



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

20
22

Annual Report

Tuarascáil Bhliantuil

information | advice | advocacy



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

“

Against a backdrop of change, it is more important than ever that CIB adapts to ensure that the services we fund and provide are accessible, consistent, relevant, and of the highest quality.

Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive Officer

20
22

Contents

Chair Introduction	4
CEO Foreword	5
1. About the Citizens Information Board	6
Who We Are	7
Our Strategy	8
Our Values	10
Our Mandate	11
Board Members	12
Periodic Critical Review	13
Internal Reorganisation	13
Organisational Chart	16
Public Sector Equality and Human Rights	17
Protected Disclosures 2022	17
2. Key Achievements	18
Compliance and Reporting Division	19
Standards and Development Division	24
Corporate Services Division	30
ICT, Digital and Data Division	31
3. Events	39
4. Appendices	42
Appendix 1: Customer Service Charter	43
Appendix 2: Energy Consumption	44
Appendix 3: Funding Provided to Service Delivery Companies	45

Chair Introduction

Catherine Heaney, Chair



I am honoured to present the Citizens Information Board's annual report for 2022. When I started in my role as Chair in July 2021, COVID-19 restrictions were still part of our daily lives and the services that could be offered face-to-face were limited. In fact, it was only in June of last year that the Board was in a position to meet again in person. It was a great relief to see the return to normality last year, both within CIB and the wider network of Service Delivery Companies.

In July 2022, the five-yearly Periodic Critical Review (PCR) of CIB was published by the Department of Social Protection. The report concludes that CIB continues to provide a needed role in Irish society and is fulfilling its statutory mandate. The report makes a range of recommendations for CIB's development, including in relation to standards and the demonstration of value through outcomes. I am pleased that CIB's reorganisation last year reflects these areas of focus, as does CIB's new strategy.

In August and September, CIB received considerable feedback from volunteers in the Citizens Information Services (CIS), both directly and through the media. In response, the Board commissioned a report on volunteering in the CIS, which was published in April 2023. The report charts a way forward for the continued re-integration of volunteers in the CIS and is very much welcomed by the Board.

September also saw the appointment of five new colleagues on the Board, as well as the re-appointment of a sixth colleague. With these appointments, the Board could look to mirror the executive structure put in place during the reorganisation by establishing three new committees to oversee areas as diverse as standards and development, compliance and reporting, and ICT, digital and data.

Looking ahead, I believe CIB is now well placed to deliver on its new strategy over the next three years. Our strategy makes some significant changes for CIB, including to the organisation's values, with sustainability – in its broadest sense – to be included as a value. This will be an important lens for the Board in its decision-making, helping to ensure that CIB-funded services are resilient and fit-for-purpose in the long-term.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and hard work during a period of considerable change. My particular thanks go to Tim Duggan, Joan O'Connor, Mary Higgins and Nicola Walshe, whose terms on the Board came to an end in the course of 2022. I would also like to thank the Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, for her support and assistance throughout the year, as well as the support and assistance of the staff of the Department of Social Protection. CIB works closely with twenty-two companies to deliver frontline services to members of the public, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Boards of Directors, staff and volunteers of the Citizens Information Services, the Money Advice and Budgeting Services, the Citizens Information Phone Service, National Traveller MABS, MABS Support, the National Advocacy Service, the Sign Language Interpreting Service and the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters. Finally, my thanks go to the staff of the Citizens Information Board, who continue to produce high-quality work and to demonstrate great commitment to CIB.

Catherine Heaney, Chair

CEO Foreword

Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive Officer



2022 was a pivotal year for CIB as we closed out our previous strategy and began to prepare for the next strategy cycle. In June, four new divisions were established, allowing for a separation between CIB's compliance and development functions. For many CIB staff members, this reorganisation involved considerable change, and I would like to commend the staff for the positive way in which they have approached their new roles and responsibilities.

Throughout the summer of last year a series of consultations were held with CIB staff, Board members, Service Delivery Companies and with members of the public. These consultations were aimed at establishing CIB's new strategic objectives and provided an excellent foundation for the draft strategy that has now been sent for approval. In that strategy, a distinct emphasis is placed on the areas of accessibility, communications, oversight, metrics, and technology. I look forward to working with internal and external stakeholders to achieve the objectives set out in the draft strategy.

2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the first Money Advice and Budgeting Services. This remarkable milestone was celebrated with a conference in Dublin Castle last September at which many clients of MABS spoke movingly of their experience of debt. For me, it was a day that confirmed the profound impact our funded companies can have on people's lives, as well as underlining the commitment of the people who work for, or are involved in, those companies.

Last year also saw the re-opening of offices in CIB and in the funded network of companies, with a very welcome return to face-to-face services evident in the statistics in this annual report. During 2022, CIB operated on the basis of a pilot blended working policy. Following extensive engagement with staff, this pilot policy has now been formalised, with nearly all staff members opting to spend part of their week working from home. I am delighted that this initiative has been so well received and that it will assist everyone in CIB with maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

I would like to thank the Board of CIB for their continued support and for their trust and guidance as we organise to deliver on our strategic objectives over the next three years. Against a backdrop of change, I believe it is more important than ever that CIB adapts to ensure that the services we fund and provide are accessible, consistent, relevant, and of the highest quality. Staff in CIB have shown great capacity to navigate change and I would like to thank the CIB staff for their continued dedication to achieving the best outcomes for members of the public.

Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive Officer

About the Citizens Information Board

Who We Are

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) provides independent information on public and social services directly to the public through the Citizens Information website (citizensinformation.ie), periodicals, and publications. CIB funds and supports 22 independent companies referred to as Service Delivery Companies (SDCs). These are:

Citizens Information Phone Service	National Advocacy Service
MABS Support	Sign Language Interpreting Service
National Traveller MABS	Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters
North Dublin MABS	North Dublin CIS
North Leinster MABS	North Leinster CIS
North Connacht and Ulster MABS	North Connacht and Ulster CIS
North Munster MABS	North Munster CIS
Dublin South MABS	Dublin South CIS
South Leinster MABS	South Leinster CIS
South Connacht MABS	South Connacht CIS
South Munster MABS	South Munster CIS

CIB's head office is in Dublin with offices in Cork, Kilkenny, Limerick and Galway.

