



Comhairle

Citizens Information Centres Survey Report, 2003

Nua Research Services
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Acknowledgements

Comhairle wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Citizens' Information Centres (CICs) throughout the country in collecting the survey data on which this report is based. It wishes to thank the Boards of Management, Development Managers and Information Givers in the following participating centres:

Blanchardstown
Carlow
Castlebar, Claremorris, Ballina, Belmullet
Cork South Mall
Dublin Northside
Dundalk, Drogheda
Dun Laoghaire.
Galway, Tuam, Clifden, Rosmuc
Longford
Newbridge, Athy, Naas

It would also like to thank the Board of Management, Development Manager and Information Givers in Crumlin CIC for their assistance at pilot study stage.

Chapter 1 : Background to the Survey

1.1 Introduction

This Report presents the principal findings from a survey which was conducted in 10 Citizens' Information Centres (CICs) during a four week period in September/October 2003. CICs are registered and supported by Comhairle to provide free, confidential and independent information, advice and advocacy services to the public on a wide range of civil and social rights, especially entitlement to state services.

Citizen Information is delivered in approximately 200 locations around the country. These services are managed by 40 independent companies, known as Citizen Information Services Ltd. Centres vary from those providing a full-time service (9am-5pm) to others which offer a number of hours per week.

1.2 Earlier Research

Comhairle was established in June 2000. Its brief is to support the provision of information, advice and advocacy services for all citizens. To this end, Comhairle is involved in the development of Citizens Information Services, including, *inter alia*, the development and support of the nation-wide network of CICs, the Citizens Information Phone Service and the Oasis Website (www.oasis.gov.ie).

In its current Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006, Comhairle (2003) set out its key service policy objectives. These include:

- Provision of high quality integrated information on all aspects of social and civil services to assist people in securing their rights and entitlements.
- Promoting the provision of independent and impartial information to address the information, advice and advocacy needs of the public.
- Providing for the delivery of high quality information and advice on social and civil services through a range of integrated and accessible delivery channels.
- Contributing to the effectiveness of social policy and services by identifying and highlighting issues of concern to service users.

The Strategic Plan emphasised that in order to achieve its service policy objectives, it is essential to deliver on a set of supporting objectives of an organisational and operational nature. These objectives include funding, governance support, promotion, and training issues. It is against this background that regular data sets are required in order to provide a valid picture of CIC clients, queries and activities which would assist in the monitoring of the nature and focus of CIC services and contribute to the ongoing development of supports in the areas of information and training.

In 2001, Weafer and Brown presented the principal findings from a survey which was conducted in November/December 2000 in 10 CICs (hereafter referred to as the '2000 Survey'). The purpose of the 2000 Survey was to:

- provide a profile of CIC users
- obtain information on the nature and type of queries with which people present
- examine the processes and the sources of information used by centres in dealing with the queries presented.

Comhairle has updated the 2000 Survey by conducting another national survey presented in this report. This survey supplements existing CIC annual data on query numbers and mode of contact with CICs.

1.3 Information Services for People with Disabilities

Under the Comhairle Act, 2000, Comhairle was charged with the provision of information, advice and advocacy to *all* citizens, including mainstream services for people with disabilities. The current mission statement of Comhairle is:

To ensure that individuals have easy access to impartial and independent information, advice and advocacy services so that they can identify their needs and access their entitlements to social and civil services. (Comhairle, 2003)

1.4 Objectives of the Survey

One of the requirements of this study is that data comparisons, in so far as is possible (see Chapter 2), be made with the 2000 Survey. The objectives of the study are thus similar to those of the 2000 Survey as outlined above:

- CIC clients will be profiled by socio-economic and related characteristics which emerge during the course of the query including sex, age, marital status, primary source of income, housing status and evidence of disability.
- The number and nature of queries will be recorded using a classification similar to that of the 2000 Survey.
- The processes and sources of information used by information givers in dealing with queries will be examined, including action taken by information givers, sources of information used, and the numbers of queries with a social policy implication.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Selection of Participating Centres

The objective of the survey was to gather data about the level and nature of activity in a representative range of CICs. In order to select a representative sample, the 39 key CICs were stratified into the design below. This stratification considered three variables:

- Volume of queries per annum based on figures for 2002 - ie large (over 11,500 queries) medium (8-11.5000 queries) and small (under 8,000 queries)
- Whether CIC did or did not participate in the 2000 survey
- Urban/Rural location for those CICs that did not participate in 2000.

From the 39 key CICs, 10 keys CICs, plus all the CICs associated with these 10, were randomly selected. All of the selected CICs were approached and all agreed to participate in the survey (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Participating CICs

Volume of Queries	Participated in 2000 Survey	Did Not Participate in 2000 Survey
Large	Galway (Galway, Tuam, Clifden , Rosmuc)	Cork South Mall
	Co Louth (Dundalk, Drogheda)	Co Mayo (Castlebar, Claremorris, Ballina, Belmullet)
Medium	Dun Laoghaire	Carlow
		Newbridge (Newbridge, Athy, Naas)
Small	Blanchardstown	Northside
		Longford

2.2 Survey Data Sheet

A detailed Survey Data Sheet, including Guidelines for its completion, was designed by Comhairle with the assistance of Nua Research Services. The Survey Sheet and Guidelines were piloted in a key Dublin CIC over a two day period in late August 2003. Following feedback from the Development Manager and two information givers, the final Survey Data Sheet and Guidelines were prepared (see Appendix 1).

There is a major methodological difference between the current survey and the 2000 Survey. In the 2000 Survey, the information givers were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual query: in the current survey they were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual client, regardless of the number of queries. Although it is the case that the majority of clients only have one query, a significant minority have 2 or more queries. This means that although comparisons can be made with the 2000 Survey, these are broad and general comparisons only.

