all the essential skills and knowledge areas that staff need to work independently as information providers. Learners are able to study online at their own speed. In 2018, 115 staff and learners successfully completed the online ETIP courses.



At the official opening of the Newbridge Citizens Information Centre, from left: Noel O'Connor, North Leinster Regional Manager, Gerry Leydon, Director, North Leinster CIS, Grainne Griffin, Senior Manager, Martin Heydon TD, Seán Ó Fearghail TD, Ceann Comhairle, Jim Blighe Chairperson North Leinster CIS, Cathy O'Donoghue, CIB, Joan O'Connor Development Manager, South Kildare.

The Higher Certificate in Arts in Information Provision and Advocacy Practice (IPAP) is a major award at level 6 and is delivered over two years by the Technological University Dublin. Forty students successfully completed IPAP in 2018 and received their Higher Certificates.

Callers

CISs assisted 574,096 people in 2018 and answered over a million queries. These figures represent a pattern of demand that has been fairly consistent over the past few years.

Callers to CISs were predominately female (57%), with males making up 37% of callers and 5% were couples (a couple is listed as one caller). The national ratio of queries to callers was 1.77, a figure which has increased in recent years. Age was recorded for 75% of callers in 2018, and the majority (47%) were in the 26-45-year category, followed by people aged 46-65 (34%). 15% of callers were 66 years or over.

Where nationality was recorded, over 75% (303,458) of callers were Irish and 24% (97,676) were non-Irish nationals, up from 23% in 2017. Both EU and non-EU migrant users of services show a continuing demand, representing 13.6% (54,833) of callers from the EU and 10.4% (41,953) from non-EU countries in 2018.

Over three-quarters of callers (78%) or 445,818 people contacted a CIC in person, 21% by telephone (120,973 calls) and 1% (7,305) by email or letter. The amount of time spent with callers

CISs assisted 574,096 people in 2018

has remained similar to previous years: 251,607 (44%) took 10 minutes and under; 220,406 (38%) took 11-20 minutes; 86,440 (15%) took 21-40 minutes; and 13,830 (2.4%) took 41-90 minutes. However, 1,813 took 90 minutes or more – a figure which is increasing year on year, demonstrating the increased complexity of queries.

Queries

The types of queries dealt with by services have remained broadly similar year on year. The most common queries from the public are on social welfare, health, housing, employment, money and tax, plus a range of local issues.

Social welfare-related queries consistently form the largest category (455,891 queries or 45%), as in 2017. This is to be expected given the number of people in receipt of a wide range of welfare payments. State Pension (Contributory), Disability Allowance and Carer's Allowance continue to be high query areas. Illness Benefit queries rose to over 20,000 in 2018.

Medical cards remain the highest single query area, rising from 59,826 queries in 2017 to 64,931 in 2018. Most queries from non-Irish nationals were in relation to medical cards.

The top 10 single payment/scheme queries were:

1. **Medical cards, 64,931**
2. **State Pension (Contributory), 35,304**
3. **Carer's Allowance, 32,155**
4. **Disability Allowance, 31,275**
5. **Jobseeker's Allowance, 27,443**
6. **Household Benefits Package, 27,259**
7. **Working Family Payment, 24,236**
8. **Legal aid and advice, 22,217**
9. **Applying for local authority housing, 22,175**
10. **Fuel Allowance, 21,394**



Giving information to a client at the National Ploughing Championships in Tullamore.

The next highest query categories were health (95,066 or 9% of queries), housing (90,064 or 9% of queries), employment (71,380 or 7%), money and tax (60,050 queries or 6%), Local (56,043 or 5%, down from 69,477 or 7% in 2017).

Housing queries are a significant area of enquiry, at 90,064 in 2018 (up from 59,205 in 2015), and cover a range of housing needs, with a particular focus on social housing provision. Housing queries from migrants continued to increase. Almost one-third of the overall number of social housing and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) queries to CISs came from migrants.

Actions

The total number of queries dealt with by services in 2018 was 1,017,369. All queries are recorded on the *Oyster* database. Some 36% of these queries were classed as **simple**, continuing a downward trend from 39% in 2017 and

42% in 2016. The number of queries recorded as **complex** has continued to rise – to 64% of all queries.

Queries are categorised as requiring **information** (48.5% or 492,455) or **advice and assistance** (51% or 516,554) or **advocacy** (almost 1% or 8,360).

In 2018, 89% of queries recorded as requiring advice and assistance were deemed to be complex. The majority of these involved 'exploring options' with clients (66%); followed by form filling (12%); calculating benefit entitlements (8%); and making phone calls to government departments on behalf of people (6%).

Other responses to callers' queries included: carrying out a benefits check; drafting letters or emails with a caller; assisting with online applications; phone-call enquiries to employers, landlords or others in the private sector; and advice on appeals processes.

Referrals to other services

CISs made referrals to a broad range of agencies. Almost 7% of clients (38,466) were referred, up from 6% in 2017 and 5% the previous year.

Of the referrals made, 17% (6,349) were to Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC); 7% (2,682) to the Workplace Relations Commission; 7% (2,285) to a solicitor; 7% to Intreo (2,551, showing a continued increase); 7% to local authorities on housing issues (2,546, continuing the increase from 2,132 in 2017, which had risen significantly from 870 in 2016); and 4% (1,429) to a local support group or service provider. Other referrals recorded were to MABS (1,155); Revenue (1,186); the Legal Aid Board (1,026); and Citizens Advice (1,092).

Over a third of the referrals were made to other national and local organisations, showing the extent to which CISs are involved in networking and in supporting callers with specific needs. These other agencies included the Residential Tenancies Board (574); Chartered Accountants Voluntary Advice (CAVA) (546); the HSE (532); the Immigrant Council of Ireland (498); and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (471).

Referrals to CISs

The majority of callers to CISs, where referral was recorded, were self-referrals. Some were also referred by a family member. Other agencies referred 9,115 callers. The largest number of referrals was from the Department of

Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and its local/Intreo offices, followed by Seetec/Turas Nua. Other sources of referral included Citizens Advice (927), community groups, CIPS, health services, local authorities, MABS, post offices and the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB).

Mobile unit

The mobile unit enables CISs to provide a service to people in more remote areas. In 2018, the mobile unit spent 83 days on the road providing a Citizens Information service in counties Clare, Mayo, West Cork, Wicklow and Wexford. CISs assisted 722 callers with 1,598 queries through the use of the mobile unit in 2018.

Specialist services

Throughout 2018, CISs continued to administer, host and sometimes staff a range of specialist clinics for, among others, Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC), SLIS, Chartered Accountants Voluntary Advice (CAVA), Threshold, Women's Aid, Office of the Ombudsman, and Revenue.

Some 36% of queries were classed as simple, continuing a downward trend from 39% in 2017 and 42% in 2016. The number of queries recorded as complex has continued to rise – to 64% of all queries.

In 2018, 228 volunteers signed up to provide a free legal aid service in CISs.

A working group, drawn from the Citizens Information Board, CISs and the Irish Prison Service, met to review the service that CIS offers to prisons. A new model of coordinated service delivery in prisons will be initiated in 2019 in three prisons.