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 raised by the users of the SDCs.

CIB supports the provision of information, advice, advocacy, money advice and budgeting assistance across a wide range of public and social services. These services are delivered in three different ways – online, by phone and in person.

In 2022, CIB received funding of €58,572,232 to provide and support information, advice, money advice and advocacy services. The Comptroller and Auditor General audits CIB's financial statements.

CIB will publish the 2022 annual financial statements on the CIB website (citizensinformationboard.ie) when available.

CIB employs 86 people who work under four organisational divisions:

Corporate Services

Standards and Development

Compliance and Reporting

ICT Digital and Data

Our Strategy

Strategic Plan 2019-2021: Delivering information, advice, money advice and advocacy services for our communities

The vision for this three-year plan is an Ireland where everyone is adequately equipped with the information and advice that allows them to realise their rights. The plan places particular emphasis on delivering this information and advice to the most vulnerable.

The strategy's dual objectives are to build on the restructuring of services over recent years and maximise the benefits of these investments to deliver greater quality and more accessible services for the public.

This strategy concluded in 2021 and the Minister's approval was sought to extend it to the end of 2022.

Throughout 2022 the Board of CIB sought to consult with stakeholders and audiences on priorities for the next three years, as well as to develop a plan that would set a broad course for the organisation over a number of strategy cycles. The 2023 - 2026 CIB strategy will be available on our website.

Information



Advice



Advocacy



Strategic Priorities



Strategic Priority 1 Enhancing service quality and availability

Achieving a consistently high standard through a modern, measurable framework of information, advice, money advice and advocacy services.



Strategic Priority 2 Service development and innovation

Identifying, promoting and implementing service development and innovation.



Strategic Priority 3 Consolidation and delivery

Building the capacity of the network of CIB services, including leadership and support, to consolidate and deliver the benefits of restructuring.



Our Values

- 

Available to all
We will offer independent, impartial, confidential and non-judgemental information, advice, money advice and advocacy in ways that are accessible to all.
- 

Responsiveness
We will always listen to people's views, reflect on what we learn and review our services to ensure 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 responds to people's needs.
- 

Confidentiality
We will respect and promote people's right to privacy.
- 

Focus on quality
We will continually improve our products, services and methods of working to meet the needs of all our stakeholders.
- 

Excellence
We will motivate our staff to deliver products and services that exceed objectives, needs and expectations.
- 

Leadership
We will offer supportive leadership and encourage innovation in our areas of expertise in a way that benefits everyone.
- 

Promotion of equality and human rights
We will promote equality and human rights in all we do.

Our Mandate

- 1**
To assist and support individuals, in particular those with disabilities, in identifying and understanding their needs and options


- 2**
To support the provision of, or directly provide, advocacy services for people with a disability


- 3**
To support the provision of advice on personal debt and money management through the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)


- 4**
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


- 5**
To ensure that individuals have access to accurate, comprehensive and clear information relating to social services


- 6**
To promote greater accessibility, coordination and public awareness of social services



Board Members



Catherine Heaney
Chair

Appointed 7 July 2021

Citizens Information Board members are appointed by the Minister for Social Protection. Members' terms are for a period of five years. The recruitment process for Board members is overseen by stateboards.ie.



Teresa Blake

Appointed
11 December 2020



Claire Byrne

Appointed
14 September 2022



Mary Doyle

Appointed
22 October 2018



Sarah Harte

Appointed
14 September 2022



Tina Leonard

Appointed
15 June 2016



Brid O'Donovan

Appointed
14 September 2022



Cearbhall O'Meadhra

Appointed
15 June 2016



Fiona Penollar

Appointed
14 September 2022



Ian Power

Appointed
15 June 2016



John Saunders

Appointed
15 June 2016



Seán Sheridan

Appointed
17 November 2015



Seamus Smith

Appointed
14 September 2022

Periodic Critical Review

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies requires that non-commercial public bodies be subject to a Periodic Critical Review (PCR) no later than every five-years. The PCR considers performance against the original mandate and the changing external environment to identify scope for improvement within CIB. The PCR process is also tasked with assessing the extent to which the governance structure of the public body and the Government department's oversight of the body is consistent with its legislative underpinning and is strongly aligned to the business needs of the body.

A PCR was undertaken by the Department of Social Protection in relation to CIB and the report can be downloaded from gov.ie

Internal Reorganisation

In 2022, CIB saw significant organisational changes. Led by recommendations from the Department of Social Protection's Periodic Critical Review (PCR), the Board oversaw the reorganisation of the teams within CIB. Recommendations from the PCR underpinned the need for CIB to place renewed emphasis on developing and implementing standards across services and ensuring greater compliance and reporting on identified metrics.

CIB now operates under four new divisions to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the public into the future.

The aim of this new structure is to enable CIB to operate with clear functional responsibilities with the Service Delivery Companies (SDCs). It will also ensure clearer channels of communication and an improved ability to evidence the effectiveness of SDCs.

Divisions



Compliance and Reporting

This division consists of three teams:



The Compliance and Reporting Division provides a strong oversight function within CIB. The teams within this division provide oversight of 22 Service Delivery Companies (SDCs) in relation to compliance with their Service Level Agreements with the Citizens Information Board. This includes governance, operational and financial compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

Corporate Services

This division consists of three teams:



The Corporate Services Division is responsible for the internal corporate governance functions of the CIB, including adherence to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and areas such as data protection, Freedom of Information and CIB's Irish language obligations.

Standards and Development

This division consists of three teams:



The Standards and Development Division develops, measures and monitors service standards for all 22 Service Delivery Companies and also provides training via an eLearning platform. The aim is to ensure that the public receive an easily accessible, high quality and consistent service by trained providers across all Service Delivery Companies. It will also support and monitor service developments.