As with the 2000 Survey, information givers were asked to record only those personal details of clients (such as age, marital status, and so forth) which were relevant to the query or which emerged during the query handling process.

The Survey Data Sheet recorded information in four key areas:

- *Selected Socio-Economic (and related) Characteristics of CIC Clients:* information givers recorded personal details of the client which emerged or could be inferred during the course of the query. These were: gender, age, marital status, housing status, primary and secondary source of income, EU/non EU nationality status and evidence of a disability
- *Client Contact with CICs:* details, such as whether the call was in person or by telephone, whether this was the caller's first contact with the CIC, the reason for contacting the CIC, were recorded.
- *The Nature of Queries Presented:* the subject matter of the query was recorded - for example, if the query was a social welfare query, or a health services query, or an employment query and so forth.
- *Process:* the final area was concerned with the processes used to deal with the presenting query. It included questions on the actions taken by the information giver, the sources of information used by the information giver, and whether or not the query was deemed to have social policy implications.

2.3 The Distribution of Data Sheets

The total number of Data Sheets distributed to the 10 CICs was 7080. Each participating CIC was given a number of Data Sheets which was proportionate to the overall size of the centre as measured by query volume for 2002.

In other words, each centre was given circa 55-60 Data Sheets per 1000 query level. This meant more Data Sheets for larger CIC and fewer for smaller CICs (see Table 2.2 below). The total number of Data Sheets returned was 6306, giving an overall return rate of 89%.

Table 2.2: Distribution of Data Sheets

CIC	Total Queries for 2002	Distribution of Data Sheets
Cork South Mall	26,192	1600
Galway	23,036	1300
Mayo	15,335	800
Louth	12,670	700
Dun Laoghaire	9,747	580
Carlow	9,020	540
Newbridge	8,053	510
Longford	6,412	390
Blanchardstown	5,197	300
Northside	5,716	360
Total	121,378	7080

The centres were instructed to begin data collection on Monday 15 September 2003 and continue until Friday 10 October *or* until all the Data Sheets in the quota were completed, whichever came first. In addition to the written guidelines, Nua Research Services was in regular contact with participating CICs both prior to and during the course of the Survey, and was also available for consultation as required by CICs.

2.4 The Role of the Information Giver

As far as CIC clients were concerned, the relationship between client and information giver was not in any way altered by the survey process. Information givers were instructed to complete the Data Sheet after the consultation was ended, and only to record those details which emerged during the course of the consultation, or which could be accurately inferred.

Chapter 3: Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of CIC Users

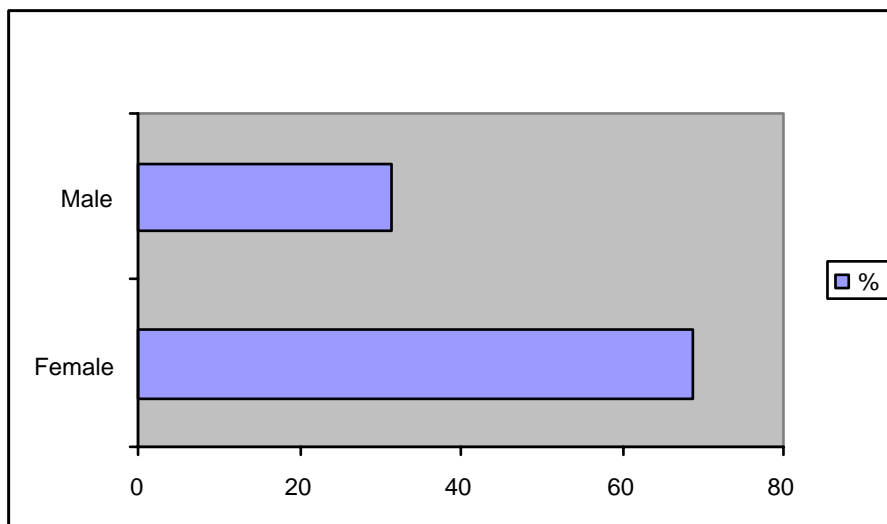
3.1 Introduction

As described above, information givers were asked to record certain personal details of clients which emerged during the course of dealing with the query. These were: sex, age, marital status, housing status, primary and secondary source of income, EU/non EU nationality status and evidence of a disability.

3.2 Sex of Clients

The sex of the client was recorded for 6242 out of the total of 6306 clients (99%). As Table 3.1 below shows, more than two thirds of clients were women. In the 2000 Survey, 64% of clients were female compared with almost 69% in the present survey.

Table 3.1: Sex of Clients



As Table 3.2 below shows, across the 10 CICs, the percentage of males to females was highest in Dun Laoghaire (41%) and lowest in Carlow (23%).