Quality

Drawing heavily on input and feedback from CISs, CIB continued to develop the suite of resources designed to drive and ensure national quality standards. The core standardised procedure *Providing Information and advice/assistance to personal callers* was updated in 2018 to reflect recent developments and the growing emphasis on advocacy practice in CISs.

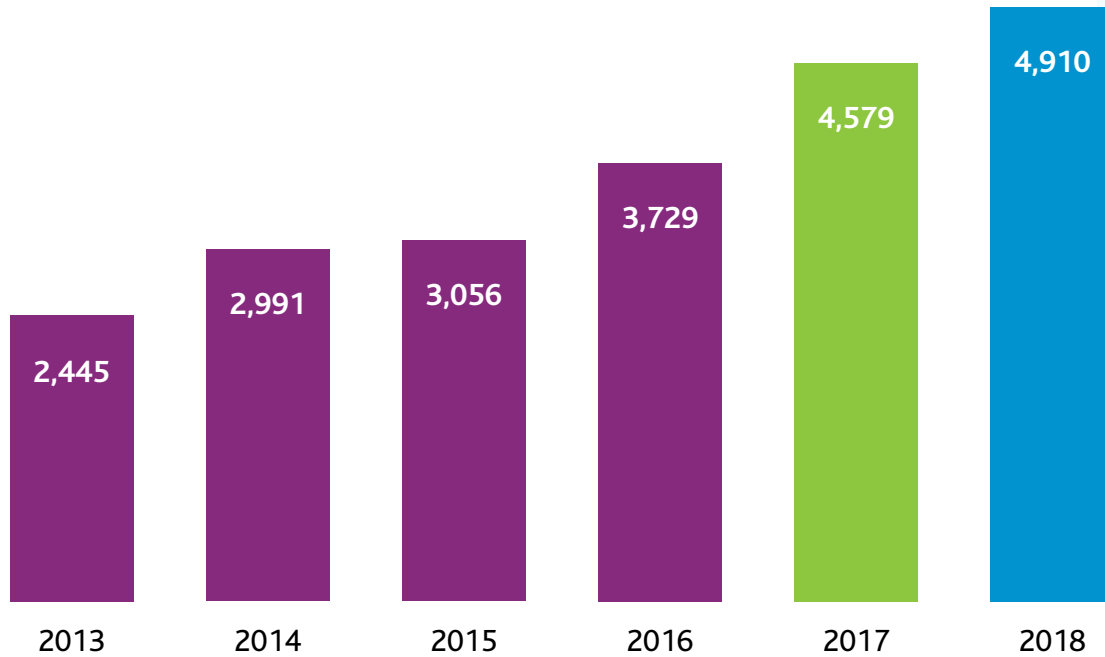
Work also started on updating the Quality of Information Review form, which is used as a tool in reviewing how far information providers adhere to the standardised procedure for dealing with queries.

Social policy

There were 4,910 social policy returns (SPRs) from CISs for January to December 2018, representing an increase of 7% from 4,579 in 2017 and 3,729 in 2016. SPRs help us get a clear picture of the problems people face when trying to access social and public services. SPRs also inform CIB submissions and recommendations to Government, consultations, regulators and other organisations on how to improve policy and the administration of services.

The majority of the SPRs submitted during 2018 related to social welfare (55% or 2,608), which is consistent with the general business of CISs. The other main categories that logged a significant number of SPRs included health (11%), housing (11%), money and tax (6%), moving country (5%) and employment (3%).

Social policy returns 2013-2018



The top 10 categories for queries on specific payments, benefits or schemes, as identified in SPRs in 2018, were:

1. **Illness Benefit (up from ninth place in 2017)**
2. **Medical card**
3. **Carer's Allowance**
4. **Jobseeker's Allowance**
5. **Working Family Payment**
6. **Disability Allowance**
7. **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**
8. **State Pension (Contributory)**
9. **GNIB applications and renewals**
10. **Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance**

Volunteering in CISs

Volunteers play a vital role in many CISs, working as information providers, receptionists and Board or committee members. In addition, many volunteers bring professional experience to their roles, including representative advocacy, complex query support, social policy work, PR and marketing, administration, production of newsletters, and organising local events. Many experienced volunteers act as local centre coordinators, and recruit, train, support, and roster other voluntary workers.

Advocacy in Citizens Information Services

CISs offer an advocacy service in a wide range of areas, including social welfare, employment, housing, consumer issues, health and immigration.

Citizens Information Services provided advocacy to over 9,579 clients in 2018. This work included 6,941 short-term or once-off advocacy cases. Short-term work generally involves one or two

engagements, such as writing a letter of complaint or negotiating a product refund.

However, the majority of the time spent on advocacy involves working with a client over many months to progress a complex issue or appeal. CIS worked with 2,638 long-term advocacy clients on complex issues such as employment appeals, social welfare appeals and housing cases.

The majority (57%) of advocacy cases in 2018 related to social welfare, representing a slight decrease compared to 2017 (59%). Employment cases increased by 1% from 2017, while housing cases remained the same as in 2017.

Advocacy support workers (ASW) programme and dedicated advocacy pilot

The primary role of the advocacy support workers (ASWs) employed across the Citizens Information network is to coach and mentor staff in the processes and skills of advocacy casework.



CIS staff pictured attending Negotiation Skills training in Dublin which was organised by advocacy support workers.

Five ASWs are assigned across the network to manage advocacy, build the capacity of information providers and provide on-call advice on casework. The ASWs are supported by a national programme group and an external expert support service.

A two-year CIS Dedicated Advocacy Pilot project came to an end in December. The pilot project evaluated

the effectiveness of having dedicated advocate officers working within a CIS with scheduled clients referred to them from drop-in information and advice clinics. The project assessed whether and how this delivery model enhances the provision of advocacy services to people who need additional support to access their rights and entitlements. Its outcome will contribute to our plans for developing CIS advocacy.

Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)

The Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) is the national Citizens Information helpline, which provides a comprehensive and confidential information service to the general public. Based in Cork, the service operates Monday to Friday 9am-8pm.

CIPS also offers Live Advisor, an instant web chat service which is open 9am-5pm on weekdays and is aimed at people with hearing and speech difficulties.

CIPS is funded by CIB. It received a grant of €1.3 million in 2018.

Statistics

In 2018, CIPS information officers dealt with a total of 140,195 telephone enquiries and responded to 1,839 Live Advisor enquiries. Of the telephone enquiries, 137,389 were from members of the public and 2,806 were from colleagues through the peer support line.

The volume of calls answered and queries dealt with by the team increased by 8.7% from 2017. The monthly average number of calls answered increased from 10,738 in 2017 to 11,684 in 2018. The number of calls offered for 2018 was 188,725, representing a marginal 1.25% increase on 2017.

Of the total number of calls offered to the service in 2018, the CIPS team answered 140,195, representing a 74.3% answer rate. The average speed to answer across the year was 3.35 minutes, with the average talk time just under six minutes, at 5.59 minutes.