ICT, Digital and Data

This division consists of three teams:



The ICT, Digital and Data Division brings together the technical, digital and data insight functions to enhance and deliver services to CIB, Service Delivery Companies and the public. The work of this division is informed by an increased focus on data dissemination and usage to demonstrate key trends and issues.

Organisational Chart



Public Sector Equality and Human Rights

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

CIB established a Public Sector Duty Working Group in 2022 with representatives from across the organisation. This group is conducting an initial assessment of human rights and equality issues that are relevant to CIB's functions and is developing an action plan in a number of different areas, to include specific Public Sector Duty training for staff members, the review of HR forms and materials, the promotion of awareness of human rights issues for staff members, the raising of awareness and understanding of forms of disabilities among staff members, as well as the promotion of awareness of human rights issues to staff members, Service Delivery Companies and the public.

Protected Disclosures in 2022

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

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014, as amended by the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022, requires public bodies to set up and maintain procedures for dealing with protected disclosures. CIB has robust procedures in place and its policy on protected disclosures is in line with the provisions of the Acts.

The Citizens Information Board received three reports that were described as protected disclosures in the course of 2022. Following assessment, two of these reports were not treated as protected disclosures. The third report was also addressed to one of CIB's Service Delivery Companies and CIB requested that funded company to follow up on the report in the first instance.

Key Achievements



Compliance and Reporting Division

The Compliance and Reporting Division was established in June 2022 following an internal reorganisation. The first half of the year saw services and staffing still impacted by COVID-19. This division has an advisory and supervisory role, with a focus on the following:

- Updating financial and operational controls that will provide protection from compliance risk.
- Monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of financial and operational controls.
- Monitoring relevant regulatory developments within the remit of the Compliance and Reporting Division.
- Provision of training in relation to regulatory developments.
- Providing marketing and reporting for the Abhaile scheme including the Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) programme.

The Head of Division prepares reports to Board of CIB's Compliance and Reporting Committee and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in relation to financial and operational compliance matters, as well as grant allocations, cash budget plans and quarterly financial returns for 22 Service Delivery Companies. The Head of Division and Abhaile Manager are also members of the Abhaile Joint Working Group.

Citizens Information Phone Service

The queries to the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) highlighted an increase in demand for information and advice about available supports:

135,046

total number of CIPS calls answered in 2022

2,386

total number of CIPS webchats (Live Advisor) answered in 2022

Citizens Information Services

394,400

calls

788,902

queries

32,912

queries about the Fuel Allowance in 2022, more than double the number of queries recorded in 2021

60% ↑

increase in demand for information on Supplementary Welfare Schemes

144%* ↑

increase in Additional Needs Payment enquiries compared with 2021

*Additional Needs Payment replaced and incorporated the exceptional needs payments during 2022.

Operational Compliance and Reporting Team

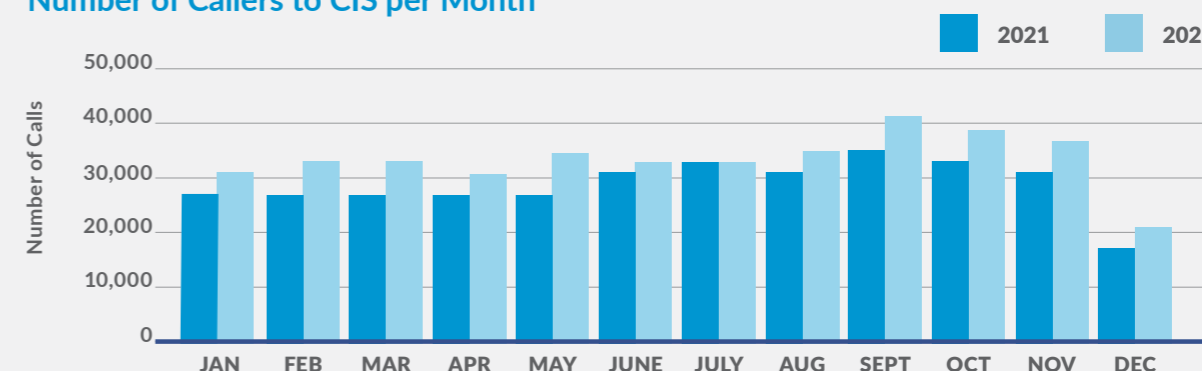
The Operational Compliance and Reporting team provide oversight and support to the Service Delivery Companies (SDCs) in relation to operational matters. The first half of 2022 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. SDCs reported an increase in activity in 2022 when compared with 2021 but were still below 2019 levels, which was the last full year of activity without service interruptions.

Citizen Information Service Caller Profile

The average number of callers per month for 2022 was 32,867, an increase from the average number for 2021 of 28,181. September had the highest number of callers (40,650).

“Demand for CIS services has experienced growth of 17% in calls and 14% in queries in 2022 compared to 2021.

Number of Callers to CIS per Month



The table below shows the split of in-person and telephone calls across the CIS network in 2021 and 2022. The number of calls to the services increased in 2022 to 394,400. Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a notable change in the way the public contacted the CIS, with in-person contact in services jumping from 11% of all contacts in 2021 to 42% in 2022.

Number of Calls

Year	In Person	Phone and Emails	Web Call Back	Total
2022	163,952	230,449	-	394,400
2021	38,841	262,482	36,844	338,167

The CIS network handled 788,902 queries, an increase of 94,982 (14%) compared with 2021. Two-thirds of these queries related to Social Welfare (47%), Housing (10%) and Health (7%).

Money Advice and Budgeting Service

CIB funds and supports eight regional Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) to assist members of the public with budgeting and debt matters. In 2022, MABS companies saw 16,115 new clients. In addition, the MABS Helpline, run by North Dublin MABS, received 26,772 calls.