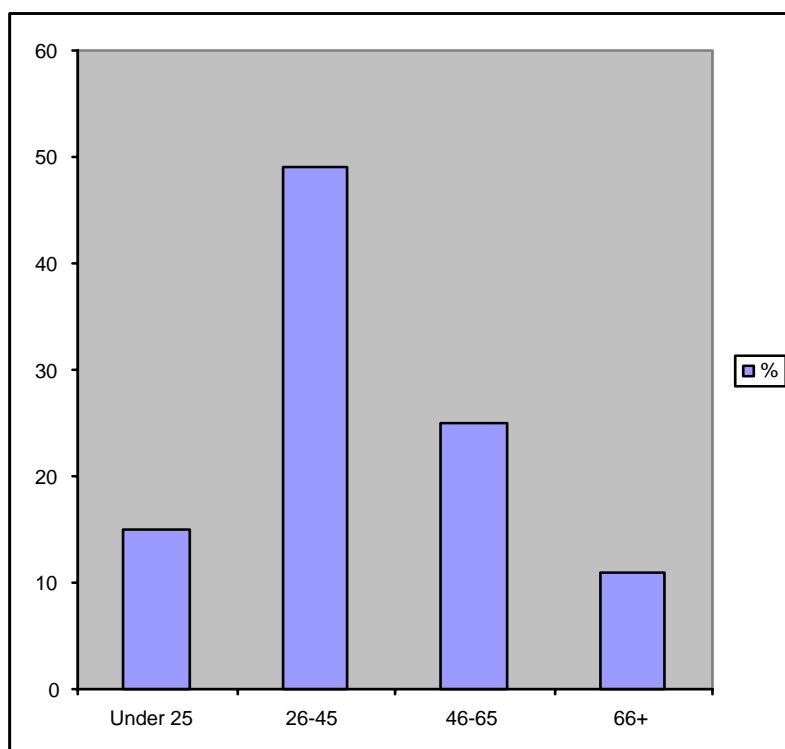
Table 3.2: Distribution of Male and Female Clients in each CIC

CICs	% Males	% Females
Cork South Mall	32	68
Galway	32	68
Mayo	27	73
Louth	31	69
Dun Laoghaire	41	59
Carlow	23	77
Newbridge	29	71
Longford	32	68
Blanchardstown	32	68
Dublin Northside	36	64

3.3 Age of Clients

Age was recorded for 5334 clients out of a total of 6306 (85%). Almost three-quarters of all clients were in the two middle age groups (Table 3.3). This compares with only two-thirds in the 2000 Survey. The earlier survey found that 19% of their clients were under 25 years compared to almost 15% in the current survey. In the 2000 survey, almost 18% were 65+ years compared to almost 11% in the 66+ age group in the present survey.

Table 3.3: Age of Clients



Across the 10 CICs there was considerable variation in the age distribution of clients (Table 3.4). The centre with the lowest percentage of youngest clients (under 25s) was Dun Laoghaire (7%), with Cork having the highest percentage (19%). Dun Laoghaire had the highest percentage of older clients (24%), with Blanchardstown having the lowest (4%).

Table 3.4: Age Distribution in each CIC

CICs	% Under 25	% 26-45	% 46-65	% 66+
Cork South Mall	19	48	23	10
Galway	17	56	21	6
Mayo	15	45	28	12
Louth	14	44	30	12
Dun Laoghaire	7	38	31	24
Carlow	18	53	21	8
Newbridge	9	54	28	9
Longford	14	45	31	10
Blanchardstown	10	74	12	4
Dublin Northside	11	38	34	17

There were substantial differences in the age profiles of men and women (Table 3.5). Almost 14% of men were in the oldest age category (66+) compared to 9% of women. On the other hand, 52% of women were in the 25-45 age band compared to 45% of men.

Table 3.5: Age Profiles of Male and Female Clients

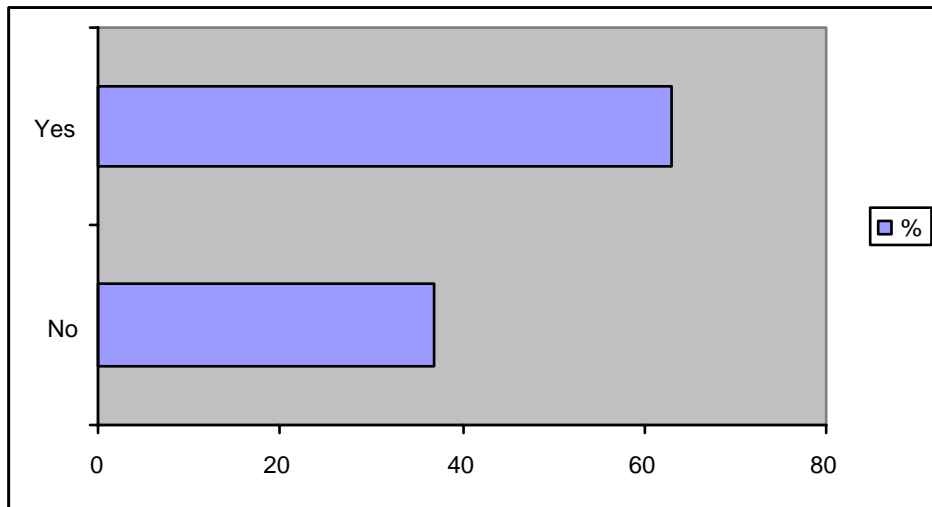
Sex	% Under 25	% 26-45	% 46-65	% 66+
Male	13	45	28	14
Female	15	52	24	9

p ≤ 0.0001

3.4 Number of Clients with Dependent Children

Whether or not the client had dependent children was recorded for 2537 (40%) clients. As Table 3.6 below shows, 63% had dependent children and 37% did not. The comparable figures for the 2000 Survey were 52% and 48%.