It takes significantly longer to deal with a web chat than a call. However, developments in technology may lead to an increase in the number of chats dealt with online. CIPS began a review of the current web-chat provision during the fourth quarter of 2018.

The Peer Support Service is a direct link between CIPS and Citizens Information Centres nationwide. It provides support and consultation on queries for staff and volunteers in CICs. 2018 saw an increase of 59% in calls to the dedicated peer support line, with 3,099 calls being attempted, compared to 1,955 in 2017. CIPS staff answered 2,806 of these calls. The answer rate increased from 81% in 2017 to 90% in 2018.

Staffing

CIPS is staffed by a manager, two team supervisors, 17 whole-time equivalent information officers, a senior administrator and two part-time administrators.

140,195 telephone enquiries and responded to 1,839 Live Advisor enquiries.



CIPS provides a comprehensive and confidential information service to the general public.

Quality assurance

CIPS management ensures the quality of all its interactions with the public and with Citizens Information peers in various ways. These include:

- A strong induction programme, with ongoing and refresher training
- In-house support for complex queries
- One-to-one coaching every two months
- Call recording with assessment by team supervisors
- Dedicated 'non-contact' time for information officers for the purpose of research and learning

In 2018, CIPS moved to a new web-based quality evaluation platform called Score Buddy, which improves transparency, ease of reporting, trend analysis and self-evaluation.

Using Score Buddy, 579 calls were evaluated during the year, with an average score of 94%, compared to 93% in 2017.

Social policy

The CIPS social policy team includes two social policy coordinators and six social policy team members. The coordinators take responsibility for training in relation to social policy, reporting social policy returns as well as working with CIB on social policy reports, and working groups.

CIPS reviewed their approach to social policy returns in 2018 – including a social policy returns buddy system and social policy record sheet in order to streamline the reporting process. CIPS sent 1,012 social policy returns to CIB in 2018.

CIPS policy returns to CIB indicate emerging and recurrent issues noted during interactions with callers, highlighting access and administrative barriers and also gaps and inconsistencies in service provision.

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) provides a free, confidential, non-judgemental and independent service throughout the country for people with debt issues. MABS aims to provide people, particularly those on low incomes, with practical advice on dealing with their finances. MABS also provide local communities with education on budgeting and money management.

In 2018, MABS was restructured into eight regional companies, which offer their services from over 60 offices nationwide. In addition, MABS includes two national companies:

- MABS National Development CLG (MABSnd) is a central support service that provides technical support for case work, money management, education and training to MABS companies. MABSnd is responsible for the national MABS Helpline.
- National Traveller MABS (NTMABS) was established in 2005. It advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalised groups) to help them to access legal and affordable credit and manage money (see page 48).



MABS Regional Managers at the launch of CIB's Annual Report 2017. Front row from left: Michelle O'Hara, Gwen Harris and Rosaleen Maher. Top row from left: Michael Laffey, Ali Fitzell and Michael Doherty. Missing from photograph: Karl Cronin, Regional Manager, North Connacht & Ulster MABS and Ursula Collins, Regional Manager, South Munster MABS.



Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty TD, with members of staff officially opening the new offices of North Dublin MABS, Swords Office.

How MABS helps

The money advisers at MABS help clients with a wide range of personal debts and budgeting issues. As many clients have more than one sort of debt, MABS advisers take each person's case as a whole and try to find the right solution for their particular situation. Common issues dealt with by MABS advisers include:

- Mortgage arrears
- Personal loan arrears
- Utilities arrears
- Credit card debt
- Hire purchase arrears
- Rent arrears
- Court fines

- Catalogue debts
- Sub-prime loans
- Moneylender debt

MABS 2018 in brief

2018 was a year of significant change for MABS, when 51 separate MABS companies amalgamated into eight regional companies. This amalgamation took place at a governance level, with MABS offices across Ireland remaining open and staff continuing to provide services to clients at the same locations. Each regional company appointed its own regional manager, who reports to the newly constituted company boards.

The first three regional companies were formed in April and the remaining five in October.

The number of new clients contacting MABS in 2018 was 15,387 – 8% fewer than in 2017. A further 2,078 people called for information and support on budgeting and money management. On 31 December 2018, MABS had an active client case load of 14,436.

Staffing and finance

The most significant staffing development in MABS in 2018 was the appointment of eight regional managers. These appointments increased the number of whole-time equivalent (WTE) posts in MABS at the end of 2018 to 260, made up of 46 money advice coordinators, 61 administrators and 144 money advisers (including DMA advisers).

The total CIB funding allocated to MABS in 2018 was €23.78 million. Operational grants to MABS companies totalled €15.44 million, with an additional €2.05 million for the DMA service. In addition, €2.79 million was allocated for centralised support to MABS companies, including MABSnd, the Aid and Advice Scheme, promotion, insurance and other contingencies.

Statistics

- In 2018, MABS saw 15,387 new clients, representing an 8% decrease on the new client figure compared to 2017 (16,740)

- A further 2,078 people called for information or advice about budgeting and money management
- The total active client caseload on 31 December 2018 was 14,436 – down 18% on the 2017 caseload of 16,740
- The active caseload figure included 1,869 special accounts cases, which represented just over 13% of the overall caseload and was down from 2,768 at the end of 2017. This figure has been declining steadily from a peak of over 30% of the active caseload in 2012.
- 46.5% of new clients were recorded as living in mortgaged accommodation with a further 6% in owner-occupied property.

Debt profile

The average level of recorded debt for new clients at the end of 2018 was €70,300 (includes total to clear debts). Of the types of debt, the commonest were personal loans, which accounted for 31% of the total. Mortgage debt was the second highest type at just over 26%. Credit card debt accounted for 14.5% and utilities debts for 13%. These four categories combined represented 84% of the debt problems presented to MABS. Moneylending debts represented a further 3.6%.



Pictured at the launch of '*Left Behind in the Cold*', standing are Board members and staff of Dublin 10 & 20 MABS with staff from Clondalkin and Dundrum MABS and National Traveller MABS. Seated from left are: Brid Smith TD, Catherine Byrne TD Minister of State at the Department of Health, Lord Mayor of Dublin Michael Mac Donncha, Angela Black, Chief Executive, and Dr Stuart Stamp, author of the report.

Waiting times

The average waiting time reported per service at the end of December was 2.23 weeks (11.15 days), which was similar to the 2017 figure. 90% of services had a waiting time of four weeks or less, while 31% had a waiting times of less than two weeks. 2,240 emergency clients were seen throughout the year without an appointment.

MABS Helpline: 0761 07 2000

The national MABS Helpline received a total of 26,292 calls up to the end of December – a 6.6% increase on the same period in 2017 and an average of 2,200 per month. Helpline calls have increased overall by over 26% over the three-year period from 2016 to 2018.

MABS policy and research

During 2018, MABS continued its policy work to highlight the issues affecting its clients and to seek positive change for them. This work involved participation in consultative groups, steering committees and partnership projects and also the preparation of the following formal submissions:

- Submission to the Central Bank's review of the Consumer Protection Code for licensed moneylenders
- *Barely Getting By* – CIB pre-budget submission and debt-related issues
- *Left Behind in the Cold* - Fuel poverty research

Abhaile – Mortgage Arrears Support Scheme

Launched in 2016, Abhaile is a State-funded service to help homeowners find a resolution to their home mortgage arrears. It provides free financial and legal advice and help from experts, accessed through MABS. Abhaile aims to help mortgage holders in long-term arrears to find the best solutions and stay, wherever possible, in their own homes.