Along with the regional MABS companies, CIB funds MABS Support and National Traveller MABS. MABS Support provides quality, training and social policy services to the MABS companies, while National Traveller MABS works to reduce poverty, discrimination and the financial exclusion of Travellers in Ireland.

In 2022, MABS Support undertook a number of new initiatives, including the development of resources for Global Money Week and the implementation of a new Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) Standard Financial Statement tool in accordance with changes required by the Central Bank. Among other activities, National Traveller MABS launched a new guide to the financial supports available for higher and further education.

Financial Compliance and Reporting Team

The Financial Compliance and Reporting team is responsible for validating budgeting proposals, cash budget plans and quarterly financial returns submitted by the SDC. The team is also responsible for monitoring and reporting on the SDC compliance with relevant regulatory and legislative requirements. The team prepares reports on financial and compliance matters for the Compliance and Reporting Committee and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

MABS and Abhaile Communications Team

Since its inception in 2016 up to December 2022, 21,709 households have been supported by financial advice under Abhaile.

MABS and Abhaile Communications team delivered three key campaigns in 2022:

- MABS launched the BOSS Christmas 2022 campaign (Budgeting, Online/Offline Shopping, Spending and Saving, Stretching) that earned an organic reach of 34,543 on Facebook and Instagram as well as 2,490 unique views to the BOSS MABS.ie webpage.
- MABS offices delivered financial awareness sessions to over 3,000 students as part of the annual Global Money Week campaign to raise awareness of access to high quality financial education.
- Two Abhaile awareness campaigns took place, one in February lasting four weeks, and another in August/September lasting six weeks.

“

The 91% growth in website traffic to MABS.ie blog pages demonstrates the value of its content in supporting people with money advice, budgeting and problem debt.



2,782

increase in new MABS clients (2022 vs 2021)



81%

increase in unique Whatsapp Chats (2022 vs 2021)



14%

increase in MABS Helpline Calls (2022 vs 2021)



19%

increase in visits to MABS.ie (2022 vs 2021)



12%

increase in Dedicated Mortgage Arrears (DMA) new cases (2022 vs 2021)



26,772

Total number of MABS Helpline calls in 2022, a 14% increase year on year



91%

increase in blog visits on MABS.ie (2022 vs 2021)



12%

increase in households supported by financial advice under Abhaile (2022 vs 2021)

Standards and Development Division

Standards and Development Team

This team led two groups involved in key pieces of research:

- The CIB-MABS Quality Assurance Programme Board, which commissioned a research report on Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement in MABS.
- The CIB-CIS Quality Assurance Group, which completed research on Perceptions of Quality in CISs.

“The team reviews existing quality standards to rework, rewrite and develop new and improved policies and procedures across CIB’s Service Delivery Companies.”

Service developments:

- Client improvements were piloted, including an Adobe e-Sign pilot enabling clients to complete essential forms safely online. This significantly reduced the time gap for signed data protection forms from an average of 21 days for the return of postal forms to a 1-hour turn around for forms issued electronically.
- The Citizens Information Services (CIS) formed part of the designated support hubs for people from Ukraine arriving in Ireland. Hubs in Dublin, Limerick and Cork provided information on a range of areas from the Temporary Protection Scheme to access to work, training, schools, childcare, medical care, trauma and counselling supports.
- In May, Fiona Coyne, CEO of the CIB, launched the [National Traveller MABS Financial Guide to College](#), which provides information about the financial supports available for Travellers considering further education.

Free Legal Advice Centres

CIS Information Officers have priority access to the Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) Information and Referral Line. CIS and FLAC sought to expand the provision of free legal advice through remote phone clinics available in seven regional CISs. In 2022 CIS staff made 1,049 appointments for CIS clients.

Review of Volunteering in the CIS

Following engagement with the services and volunteers, the Board of the Citizens Information Board (CIB) undertook a review of volunteering in the Citizens Information Services (CIS) in September 2022. BearingPoint was engaged in October to carry out this review by capturing views and experiences from all stakeholders, assessing the impact volunteering has on the CIS and considering the continued sustainability of the volunteer model. The scope of the review included exploring the role of the volunteer in the CIS and providing recommendations on the re-integration of volunteers to the CIS following the pandemic.

The review was conducted in consultation with CIS volunteers, staff and boards. The consultation involved a high level of engagement from CIS volunteers. CIS volunteers submitted more than 230 survey responses, while four focus groups were also held with volunteers in Cork, Dublin and online.

The shared aim of CIB, CIS staff, boards and volunteers is to ensure the public has access to trusted and accurate information, advice and advocacy. CIB will support the CIS companies to implement the recommendations made in the review. The review can be found on www.ciboard.ie

Advocacy Standards and Development Team

The Advocacy Standards and Development team develop standards and policies to ensure a consistent approach to advocacy across CIB's Service Delivery Companies, increase the capacity of services to deliver high quality advocacy services to the public and identify and address gaps in advocacy provision. In 2022, the team:

- Facilitated and supported the Citizens Information Services Advocacy Development Group (ADG) to drive and oversee the development of standardised advocacy resources across the CIS network.
- Distributed an internal advocacy newsletter across the CIS network. This newsletter communicates new developments and updates on social welfare, employment, housing and immigration.
- Supported the establishment of Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) as the CIB's 22nd Service Delivery Company.
- Worked with the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) on national standards and development areas.

Active Long Term CIS Advocacy Cases

Case Category	No. of Cases	% of Total Active Long Term Cases
Social Welfare	1,511	67
Employment	321	14
Housing	209	9
Immigration	75	3
Other	70	3
Consumer	49	2
Health	34	2
Education	9	0
Total	2,278	100

“

Formed in July 2022, this team reviewed advocacy quality standards to develop new and improved policies and procedures across the CIS Service Delivery Companies.

Sign Language Interpreting Service

The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) provides a range of services including remote interpreting through the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) and a referral service to assist clients to find the right interpreter for their needs. In 2022, SLIS completed 8,498 remote interpreting assignments.

Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters

The purpose of the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) is to establish and maintain a standards-based registration system for Irish Sign Language Interpreters. The registration system is referenced in the Irish Sign Language Act (2017).

In 2022, with the support of CIB and the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS), RISLI established itself as a fully independent organisation. Two full-time staff were recruited to maintain and oversee the register along with the voluntary Board and Registration Panel. RISLI secured a new office space in the Deaf Village Ireland, Cabra, Dublin 7.

RISLI has developed a Code of Conduct for Irish Sign Language interpreters and set qualification, training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) standards.

National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) provides a free and confidential advocacy service to adults with a disability, particularly those in vulnerable situations, isolated from their communities, who communicate differently or have limited formal or natural supports.

NAS works for the person with a disability on the principle that they make decisions about their own lives and must be listened to and consulted by families and service providers to access supports to live their lives and enjoy meaningful participation in family, work and leisure.



“

In 2022, there were 114 Irish Sign Language interpreters registered on the RISLI register.



National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS)

 **3,021**

NAS initial inquiries in 2022

NEW **1,022**

NAS new cases in 2022

 **1,577**

Active cases at the end of 2022

eLearning Team

The eLearning team is responsible for the development and delivery of online training for CIB and Service Delivery Companies. The team works with key stakeholders to identify training needs, which are then developed into online courses containing interactive lessons, videos, case studies and assessments. CIB's eLearning courses are available through a dedicated learning management system. In 2022 this team had many successes, including:

- 13 new courses added to the CIB online training library.
- 2,248 learners achieved certification through online assessments. The CIB online training pre-COVID-19 proved to be very successful. It allowed training to continue without disruption and is now aligned with staff and volunteer desire for flexible, on-demand learning.
- 134 induction courses completed for new CIS staff and volunteers.
- The CIB eLearning team was shortlisted as a finalist for the International Learning Technologies Awards in the category of 'Best learning technologies project - public & non-profit sector'.

“
In 2022, the eLearning Team awarded 2,248 certificates of course completion to learners.
”

Images of some of CIB's eLearning courses:



Corporate Services Division

Finance Team

The Finance team manages CIB's finance, procurement and risk functions, including production of the annual financial statements and the maintenance of the risk register. Some successes for this team in 2022 include:

- Progression of the eRisk system enabled risks to be better identified, captured and managed.
- Collaborated internally with the eLearning team to develop a training course that will improve the knowledge of procurement of all CIB staff. It will be launched in 2023 and a Service Delivery Company specific course will be developed and rolled out later in the year.

Corporate Services Team

The Corporate Services team provides a range of supports to the organisation. In 2022:

- The Corporate Services team rolled out a new records management system called eDocs. This is a document and records management system offered by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) under the 'Build to Share' programme. The system provides functionality to comply with our data protection policy and best practice in records management.
- The CIB also availed of the OGCIO's eFOI system that supports us in complying with requests made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. 31 FOI requests were responded to in 2022.
- A new bite size practical eLearning course on GDPR was developed to assist staff to understand their data protection responsibilities.

Human Resources (HR) Team

In 2022:

- The team ran 18 recruitment campaigns.
- The team oversaw the implementation of a blended working pilot in 2022, resulting in a formal policy coming into effect in April 2023.

“

Finance looks to continuously improve systems, processes and controls and, during 2022, adapted to changes required by the internal reorganisation of CIB.

“

Corporate Services rounded off the year by organising the first in-person all staff conference since 2019. It was held in the Law Society of Ireland with over 70 colleagues from across the country in attendance.

“

Emerging from COVID-19, and after a reorganisation CIB embraced new opportunities and established flexible ways of working to promote a better work-life balance.

ICT, Digital and Data Division

Information Communications Technology Team

In 2022:

- The Information Communications Technology (ICT) team enhanced its security infrastructure, by implementing additional applications and services to protect users, systems, and data.
- The team ran procurements for the ICT Helpdesk, PC and Laptop Purchasing and Deployment, Maintenance Contracts and Managed Print Services through frameworks from the Office of Government Procurement (OGP).
- A major review of Identity Access was completed, ensuring all users have their own specific accounts to access the CIB ICT services.
- Approximately 10,000 requests were answered by the ICT Helpdesk. In CIB, the ICT team supported staff through the transition to blended working.

“

All ICT processes and forms were converted to online electronic forms and automated systems deployment.

Data and Research Team

In 2022:

- The team collaborated with Threshold and Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) on two research projects on the topical issue of housing, which emerged as a significant concern in the data as presented to CISs throughout the year.
- Fourteen policy submissions were completed in response to public consultations.
- The team continued to maintain the [Data Hub](#), which provides an insight into the anonymised data collected by the national network of CISs. The Hub profiles who uses the services, the type of information they are looking for, the range of queries and concerns raised by the public and the top categories and trends arising each year. The Data Hub is available to everyone on the CIB website.

“

The team analysed high level trends on over three quarters of a million queries on all aspects of rights and entitlements. Social Policy Returns from services increased 8% to over 8,800 in 2022.

Social Policy and Research Reports



Partnership with Threshold: [Renting and Risk: an analysis of the vulnerabilities of renting.](#)

Data from the CIS and Threshold (over 90,000 queries over a two-year period) was used to examine the barriers experienced by people in accessing and retaining suitable and affordable housing, particularly in the private sector.

The report was launched by the Chair of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), Tom Dunne. The launch was attended by CIB's CEO Fiona Coyne as well as by housing sector representatives, including the Housing Commission.



Partnership with Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI): ['The Right Home': the Housing Needs of People with Disabilities](#) report was launched by

Minister of State for Housing Peter Burke TD who noted that the report would assist in informing policy. The joint CIB/DFI social policy report provides a multi-faceted insight into the housing needs of people with disabilities.

The report subsequently featured and informed submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters on 9 February 2023, which focused on the theme of congregated settings and the lived experience of people with disabilities.