Table 3.6: Percentage of Clients with Dependent Children

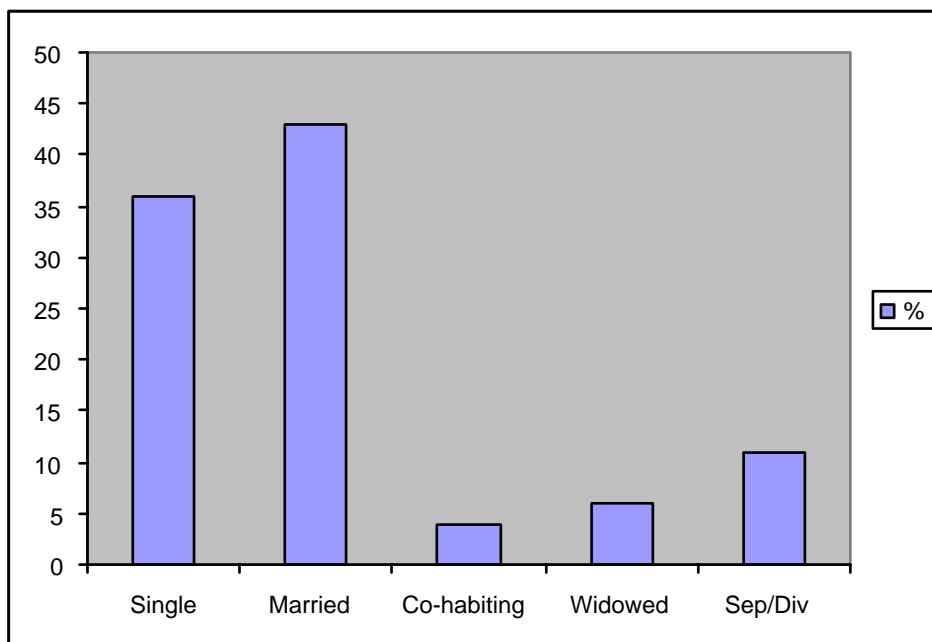


Within the 10 CICs there was some variation. In Blanchardstown, 72% of clients had dependent children, compared to 48% of Dun Laoghaire clients.

3.5 Clients' Marital Status

Marital status was recorded for 3795 (60%) clients (Table 3.7). The distribution across the five marital categories was very similar to that for the 2000 Survey, with a slight increase in the 'single' category (from 32% to 36%), and a slight decrease in the 'married' category (from 46% to 43%).

Table 3.7: Clients' Marital Status



3.6 Clients' Housing Status

Information on clients' housing status emerged or could be inferred for 2291(36%) clients (Table 3.8) . As with the 2000 Survey, the two largest groupings were 'Owner Occupier' and 'Private Tenant'. The percentage in the former category was 52% in 2000, compared to 42% in the present survey. In the second category, the percentage was 21% in the 2000 Survey and 31% in the current study.

Table 3.8: Clients' Housing Status

Housing Status	Number	%
Owner Occupier	959	42
Local Authority Tenant	347	15
Private Tenant	713	31
Housing Association	12	*
Institution	8	*
Homeless/NFA	25	1
Living with Family	200	9
Direct Provision	19	*
Traveller Accommodation	8	*
Total	2291	100

Note *=<1%

3.7 Source of Income

Information givers were asked to note, if the information emerged or could be inferred, both primary and secondary sources of income for clients.

The primary source of income was noted for 3535 (56%) clients (Table 3.9). For almost 46% of these clients, the primary source was employment, with social welfare accounting for a further 43%. Occupational pension was the primary source of income for just over 4% of clients. The comparable figures for the 2000 Survey were 45%, 42% and 7%.

Table 3.9: Primary Source of Income

Primary Source of Income	Number	%
Employment	1609	46
Social Welfare	1538	43
Occupational Pension	149	4
Other	239	7
Total	3535	100

A secondary source of income was given for 672 (11%) clients. For almost half of these (48%), the secondary source of income was social welfare.

3.8 Nationality of Clients who were not Irish Citizens

Information givers were asked to note, if the information emerged or could be inferred, the EU/non EU status of clients who were not Irish citizens. This information was recorded for 1132 (18%) clients. As Table 3.10 shows, just over 73% of these clients were classified as EU Nationals.

Table 3.10: EU/Non EU Status

Nationality	Number	%
EU National	831	73
Non EU National	301	27
Total	1132	100

There was a substantial relationship between nationality and age of client: 33% of EU nationals were over the age of 46 compared to only 4% of Non EU nationals.

3.9 Evidence of a Disability

The information givers were asked to note if there was any evidence that the client had a disability. This observation was noted for 4710 (75%) clients (Table 3.11). For 13% of these clients there was, in the judgement of the information-giver, evidence of a disability. No further information on type or severity of disability was sought.

Table 3.11: Evidence of a Disability

Evidence of Disability	Number	%
Yes	612	13
No	4098	87
Total	4710	100

As would be expected, there was a strong relationship between age and evidence of disability. Older people were more likely to show evidence of disability than younger people. However, as Table 3.12 below shows, there was also a strong relationship between sex and evidence of disability. In the opinion of information givers, male clients were substantially more likely to have evidence of a disability than female clients.

Table 3.12: Sex and Evidence of Disability

Sex	% Evidence of Disability	% No Evidence of Disability
Male	16.8	83.2
Female	11.2	88.8

$p \leq 0.0001$

The variation between centres in evidence of disability was slight, varying between 10% and 16% of clients.