Abhaile is an umbrella brand, providing a one-stop-shop to a range of services. These include financial advice from a MABS dedicated mortgage arrears (DMA) adviser (see below) or personal insolvency practitioner (PIP). Also available are legal advice and support from a duty solicitor and MABS court mentors (who attend possession hearings at court); a consultation solicitor service; and Personal Insolvency Arrangement (PIA) reviews, also known as Section 115A reviews.

Abhaile is jointly coordinated and funded by the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). Funding from the DEASP is administered through CIB, which holds the governance and communications remit for the scheme. MABS, the Insolvency Service of Ireland, the Legal Aid Board and CIB work together to implement the Abhaile scheme.

Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) adviser service

The Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) adviser service aims to help borrowers cope with mortgage arrears by providing

free, independent, expert advice and support tailored to meet individual circumstances. The DMA service is part of Abhaile.

By the end of 2018, DMA advisers had provided advice and assistance to 5,478 borrowers in late-stage mortgage arrears. With the advisers' help, almost a quarter of these borrowers had succeeded in resolving their housing problems. The solutions negotiated included alternative repayment arrangements, interest-rate reductions, mortgage-to-rent schemes and lump-sum settlement.

Court Mentoring Service

There are 31 County Registrar courts across Ireland. MABS staff attend County Registrar courts as part of the Abhaile scheme, to support borrowers at possession hearings. Typically, two MABS staff attend: one outside to meet and discuss with clients, and one in attendance at the court to observe proceedings, take note of referrals by the registrar, support clients and answer any questions if directed by the registrar. The court mentors take note of all possession orders listed and their outcomes. The service has been very positively received.

Abhaile communications

Building on the 2017 national awareness and information campaigns, the objective for 2018 was to support the national advertising campaigns by getting out into the community to raise awareness of Abhaile.




HELPLINE
calls received
26,012



Organic reach
on **FACEBOOK**
197,880



Visits to the MABS website
117,131

90% 
of **PEOPLE**
who engaged stayed
in their home
(PIP and DMA Average)

Communications and
outcome statistics for
Abhaile in **2018**

ABHAILE

FREE MORTGAGE ARREARS SUPPORT

1.2 
MILLION
Impressions per month
from GP/CLINIC
partnerships

OUT OF HOME
advertising -
seen by over
3 MILLION
PEOPLE 



Radio advertising -
heard by over
9 MILLION
PEOPLE



YouTube
442,565
VIEWS

Locally organised events are an effective way to meet and talk with people in the community. They provide an opportunity to obtain valuable market insights, which have helped to shape our campaigns.

The theme of 'struggling with mortgage arrears' in the spring of 2018 evolved during the autumn to a message that promoted aid and advice about loan sell-off to funds. This focus reflected the national conversation at the time.

Abhaile engaged in sponsored digital partnerships with trusted news outlets to spread information online, including advice pieces and interviews with Abhaile experts.

Throughout 2018, Abhaile continued to use a combination of national and local radio, digital and social media, outdoor posters and PR to communicate the message to people in arrears that free mortgage arrears support is always available.

Abhaile ran radio campaigns throughout the year due to the large audience and geographical reach of radio. Outdoor posters and digital displays were rolled out nationally to attract people's attention as they went about their daily routine. Additionally, print ads were placed in selected publications.

'Call MABS' is the primary call to action of the awareness campaign. Over the year the MABS Helpline recorded 26,292 calls, an increase in calls of 6.6% compared to 2017. The secondary call to action is 'visit mabs.ie', and the website received 141,043 visits, an increase of 57% compared to 2017.

By the end of 2018, DMA advisers had provided advice and assistance to 5,478 borrowers in late-stage mortgage arrears.

National Traveller MABS

National Traveller MABS (NTMABS) highlights issues of over-indebtedness and exclusion from financial institutions among Irish Travellers and responds through its research and policy work.

NTMABS establishes ways for the Traveller community to access legal and affordable credit, and money management advice, and builds capacity within the community through education. NTMABS supports both MABS and the Traveller community to ensure Travellers can easily access the service.

In 2018, NTMABS carried out extensive research into issues that affect the Traveller community.

The Implications of Financial Exclusion for Health and Wellbeing

NTMABS submitted a report on The Implications of Financial Exclusion for Health and Wellbeing to Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre for inclusion in the Traveller Health Strategy. Travellers experience multiple forms of financial exclusion which can impact on mental and physical health. Lack of access to culturally appropriate affordable accommodation, fuel and energy poverty and lack of access to basic financial services combine to create multiple forms of financial and social exclusion.

Review of Schemes of Grants and Loans for the Purchase of Caravans by Travellers

A review of the Scheme of Grants and Loans for the purchase of caravans by Travellers was undertaken by the Housing Agency on behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. Research in 2015 showed that only 36% of local authorities were providing loans, 7% on a case by case bases and 57% had stopped providing loans at all.

NTMABS's response noted that 90% of stakeholders who made submissions agreed that the Caravan Loan Scheme is still relevant in the context of current Traveller accommodation policy. Those most in need were young families with children, with a history of living in mobile accommodation, seeking to live close to their families. In many cases families did not qualify either because they did not meet the financial criteria or because they are not official tenants.

The findings concur with NTMABS experience of travellers engaging with their service and through other stakeholder feedback. Travellers are unable to access affordable social housing and some are unable to secure a caravan loan as they lack to financial capacity to make repayments. NTMABS state that the housing needs of this group must be met in a way that is affordable. The lack of provision has led to some travellers being put into private rented accommodation, but discrimination against them can lead to them being made homeless.



Pictured at the launch of *'Left Behind in the Cold'* are from left: Fr. Bill Toner, founding member of the Dublin 10 & 20 MABS, Dr Stuart Stamp, Report Author and Annette McMahon, Money Adviser and co-author.

Cost of accommodation for Travellers

NTMABS hosted a seminar on in June 2018 to develop and advance the recommendations from their study into the cost of mobile home and trailer accommodation for Travellers.

This small scale study was undertaken to identify the typical cost of installing a mobile home or trailer for use as a permanent residence for a Traveller family. The study concluded that the current situation where Travellers must finance their own mobiles

has implications in terms of over indebtedness and fuel poverty. It also concluded that most Travellers cannot afford to purchase mobile homes or trailers that are of residential standard. NTMABS is continuing to work with CIB on developing proposals to progress the accommodation needs of Travellers.

NTMABS is also carrying out research into fuel poverty following preliminary research carried out by Dublin 10 & 20 MABS. Data collection was undertaken in November and it is expected that the research will be completed in 2019.

National Advocacy Service (NAS)

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) provides an independent, confidential and free representative advocacy service that works exclusively for each person using the service, and adheres to the highest professional standards.