[Accessing Services from Prison - The Inside Story](#)

South Leinster CIS carried out research, 'Equality of Access to Information and Services Enhances Personal Power', exploring the subjective experience of prisoners in accessing information and assistance from outside state services. The research was funded by CIB through its Social Policy Grants scheme, and IHREC, and was carried out as part of the work of the CIS Prisons Working Group. Posters placed in Irish prisons raised awareness of services available to prisoners as they seek information and assistance to deal with personal matters.



['For the few but not the many'](#), a MABS report analysing Debt Relief Notices (DRNs) from the debtor's perspective. This was funded by a CIB social policy grant.

The report highlights the fact that while DRNs can be transformative for those who use them, the level of take up has been lower than anticipated. Reasons for this include lack of awareness, eligibility, administrative burden and supervision period requirements.

Social Policy Submissions

[Mid-Term Review of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025](#)

This submission was informed by the experience of, and feedback from, the CIB-funded services who have a significant engagement with individuals and households experiencing social exclusion or poverty.



Pre-Budget Submission 2023 ['Caught in a bind': Targeted Supports Needed to Alleviate Cost of Living Pressures on Citizens](#) provided evidence of the pressures people are facing with the costs of living. Their experiences of being 'caught in a bind' between eligibility requirements for a range of schemes combined with increasing rents, energy, and food prices informed budget priorities and policy implications.

[Referendum on Housing](#)

A submission from CIB to the Housing Commission drew on the feedback from CIS, CIPS, MABS and NAS to evidence the concerns and challenges experienced by clients in trying to access suitable, affordable, quality housing.

[Commission on Taxation and Welfare](#)

A CIB submission to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare's (CoTW) consultation on the future of the taxation and welfare systems.

Social Policy Returns (SPR)



8,815

SPR recorded by the CIS and CIPS in 2022



8%

increase in the number of SPRs recorded

Social Policy Updates

Social Policy Bulletin

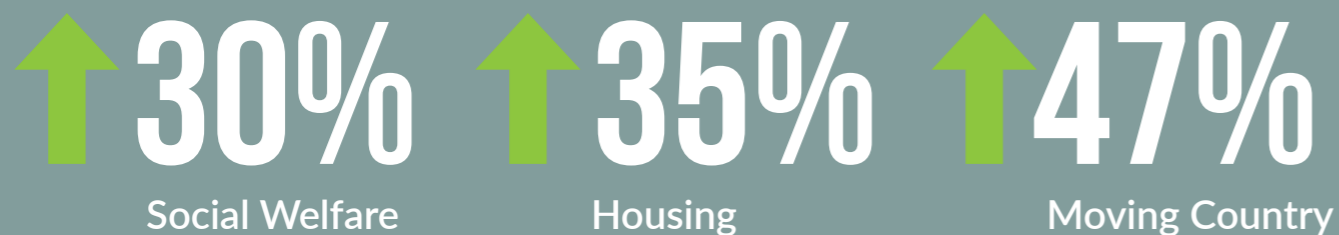
The CIB Data and Research team publishes an online Social Policy bulletin every two months. In 2022 it was circulated to over 800 subscribers, including external agencies and staff in the network of the CIB-funded services.

Social Policy Returns (SPR) are recorded by staff in the network of CIS and Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and submitted to CIB, where a broader problem with a policy, practice or piece of legislation is identified. The Data and Research team uses this information to inform their submissions and reports.

Social Policy Returns Categories



Social Policy Returns (2022 vs 2021)



Digital Content Team

CIB's information website, citizensinformation.ie, provides public service information for Ireland. The website gathers information from Government departments and agencies so users can access information on their rights and entitlements presented in an easy to understand way. The website is the main information source for information providers in the Citizens Information Service and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

Traffic to citizensinformation.ie

547,208 page views
Fuel Allowance

408,618 page views
Illness Benefit

403,628 page views
Travelling to Ireland during COVID-19

399,060 page views
State Pension (Contributory)

389,976 page views
Working Family Payment



Content Developments in 2022

Fifty-two new web pages were added in 2022. The website responded to the war in Ukraine and the arrival from many people of Ukraine in Ireland by adding information on the Temporary Protection Directive, Coming to Ireland from Ukraine, Supports for Ukrainians in Ireland, Social Welfare supports for people from Ukraine, and the Accommodation Recognition Payment for hosts.