3.10 Key Points Emerging

- Women clients still considerably outnumber men, as was the case in the Weafer and Browne (2001) survey and the 1998 CIC Survey (Comhairle, 1998). Although the proportion of male clients was higher in 2000 (36%) than in 1998 (34%) in the current survey it was lowest at 31%. In Carlow, almost four/fifths of clients were women.
- Almost three-quarters of all clients were in the middle age groups (ie 26-65years). This compares with only two-thirds in the 2000 Survey. There was some age variation between Centres; for example, the percentage of clients who were in the older age group varied between 24% (Dun Laoghaire) and 4% (Blanchardstown).
- On the whole, male clients tended to be older than female clients.
- Almost two-thirds of clients had dependent children, compared to just over half in the 2000 Survey.
- Just under half of the clients were either married or co-habiting. This was similar to the 2000 Survey finding.
- Information on clients' housing status was recorded for only 36% of clients. Within this caveat, 42% of these clients were owner occupiers, compared to 52% in the 2000 Survey. In the 1998 Survey, 47% were owner occupiers. In the current survey, almost one third were in the private rented sector, an increase from one fifth in the 2000 Survey. This finding reflects the growth in the private rented sector as evidenced in recent Census data (CSO, 2003).
- As with the 2000 Survey, employment (46%) was marginally higher than social welfare as the primary source of income.
- For the 18% of clients who were recorded as non-Irish citizens, almost three-quarters were EU nationals.
- There was evidence of a disability in 13% of clients. There was a strong relationship between sex and evidence of disability with male clients substantially more likely to have evidence of a disability than female clients.

Chapter 4: Client Contact with CICs

4.1 Introduction

Information givers were asked to record details such as whether the call was by telephone or in person, whether this was the caller's first contact with the CIC and the reason(s) for contacting the CIC.

4.2 Mode of Contact with CIC

Mode of contact was recorded for 6258 (99%) clients (Table 4.1). As with the 2000 Survey, more than 99% of all contacts were either personal or telephone calls. In 2000, the percentage of personal calls was 60%, falling to 56% in the present survey. Telephone contacts accounted for 39% in 2000 and 43% in the present study.

Table 4.1: Mode of Contact

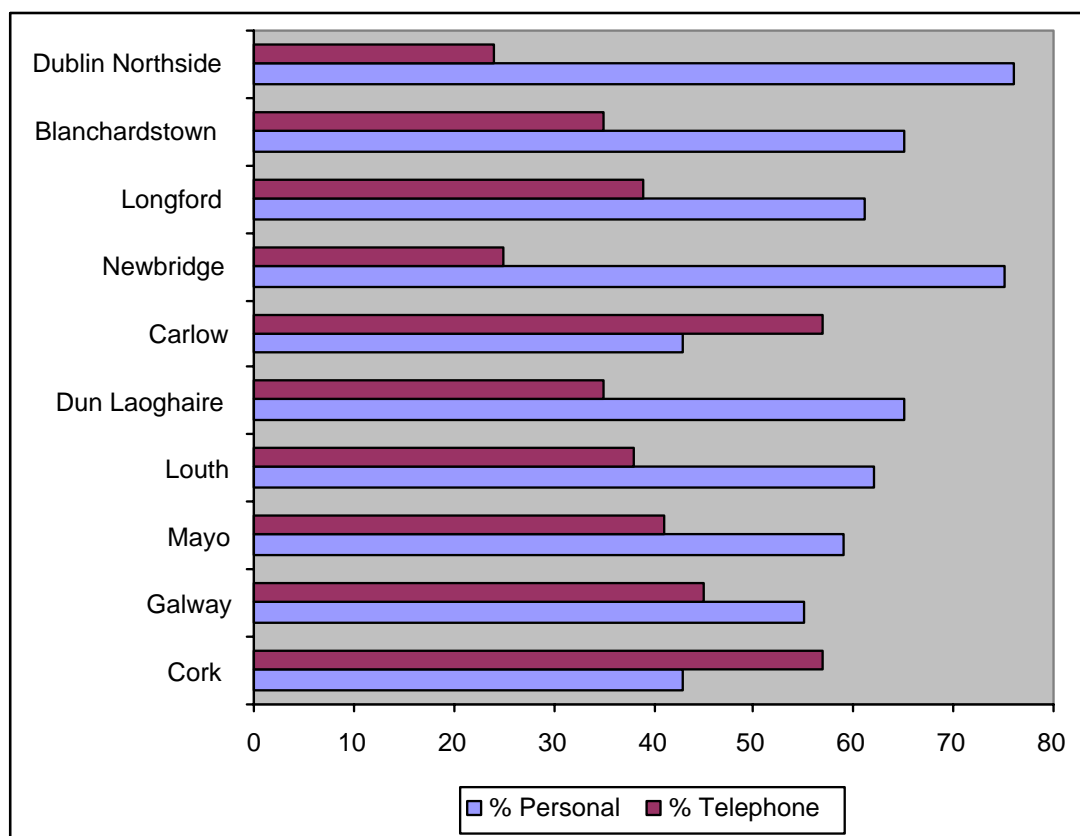
Mode of Contact	Number	%
Personal	3515	56
Telephone	2703	43
Letter	7	*
E-mail	33	*
Total	6258	100

Note *=<1%

There were substantial differences in mode of contact between men and women. Two thirds of men (66%) personally called, whereas almost half of women (48%) made contact by telephone.

Across the 10 Centres, as Table 4.2 below shows, the proportions of clients personally calling varied considerably. For example, in Dublin Northside, 76% of clients called personally and only 24% telephoned. In Carlow, by contrast, 43% personally called and 57% telephoned.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Mode of Contact within Centres



4.3 Nature of the Caller

Of the 6127 (97%) clients for whom this information was recorded, 82% were calling on their own behalf, 15% were calling on behalf of somebody else and 3% were doing both (Table 4.3). The comparable figures for 2000 were 79%, 17% and 4%.

Table 4.3: Nature of Caller

Nature of the Caller	Number	%
Calling on Own Behalf	5018	82
Calling On Behalf of Someone Else	908	15
Both	201	3
Total	6127	100

Younger people were more likely to call on their own behalf than older people. As Table 4.4 below shows, 87% of young people (under 25s) called on their own behalf compared to 76% of those aged 46-65 years.