NAS ensures that when life decisions are made, due consideration is given to the will and preference of people with disabilities, and enables them to protect their rights.

NAS has a national office and operates across four regions: Greater Dublin, North-East and Midlands, Southern, and Western.

Service statistics

In 2018, 3,025 people contacted the National Advocacy Service. NAS provided full representative advocacy casework to 916 people, this included 406 new cases in addition to 510 cases that were open at the start of 2018.



Pictured at the launch of the NAS Annual Report and Strategic Plan 2018-2021 were from left: Joanne O'Riordan, journalist and disability rights campaigner, PJ Harrington, former NAS client, Louise Loughlin, NAS National Manager, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty TD and Angela Black, Chief Executive.



Disability rights campaigner, Joanne O'Riordan talks about empowerment at the launch of the NAS Annual Report and Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

A further 2,619 people received other forms of advocacy support or information, including support with self-advocacy and advice on getting additional services.

Types of disability among people accessing NAS services in 2018	
Intellectual disability	45%
Physical disability	31%
Mental health	24%
Learning disability	17%
Autistic spectrum	12%
Sensory disability	8%
Acquired brain injury	8%

Types of assistance needed	
Housing	50%
Health	23%
Justice	13%
Parenting with a disability	8%
Birth, family and relationships	7%
Money and tax	4%
Social welfare	6%
Education	3%

Citizens Information Services (CISs) and NAS work in collaboration across the country to provide information and advocacy support to people with disabilities. CISs refer individuals to NAS when they meet its specific remit to provide representative advocacy to people with disabilities in particularly vulnerable situations. NAS also directs enquiries to Citizens Information, particularly for social welfare information and support.

Funding and staffing

The CIB budget allocation for NAS in 2018 was €3,239,009. NAS staff in 2018 consisted of one national manager, one corporate services manager, one human resource executive, one policy and communications officer, one national-office administrator, four regional managers, eight (whole-time equivalent) senior advocates, 28 (whole-time equivalent) advocates and four

regional administrators. In addition, CIB sanctioned two temporary advocacy project officer positions.

Patient safety advocacy service

In December 2018, the Minister for Health announced NAS had been awarded a contract for a new, independent Patient Safety Advocacy Service. This service will support people wishing to make a complaint about their experience of the public health service, and will support patients affected by a patient safety incident.

In 2018, NAS received an income of €197,100 directly from the Department of Health for the development and implementation of the Patient Safety Advocacy Service in 2019. This service is expected to become operational in the second half of 2019. It will focus initially on the public acute hospital sector. NAS will be recruiting staff for this service during 2019.



“The advocacy support meant my voice was heard and my wishes were taken into account and led to a special package of support being put in place.”

Feedback from NAS customer

Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)

The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) supports high quality interpretation services to ensure Deaf people can access public and social services and participate in Irish society as full and equal citizens.

SLIS provides the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) and facilitates and refers requests for Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters.

IRIS improves access to information, entitlements and rights by providing remote access to an ISL interpreter via video link from the SLIS office.

SLIS has been allocated multi-annual funding (administered by CIB) under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS), published in July 2017. The NDIS 2017-2021 sets out what the DEASP and the Department of Justice and Equality can do to develop and implement key ISL objectives including:

- Extending the hours of the Irish Sign Language (ISL) remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends (this objective was achieved in 2018)
- Resourcing SLIS to increase the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf interpreters, to put a quality assurance and registration scheme for interpreters in place, and to provide ongoing professional training and development
- Supporting legislation to ensure that all public bodies provide ISL users with free interpretation when using their statutory services

SLIS governance, finance and staffing

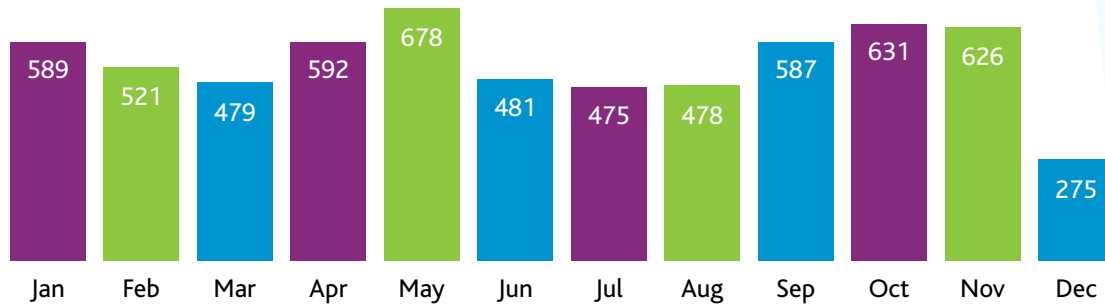
SLIS is a limited company with charitable status and is managed by a board of directors comprising representatives of key national stakeholders.

CIB is the main funder of SLIS. Total income for SLIS in 2018 was approximately €770,000. The SLIS funding allocation from CIB in 2018 comprised €348,933 for core activities and €327,000 for NDIS projects. SLIS also received a very small income from the provision of interpreting services to the private sector (€6,203). SLIS received additional funding of approximately €90,000 from the HSE in respect of the assignment of ISL interpreters to the pilot GP/primary care access scheme. In 2018, SLIS operated with one manager, one finance officer, two whole-time equivalent administrators, and 3.5 whole-time equivalent IRIS remote interpreters. In addition, it recruited a quality development officer under the NDIS, who started employment in January.

Developments in 2018

For SLIS, 2018 was the first full year of developing projects and processes under the NDIS. During the year, it increased its IRIS staffing and operating hours. It opens Monday to Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 10am-2pm, and Sunday 10am-12 noon.

Monthly uses of IRIS in 2018



In 2018, IRIS provided 6,412 interpreting assignments, an increase of approximately 60% on 2017. The areas for interpreting included medical, public service and education. IRIS also made significant progress in the other areas identified under the NDIS, notably the development of a strategic framework to increase the availability and quality of sign language interpreting in Ireland.

In addition to progressing projects under NDIS, SLIS continued its work in core areas, which included:

- The ongoing development and provision of IRIS to meet the needs of the Deaf community
- Promoting and advocating for the right to quality sign language interpreting services
- Meeting social interpreting needs
- Working with stakeholders to develop an emergency response service

With the HSE, SLIS also continued a successful pilot project to provide face-to-face interpreting for Deaf people with medical cards who seek access to GPs or other primary care.

Irish Sign Language Act 2017

The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 was signed into law in December 2017. The Act recognises Irish Sign Language (ISL) as a native and independent language and will improve access to public services, legal proceedings, education, interpretation services and television programming.

Under the Act, public bodies will be required to prepare and implement ISL action plans and provide free ISL interpretation to people using or seeking access to statutory entitlements and services. The Act must come into operation no later than three years after it was passed, and will have significant implications for SLIS.

The SLIS Board of Directors intends to produce a new strategic plan by the end of 2019. The new plan will reflect the significantly changed perspective of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021.



"Very relieved and optimistic for the future. Received wonderful help from the staff at my local MABS. I am so grateful."