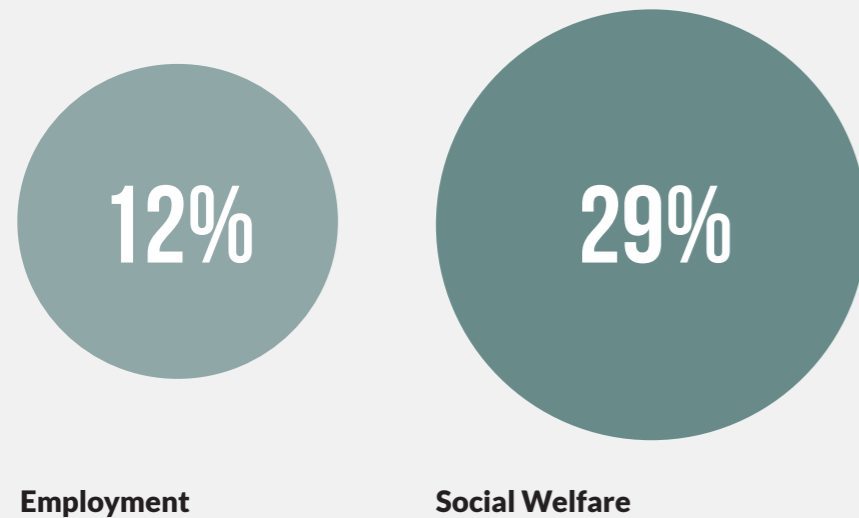
8,115,785

users visited citizensinformation.ie

34,520,387

page views

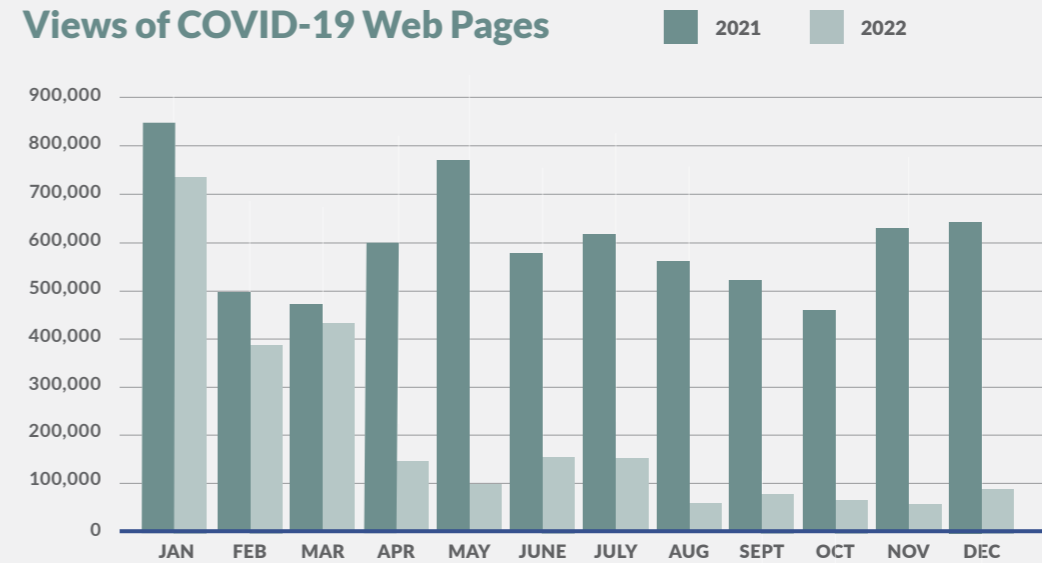
Of the 15 information categories on the website, the most viewed were:



Over 100 pages were removed from the website including most of the COVID-19 related web pages following the end of restrictions at the end of March 2022. In 2021, these pages accounted for over 10.2 million page views, just under 23% of the total page views across the site. In 2022, COVID-19 content accounted for under 7% of the total page views (2.4 million), mainly in the first part of the year. Users continued to visit health-related information on vaccines, close contacts, testing for COVID-19, self-isolation and travel throughout the year.

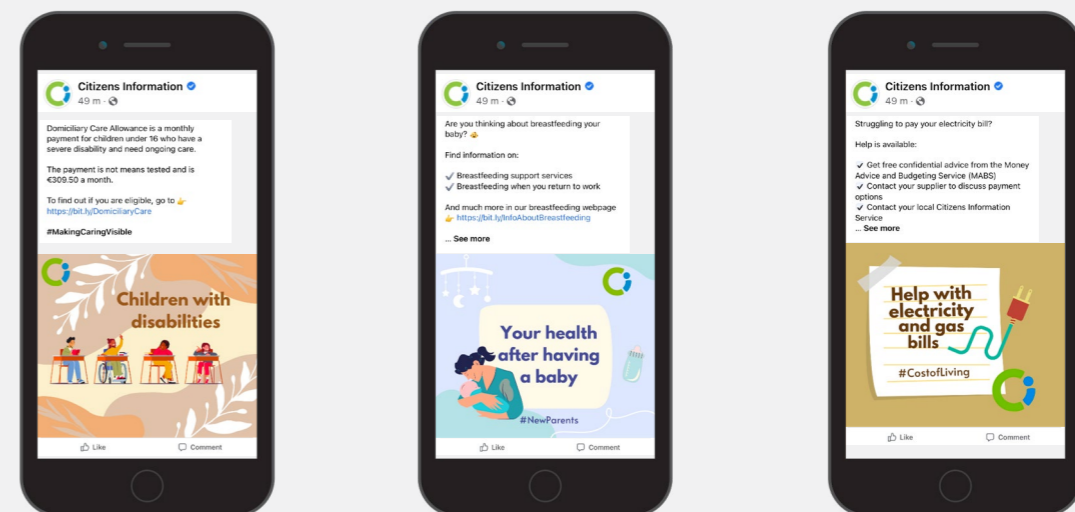
At the end of 2022, citizensinformation.ie held 1,297 content pages.

Views of COVID-19 Web Pages



Social Media in 2022

CIB completed nine monthly campaigns in 2022, as well as topical content, achieving a combined campaign reach of 723,976 people.



Social media followers increased to nearly 45,000 people across our three social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Posts on Facebook reached over eight million people.

There was a 45% engagement rate increase on Facebook compared with 2021, with a rise in likes, comments and sharing. Some Facebook posts reached over 100,000 people.

Social Media Statistics

	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
Impressions	16,286,500	568,700	13,105
Reach	8,063,207	n/a	7,315
Engagement	211,151	5,402	890
No. of posts/tweets	1,165	1,133	14
Followers gained	7,087	911	201

Other Activities and Projects

Returning to Ireland

The Returning to Ireland portal on citizensinformation.ie, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs, currently holds 26 stand-alone dedicated web pages. In 2022, there were 185,057 users of this category with 350,291 page views.

Publications and Leaflets

The [Benefits and Taxes 2022](#) leaflet and wallchart were published and distributed to CIS and MABS. [Information for School Leavers](#) in both English and Irish were distributed to post-primary schools.

Events



Events

After nearly two years of corporate virtual events, in-person events began to return in 2022.

The National Ploughing Championships

In September, CIB was present at Europe's largest outdoor event, the National Ploughing Championships. Over 277,000 visitors attended over three days, with the CIB marquee welcoming approximately 6,500 people, an increase of 47% compared to 2019 footfall.

MABS 30th Celebration in Dublin Castle

In September, over 200 people attended Dublin Castle to celebrate 30 years of MABS supporting local communities around Ireland. A MABS exhibition, to tell the story of the MABS journey over the last 30 years, was featured at the venue. This exhibition travelled around Ireland and was exhibited in Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Monaghan with Minister Heather Humphreys TD attending the Monaghan event. A unique logo was designed to mark the occasion.