Table 4.4: Nature of Caller by Age

Age	% Own Behalf	% On Behalf of Someone Else	% Both	Total
Under 25	87	11	2	100
26-45	84	13	3	100
46-65	76	19	5	100
66+	80	17	3	100

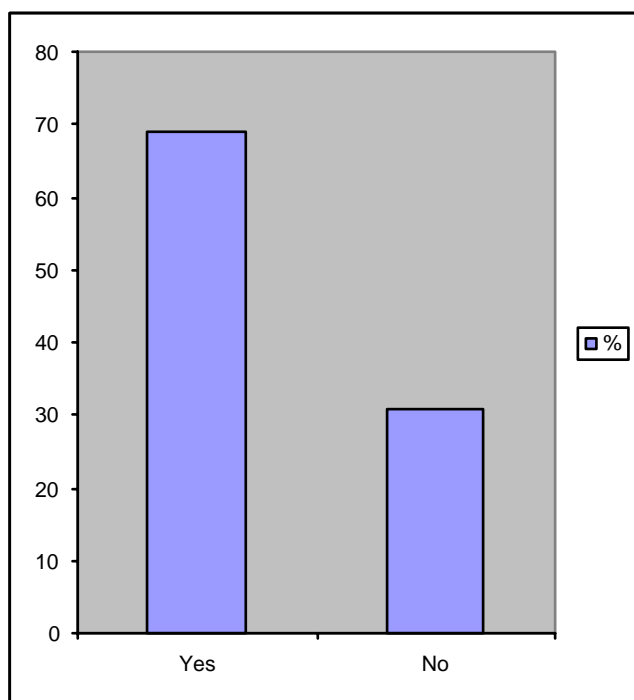
$p \leq 0.0001$

There were some differences across the 10 Centres. In Galway and Blanchardstown, for example, 88% of clients called on their own behalf, compared to 75% in Carlow.

4.4 First Contact with CIC

Of the 5010 (79%) clients for whom this information was recorded, for 69 % (71% in the 2000 Survey) it was their first contact with the CIC (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: First Contact with CIC



As Table 4.6 below shows, there were considerable variations between Centres. In Longford, for 89% of these clients, it was their first contact with the CIC, declining to 58% for Carlow and 59% for Dublin Northside.

Table 4.6: First Contact Variations between Centres

CIC	% First Contact	% Not First Contact	Total
Cork South Mall	77	23	100
Galway	63	37	100
Mayo	60	40	100
Louth	63	37	100
Dun Laoghaire	66	34	100
Carlow	58	42	100
Newbridge	78	22	100
Longford	89	11	100
Blanchardstown	70	30	100
Dublin Northside	59	41	100

For the 31% who had previously had contact with the CIC, this was a return visit in relation to the present query for just over 30% of these. In other words, for about 10% of all clients, their visit was a return visit in relation to an ongoing query.

4.5 Reasons for Contact with CIC

The information givers were asked to record what, in their view, was the reason(s) clients contacted the CIC. Most clients had only one reason (for example, a request for simple information) but a number had two, or even more, reasons for making contact. Information givers were permitted to record as many reasons as they felt appropriate. As in the 2000 Survey, Table 4.7 below shows that the two most common reasons - by far - given for clients contacting the CIC were 'request for simple information' and 'advice'.

Other reasons for contacting the CIC included: unsatisfactory treatment elsewhere; assistance with form filling; referral from another agency; and inaccurate or insufficient information obtained elsewhere.

Table 4.7: Reasons for Contact with CIC

Reason for Contact	Number	%
Request for simple information	4396	61
Advice	1616	22
Unsatisfactory treatment	362	5
Assistance with form filling	220	3
Referred from other agency/service	203	3
Inaccurate/insufficient information obtained elsewhere	182	3
Delays in application process	153	2
Assistance with appeal	73	1
Total	7205	100

Although 'request for simple information' was the overall most common reason for contacting the CIC, in two centres, Blanchardstown and Dublin Northside, looking for 'advice' was more frequent. In the 2000 Survey, 'request for simple information' was the most common reason given in all ten centres in that study.

As Table 4.8 below shows, the vast majority of clients (75%) only had one reason for contacting the CIC. A further 15% had two reasons, and 3% had more than two reasons. With 7% of clients, the reason for contact was not recorded.

Table 4.8: Number of Reasons for Contacting CIC

Number of Reasons	Number	%
One Reason	4738	75
Two Reasons	937	15
More than Two Reasons	184	3
Not Recorded	447	7
Total	6306	100

For those 75% of clients who had only one reason for contacting the CIC, more than four-fifths of them (81%) were looking for simple information only. Of the remaining one-fifth, the majority were seeking advice. These findings are similar to those of the 2000 Survey.

4.6 Key Points Emerging

- As with the 2000 Survey, more than 99% of all contacts with CIC were either personal or telephone calls. Men were more likely than women to personally call rather than telephone. Across the 10 Centres, the proportions of clients personally calling varied considerably, ranging from 76% in Dublin Northside to 43% in Carlow.
- Just over four-fifths of clients called on their own behalf, with the remainder either calling on behalf of somebody else or doing both. These findings were very similar to those for the 2000 Survey. Younger people were more likely to call on their own behalf than older people.
- Overall, for about 70% of clients, this was their first contact with the CIC. Again, this figure was very similar to that for the 2000 Survey. There were some variations between Centres.
- For about 10% of all clients, their visit was a return visit in relation to an ongoing query. It is not clear whether this means that the queries were so complex that they required more than one visit, or whether the client did not get sufficient or appropriate information, advice or advocacy on the first visit.
- As in the 2000 Survey, the two most common reasons given for clients contacting the CIC were, respectively, 'request for simple information' and 'advice'. In two centres, however, (Blanchardstown and Dublin Northside) advice was more frequently sought than information.
- About three-quarters of clients had only one reason for contacting the CIC and, of these, about 80% were just looking for simple information.