Feedback from MABS customer

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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 (0761 07 4000) 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. You can find our Customer Service Action Plan on our website, citizensinformationboard.ie.

We are committed to:

1. Clear, comprehensive and accurate information	We will provide clear and detailed information about public and social services to help you identify your needs and access your entitlements.
2. Prompt, courteous and efficient responses	We will be responsive to your needs and we will deliver our services sensitively and efficiently.
3. Equality and diversity	We will respect diversity and ensure your right to equal treatment.
4. Choice	We will plan and deliver our services so you can access them in the way that suits you best.
5. Access	We will ensure that all our services and offices are fully accessible. Contact our Access Officer at accessofficer@ciboard.ie .
6. Official languages	We will provide our services through English, Irish and bilingually where required.
7. Consultation and evaluation	We will consult with you to establish your needs when developing, delivering and evaluating our services.
8. Internal customers	We will support our staff to ensure that they provide an excellent service to one another and to you.
9. Co-ordination	We will work closely with other organisations to deliver citizen-focused public services.
10. Appeals	We will maintain an accessible and transparent appeal and review system where appropriate.
11. Comments and complaints	We want to provide the best service possible to you and welcome all comments on our services. Contact our Customer Services Officer on commentsandcomplaints@ciboard.ie .

Appendix 2:

Board members in 2018

The following people served on the Board of CIB in 2018:

- Ita Mangan (Chairperson)
- Eilis Barry (Appointed on 22/10/2018 replacing Noeline Blackwell's term)
- Noeline Blackwell (resigned on 26/02/2018)
- James Clarke
- Mary Doyle (Appointed on 22/10/2018 replacing Eugene McErlean's term)
- Tim Duggan
- Josephine Henry
- Mary Higgins
- Tina Leonard
- Joanne McCarthy
- Eugene McErlean (resigned on 26/02/2018)
- Niall Mulligan
- Cearbhall O Meadhra
- Ian Power
- John Saunders
- Sean Sheridan
- Nicola Walshe

A list of current Board members can be found on the CIB website, citizensinformationboard.ie.

Appendix 3:

Service teams and structure

To carry out its functions, the Citizens Information Board (CIB) organises its work under the following four pillars:

1. Corporate Services
2. Service Development and Support – Citizens Information and Advocacy
3. Service Development and Support – MABS
4. Information, Research and Policy

Information, Research and Policy is currently split across the two Service Development and Support areas while restructuring is taking place. This structure will become operational in 2019.

Citizens Information, Advocacy and Social Policy

Citizens Information Service Delivery

The Citizens Information (Service Delivery) team promotes and supports continuous improvement in the quality and reach of essential frontline Citizens Information services. It provides a range of critical supports (including management, quality, training and organisational development supports) and substantial policy/procedural advice to the nationwide network of Citizens Information offices and the national Citizens Information Phone Service. The team also continuously monitors and reports on service development and delivery, and allocates and monitors funding (operational grants) to the frontline services.

Advocacy

The Advocacy team in CIB is responsible for supporting, funding, monitoring, reporting on and championing the provision of frontline advocacy services to individuals, in particular those with a disability. These frontline advocacy services are delivered through the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS) and the network of Citizens Information Services (CISs). The frontline advocacy provided assists people in identifying and understanding their needs and options and in securing their entitlements to social services.

The Advocacy team works in close collaboration with other teams in CIB – in particular Service Delivery, Operations, Finance and Social Policy. The team also develops advocacy

standards, policies and resources, in collaboration with CIS personnel. Additionally, the Advocacy Team supports funds, monitors and reports on the work and development of the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS); this currently involves the progression of a range of critical projects under the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, intended to enhance service access for, and tackle the marginalisation of the Deaf community.

Social Policy and Research

The Social Policy and Research team is responsible for developing CIB's social policy feedback role and undertaking research on models of information, advice and advocacy provision and on the information needs of service users. The team collects and analyses information and data on social policy matters and the administration of social services from delivery services, develops information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services, highlights issues that are of concern to users of those services to policy makers, prepares evidence-based reports and contributes to public policy formulation by responding to policy consultations and preparing submissions.

MABS, Information Resources and eLearning

MABS Service Delivery

The MABS Service Delivery team is responsible for co-ordinating and supporting the eight Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) regional companies. The Service Delivery team resource and support MABS to ensure it can deliver high quality services to the public and to ensure that those services are constantly developing and improving to respond to public need. We work to develop and support new services and projects with MABS such as the Dedicated Mortgage Arrears service, Approved Intermediary service and the Chartered Accountant Voluntary Advice clinics (CAVA). The MABS Service Delivery team is also the key point for communication to and from MABS companies and addresses obstacles to service delivery including issues relating to ICT, staffing, finance and premises in cooperation with Operations and ICT Teams.

Information Resources

The Information Resources team is responsible for the Citizens Information websites – citizensinformation.ie and keepingyourhome.ie along with CIB's information publications (see page 24). The Information Resources team is also responsible for CIB's corporate website – citizensinformationboard.ie and the assistireland.ie website.

ELearning

The CIB eLearning Team is responsible for developing online courses and resources to support the training needs of staff and volunteers, particularly in the Citizens Information Services. The team works with key stakeholders to identify priority learning needs. These are then developed into online courses containing interactive lessons, videos, case studies and assessments. Courses are available online through CIB's dedicated learning management system and can be accessed on any device with Internet access.

Corporate Services

HR

The HR team supports the staff of CIB, including in areas such as recruitment, induction and training. The team also assists in certain governance areas such as Freedom of Information. The HR team works closely with the Operations team, which is responsible for supporting the delivery services on HR and governance matters.

Finance and Administration

The Finance and Administration team is responsible for finance matters, audits, risk and administration for CIB and the procedures for delivery services. CIB ensures that proper financial controls and reporting procedures are followed by delivery services – which ensures that value for money is delivered to the taxpayer.

ICT

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team is responsible for the delivery of modern ICT supports to CIB and the delivery services. This involves the development and maintenance of networks and infrastructure as well as the provision of hardware and applications to more than 1,800 staff at 200 locations.

PR and Promotions

A PR and Promotions Executive promotes awareness of the Citizens Information Board and its main service brands of Citizens Information and MABS. In 2018, the PR Executive also provided PR support to the Abhaile project team and the Restructuring team.

Abhaile

The Abhaile communications team is responsible for delivering sustained communications and information campaigns aimed at long-term mortgage arrears borrowers. The goal is to encourage engagement with the State's mortgage arrears supports and ultimately contribute to positive solutions for those homeowners in the longest mortgage arrears. Abhaile is jointly coordinated and funded by the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. MABS, the Insolvency Service of Ireland, the Legal Aid Board and the Citizens Information Board work together to provide the Abhaile services (see page 46).