Various regional events took place throughout the country to celebrate the MABS 30th. They were attended by MABS staff, clients, local politicians and community groups.



Left to right: Karl Cronin, Regional Manager North Connacht and Ulster MABS; Geraldine Mohan, Money Adviser; Orla Nugent, Service Coordinator; Minister Heather Humphreys TD; Louisa O'Brien, Money Adviser; Michael Johnston, Money Adviser.



MABS Money Advisers providing practical advice and support at the 50Plus show in the RDS.

Left to right: Michelle Burns, and Philip Mulhall, North Dublin MABS.

Launch of the joint CIB and Threshold report Renting and Risk: an analysis of the vulnerabilities of renting

Left to right: Ciara Morley, Director, Morley Economic Consulting; Tom Dunne, Chair, Residential Tenancies Board; Fiona Coyne, CEO, Citizens Information Board; Ann-Marie O'Reilly, Policy Officer, Threshold.



CIB Staff Day

CIB held its first in-person staff day event since 2019 in the Law Society of Ireland. The event had 70 staff in attendance, and was an opportunity to renew and build working relationships.

Fiona Coyne, CIB's CEO, launched the event with organisation updates and facilitated a staff Q&A.

Throughout the day, CIB staff engaged in a collaborative workshop and used design-thinking activities to identify communication challenges within the CIB and develop innovative solutions in response.

This dynamic and interactive workshop proved very successful with staff and led to a commitment from senior management to review and implement its recommendations.



The CIB Staff Day, Law Society of Ireland. From left: Fiona Coyne, CEO, Citizens Information Board and Fergal Brophy, Entrepreneurial Specialist at University College Dublin (UCD) Innovation Academy.

Appendices



Appendix 1:

Customer Service Charter

CIB provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through citizensinformation.ie, the Citizens Information Phone Service (0818 074 000) and the network of Citizens Information Services. We are responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and provide the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS).

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, citizensinformation.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 Complaints Administrator at annemarie.owens@ciboard.ie

Appendix 2: Energy Consumption

Energy Targets

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) has specific climate action targets for public sector bodies including a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as well as an improvement in energy efficiency in the public sector from 33% target in 2020 to 50% by 2030. These targets are also referenced in the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23). The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 legally underpins climate action by public sector bodies.

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is required to report its energy management and performance data to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) using procedures and calculation methodologies specified by the SEAI under Statutory Instrument No. 426/2014 European Union (Energy Efficiency) Regulations 2014.

CIB completed a mandatory energy audit in 2022 and is committed to undertaking these audits every four years. CIB is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and improving its energy efficiency with regard to the following 2030 targets;

Carbon

- 2030 greenhouse gas target is 45,439.2 KgCO₂ (including non-electricity greenhouse gas target of 16,041.3 kgCO₂).

Energy Efficiency

- The CIB 2030 energy consumption target is 505,649 kWh.
- The Energy Efficiency target is an 'Intensity/performance metric', that is, kWh/m² rather than an absolute target. The 2030 energy consumption target is 155 kWh/m², subject to area changes.

Energy Performance

The latest statistics from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland report energy consumption in the Citizens Information Board are as follows;

- Energy savings 21.4% better than 2009 baseline
- CO₂ emissions down 38% from 2009 baseline

Appendix 3: Funding Provided to Service Delivery Companies

The tables below show the 2022 grant allocations for SDCs.

Citizens Information Services	2022	2021
Dublin South	€2,003,748	€1,789,312
Dublin North	€2,331,767	€1,991,458
South Leinster	€1,981,653	€1,895,327
North Leinster	€2,373,012	€2,281,491
North Connacht and Ulster	€2,018,143	€1,691,547
South Connacht	€1,489,396	€1,372,442
North Munster	€1,773,458	€1,778,463
South Munster	€1,990,403	€1,777,316
Total	€15,961,580	€14,577,356

Money Advice and Budgeting Services	2022	2021
MABS Support CLG	€1,107,007	€962,886
National Traveller MABS	€368,604	€268,182
Dublin North	€2,850,960	€2,178,834
Dublin South	€2,724,587	€2,388,569
South Leinster	€2,368,301	€1,867,250
North Leinster	€2,167,894	€1,654,517
North Connacht and Ulster	€2,187,426	€1,813,623
South Connacht	€1,668,772	€1,577,492
North Munster	€2,410,786	€1,969,496
South Munster	€2,125,783	€1,804,549
Total	€19,980,120	€16,485,398

National	2022	2021
Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)	€1,342,041	€1,201,552
Sign Language Interpreting Services (SLIS)	€663,332	€748,155
National Advocacy Service (NAS)	€2,972,746	€2,184,928
Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI)	€42,000	N/A
Total	€5,020,119	€4,134,635

Supports	2022	2021
Threshold	€47,000	€47,000
Free Legal Advice (FLAC)	€140,000	€140,000
Treoir	€34,400	€34,400
Immigrant Council of Ireland	€68,000	€68,000
Total	€289,400	€289,400

The Citizens Information Board provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through citizensinformation.ie, the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) and the network of Citizens Information Services (CIS). It is responsible for the network of Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS), National Traveller MABS, along with MABS Support, the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS), the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) and the National Advocacy Service (NAS) for People with Disabilities.

Dublin

George's Quay House, 43 Townsend Street,
Dublin 2, D02 VK65

Cork

101 North Main Street, Cork, T12 AKA6

Galway

4th Floor, Dockgate, Merchants Road
Galway, H91 EY10

Limerick

1st Floor, Riverstone House,
23-27 Henry Street, Limerick, V94 3T28

Kilkenny

Unit 2, Third Floor, Desart House,
New Street, Kilkenny, R95 WF96

www.citizensinformationboard.ie

Telephone: (01) 605 9000

Email: info@ciboard.ie