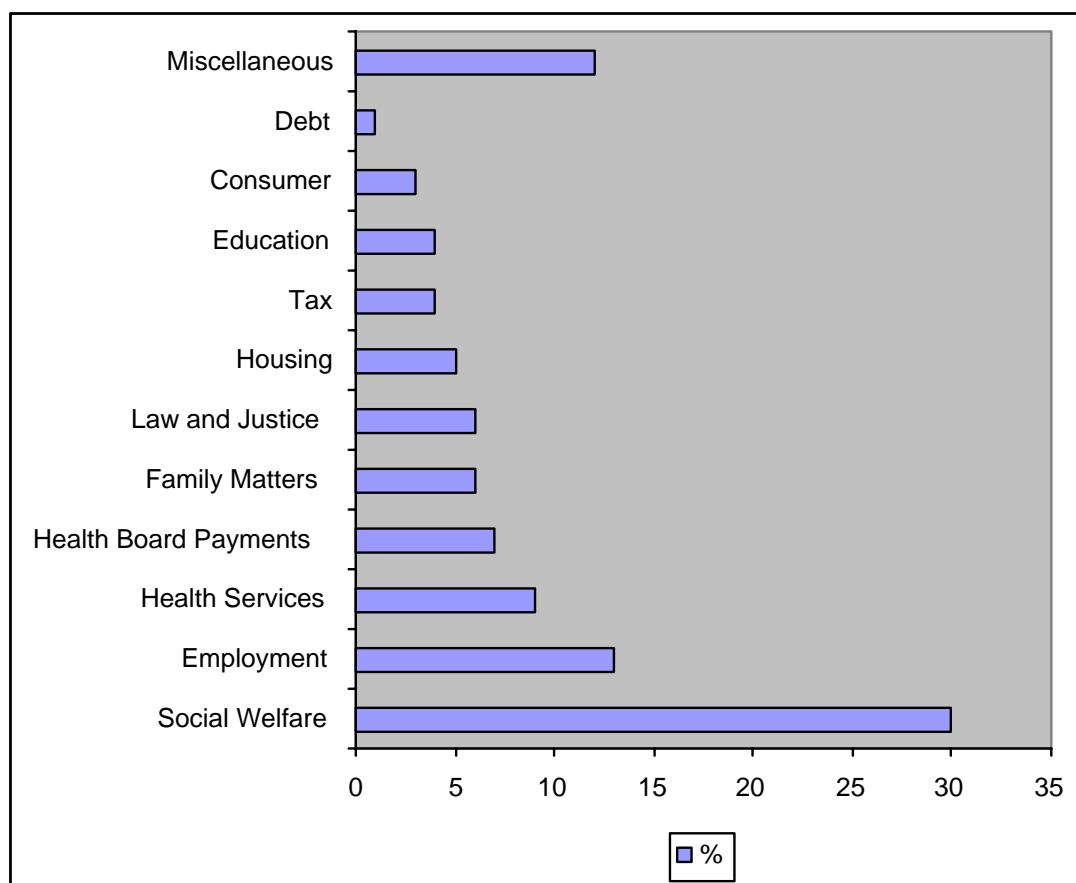
Chapter 5: Nature of Queries Presented

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in the background to the survey, CICs provide information, advice and advocacy on a wide range of civil and social rights and entitlements. This means that information givers in CICs deal with a vast range of queries, varying in complexity and diversity.

As can be seen from the Data Sheet (Appendix 1) information givers were presented with a large number of categories (n=80) in which to classify the clients' queries encountered in this survey (n=11,196). These categories were presented under the headings of Social Welfare, Health, Employment, Housing and so on. In the Guidelines circulated to all centres (Appendix 1), information givers were invited to use these categories where appropriate. If the query did not fit into any of these categories, the information workers were asked to briefly describe the query under the heading of 'Miscellaneous'.

Table 5.1: Categories of Queries



As Table 5.1 above shows, the four largest categories of queries (not including Miscellaneous) were issues relating to Social Welfare (30% of all queries), Employment (13%), Health Services (9%) and Health Board Payments (7%). In the 2000 Survey¹ the

¹ It should be noted that the 2000 Survey Report used an analytical framework that was somewhat different from the one used in the present report and that, therefore, comparisons between the two data sets are broadly indicative rather than strictly accurate.

highest proportion of queries also related to Social Welfare (43%), with Employment (16%) and Health (11%) in second and third place respectively. While Housing accounted for 5% of queries, it should also be noted that 42% of queries in the Health Board Payments category had a housing component in that they referred to rent allowance/mortgage interest payments (see Table 5.5).

About 12% of queries were classified under the Miscellaneous heading. In about a third of all these cases, the Miscellaneous category was used to elaborate on a query which was *already* noted in one of the 80 given categories. Because of this evidence of 'double counting' and because of the range and variety of Miscellaneous queries, they are separated from the analysis at this point (i.e., from Table 5.2 to Table 5.10) and are dealt separately with at the end of this Chapter. Table 5.2 below shows the percentage distribution of categories of queries across the 10 centres when the Miscellaneous category is excluded. When this category is excluded, Social Welfare queries account for 35% of all queries, Employment for 15% and so forth.