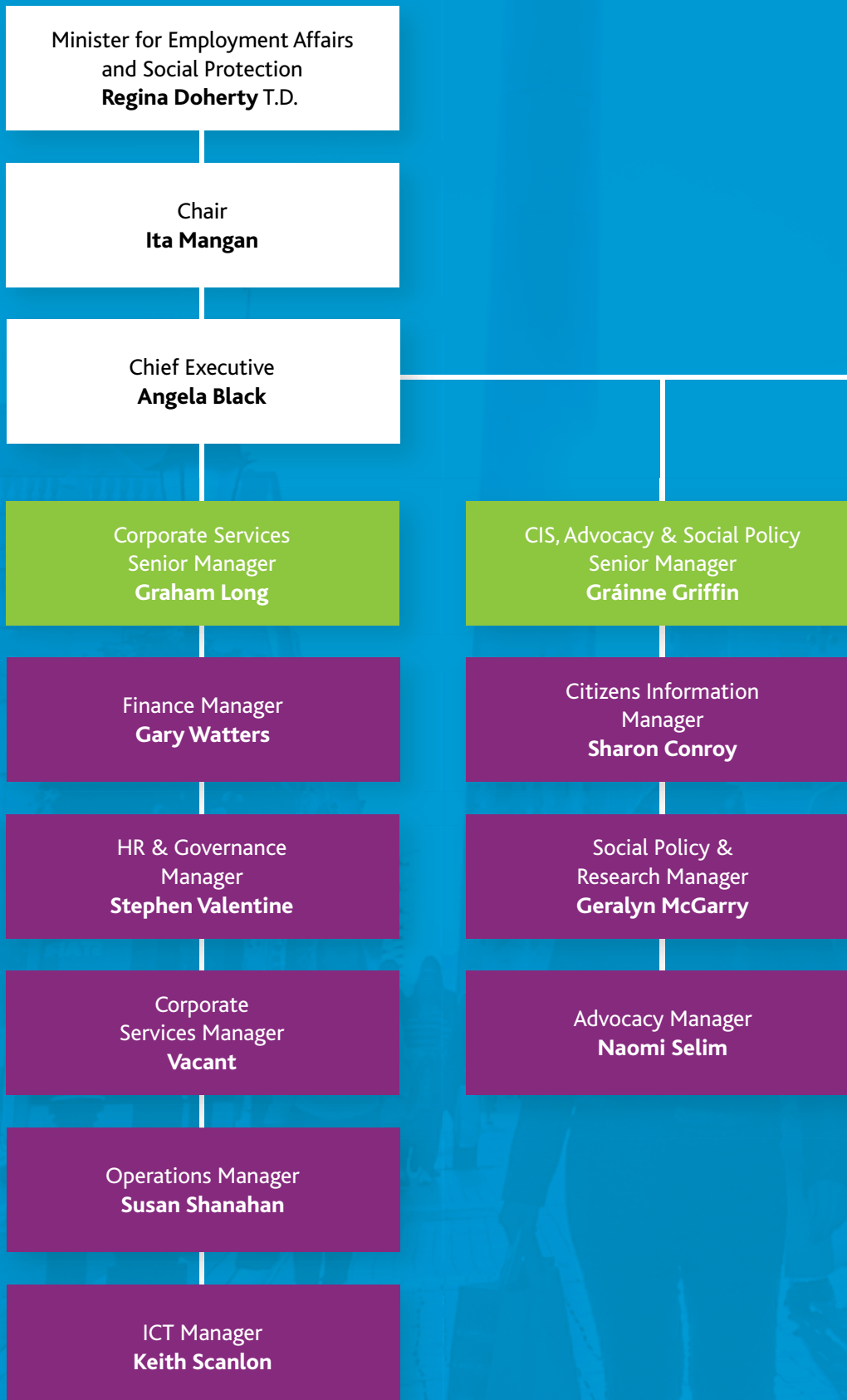
Operations

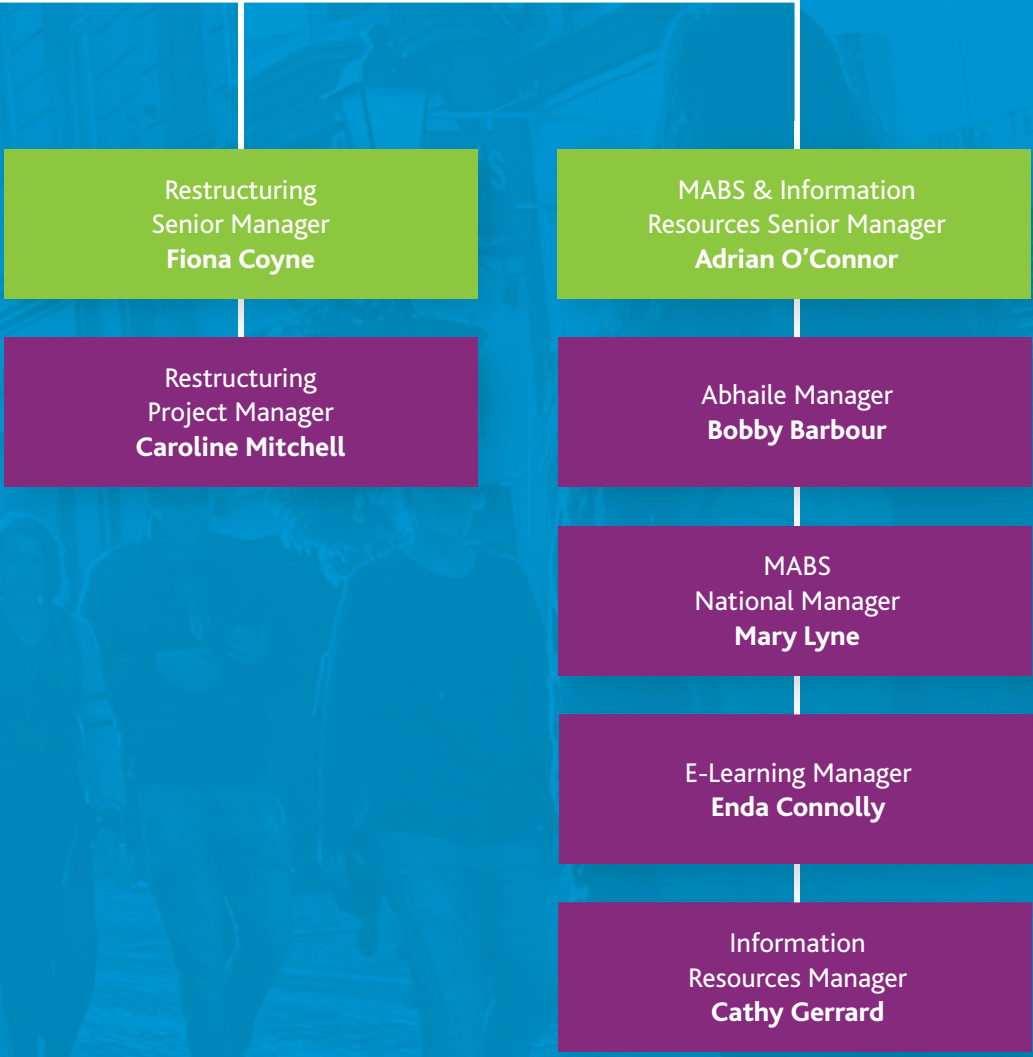
The Operations team is responsible for supporting and monitoring the delivery services in relation to HR, finance, governance and premises. This is achieved through the provision of policies, guidelines, procedures and resources to maintain best practice and ensure legislative compliance. The team is also responsible for a number of areas in CIB, including data protection, Health and Safety, and property development and management.

Restructuring

The Restructuring team worked on the restructuring of CIS and MABS services from 93 companies to 16 regional companies in 2018 (see page 15). The team ensured that all staff in the 93 companies were successfully transferred to the new companies. No services were closed as a result of the restructuring. The changes were at board level only. A new post of Regional manager was created for each of the 16 companies.

Appendix 4: Organisation chart





Appendix 5:

Energy usage in 2018

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, lighting and ICT account for the main energy usage in CIB. In 2018, CIB consumed 361,862 kWh of electricity and 150,281 kWh of gas. CO₂ emissions were 159,303 kgCO₂, representing a 6.2% increase on 2017.

The SEAI confirm CIB's overall performance at end 2017 in the following terms:

- Savings are 31.3% on baseline
- Energy consumption is 19.8% lower than baseline
- CIB is the 73rd best performer out of 2128 public bodies

Among office-based organisations:

- CIB is the third best performer in 119

CIB's energy performance was impacted in 2018 by increased leasehold floor area. CIB plans to improve energy performance in 2019 by implementation of an energy management plan, incorporating:

- Implementing an energy awareness programme
- Incurring expenditure on energy saving installations

Appendix 6:

Protected Disclosures Act

CIB is committed to fostering an appropriate environment for addressing concerns relating to potential irregularities and or wrongdoing with respect to financial reporting and other matters in the workplace. CIB is also committed to providing the necessary support and assurances for staff that raise genuine concerns. The Act requires

public bodies to establish and maintain procedures for dealing with protected disclosures. CIB has a robust procedure in place in line with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

No submissions were made to CIB under the Protected Disclosures Act during 2018.

Appendix 7: Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. This is a legal obligation, called the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014). Section 42 states that:

"A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination,
2. Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
3. Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services."

Equality of access to information, advice and advocacy is core to the services the Citizens Information Board (CIB)

provides and funds. We aim to ensure equality of access through services provided in person, by phone and online, as well as through the Live Advisor and the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS). The website citizensinformation.ie has been designed to achieve a high level of accessibility.

CIB also has a number of robust policies and procedures in place to promote equality and human rights and to support our staff. CIB's Staff Resource Pack contains detailed policies and procedures on employee relations including policies relating to dignity and respect in the workplace, learning and development, bullying and harassment, performance, as well as safety, health and welfare.

We support staff to maintain good physical and mental health by providing our dedicated Employee Assistance programme. This provides support for employees who may be suffering from illness, as well as professional support for staff wishing to progress in their career.

Appendix 8: Citizens Information Board main offices

George's Quay House
43 Townsend Street
Dublin 2
D02 VK65
Telephone: 0761 07 9000

1st Floor Riverstone House
Henry Street
Limerick
V94 3T28

101 North Main Street
Cork
T12 AKA6

4th Floor
Dockgate
Merchants Road
Galway
H91 EY10

4 The Parade
Kilkenny
R95 VO52

Appendix 9: Grants in 2018

Services	Total €
Citizens Information Services	
Ballyfermot	€86,667
Blanchardstown	€180,000
Carlow	€144,700
Cavan	€222,924
Clare	€286,708
Clondalkin	€132,426
Cork City North	€67,667
Cork City South	€156,391
Donegal	€492,375
Dublin City Centre	€462,875
Dublin City North Bay (KARE)	€92,500
Dublin 12 & 6W (Crumlin)	€72,333
Dublin 8 & Bluebell	€80,833
Dublin North West (Finglas)	€284,550
Dublin Northside	€191,875
Dublin 2, 4, 6	€86,133
Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown	€86,667
Fingal (North County)	€245,372
Galway	€336,997
Kerry	€130,036
Kilkenny	€142,625
Laois	€197,175
Leitrim	€181,800
Limerick	€247,500

This table shows all grants paid in 2018 to all CIB-funded services. In 2019, the number of CIS and MABS services reduced to 16 following restructuring of the services in 2018.

Services	Total €
Citizens Information Services	
Longford	€107,100
Louth	€120,600
Mayo	€291,024
Meath	€123,667
Monaghan	€187,500
North & East Cork County	€108,333
North Kildare	€72,000
Offaly	€284,720
Roscommon	€203,600
Sligo	€207,075
South Kildare	€83,333
Tallaght	€106,800
Tipperary	€377,250
Waterford	€247,500
West Cork County	€132,804
Westmeath	€112,377
Wexford	€283,241
Wicklow	€305,337
Dublin South	€1,405,124
Dublin North	€509,715
South Leinster	€690,728
North Leinster	€1,322,777
North Connacht & Ulster	€440,104
South Connacht	€311,036
North Munster	€420,046
South Munster	€1,273,286
Total	€14,336,206

Services	Total €
MABS	
MABS ND	€2,241,835
Arklow	€222,941
Athlone	€55,000
Ballymun	€270,250
Blanchardstown	€282,750
Bray	€301,020
Carlow	€293,164
Cavan	€238,118
Charleville	€66,667
Clare	€255,220
Clondalkin	€124,833
Cork	€198,928
Drogheda	€87,077
Dublin 10 & 20	€126,667
Dublin 12 Area	€96,667
Dublin North City	€215,100
Dublin North East	€210,000
Dublin South East	€96,667
Dun Laoghaire	€91,000
Dundalk / Oriel	€76,333
Dundrum / Rathfarnham	€125,527
Fingal (North County)	€299,073
Finglas / Cabra	€281,926
Kerry	€199,048
Kildare	€176,747
Kilkenny	€210,000
Laois	€189,834
Leitrim	€198,915
Liffey South West	€125,667
Limerick	€327,314

Services	Total €
MABS	
Longford	€87,391
Meath	€132,531
Monaghan	€201,442
Mullingar	€70,717
National Traveller MABS	€308,576
North Cork	€105,100
North Donegal	€382,080
North Galway	€229,267
North Mayo	€161,625
North Tipperary	€250,041
Offaly	€167,205
Roscommon	€174,309
Sligo	€298,253
South Donegal	€122,212
South Galway	€416,069
South Mayo	€261,764
South Tipperary	€343,818
Tallaght	€161,241
Waterford	€479,060
West Cork	€93,667
West Donegal	€98,400
West Waterford	€122,650
Wexford	€220,000
Dublin North	€540,636
Dublin South	€2,001,101
South Leinster	€553,712
North Leinster	€1,432,073
North Connacht & Ulster	€528,307
South Connacht	€451,428
North Munster	€611,608

Services	Total €
MABS	
South Munster	€1,383,536
Total	€20,074,107

National	
CIPS	€1,312,338
NACIS	€27,226
SLIS	€466,585
NAS	€3,010,038

Supports	
Threshold	€47,000
Free Legal Advice (FLAC)	€146,680
Treoir	€34,400
Immigrant Council of Ireland	€68,000
Total	€296,080



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. It is responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and provides advocacy services for people with disabilities.

Head Office

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