Although Social Welfare is the most frequently recorded category in all centres, there is some variation between centres (Table 5.2). For example, in Dublin Northside, Social Welfare queries account for 43% of all queries, falling to 28% of all queries in Cork. Employment accounted for 20% of all queries in Galway, but only 9% of all queries in Louth. Law and Justice issues accounted for 13% of all queries in Dun Laoghaire, but only 4% of all queries in Mayo.

Table 5.2: Distribution of Categories of Queries across Centres (%)

Category	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Social Welfare	28	36	38	38	30	40	36	37	30	43	35
Employment	18	20	14	9	9	13	13	18	10	9	15
Health Services	7	9	11	14	11	9	10	11	7	11	10
Health Board Payments	7	7	8	9	4	9	7	6	10	9	8
Law	9	7	4	6	13	5	4	3	9	6	7
Family	8	5	4	7	9	6	9	6	12	8	7
Tax	4	4	3	4	9	6	7	7	4	1	5
Housing	7	2	6	6	8	4	5	6	6	4	5
Education	4	4	6	4	3	5	4	5	5	5	4
Consumer	6	5	4	4	4	1	1	2	4	2	4
Debt	2	1	1	1	1	*	2	1	3	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

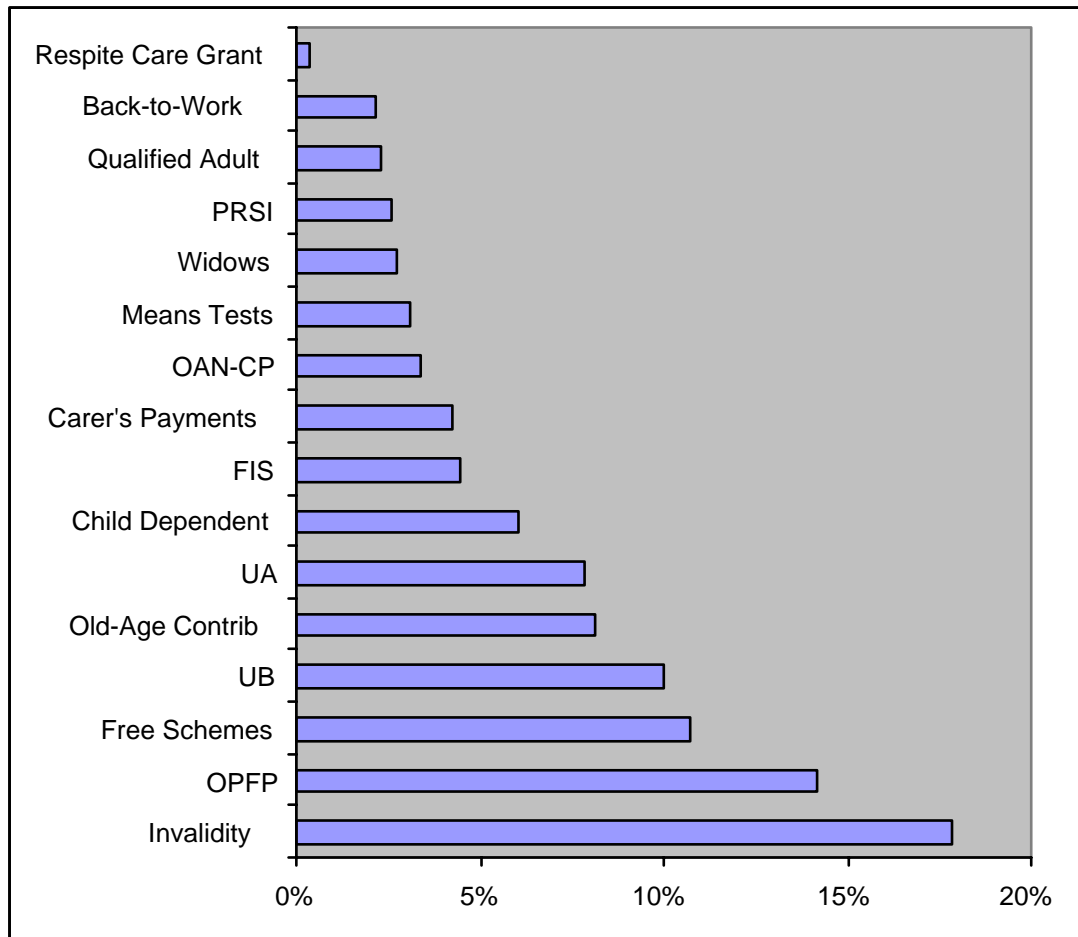
Note *=<1%

5.2 Social Welfare

Over all the centres, and within each centre individually, Social Welfare queries are the most frequently recorded. This finding concurs with that of the 2000 Survey and also previous surveys both here and elsewhere.

Within those areas that make up the Social Welfare category, however, there were considerable variations. Table 5.3 below shows that the single area in the Social Welfare category that evoked most queries was that of Invalidity/Disability Payments (18%) followed by One Parent Family Payments (14%) and Free Schemes (now known as 'Household Benefits Package') (11%). In the 2000 Survey, the largest area was also Invalidity/Disability Payments (12%) followed by Free Schemes (11%) and One Parent Family Payments (9%) in that order.

Table 5.3: Distribution of Social Welfare Queries for all Clients



Within each of these areas there was considerable variation between centres as Table 5.4 below shows. For example, queries concerning Invalidation/Disability Payments accounted for almost one fifth of all social welfare queries, ranging from 23% of all Social Welfare queries in Cork down to 14% in Mayo.

Table 5.4: Distribution of Social Welfare Queries across Centres (%)

Social Welfare	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Invalidity/ Disability	23	17	14	16	16	17	18	19	16	19	18
OPFP	14	15	9	15	13	15	17	11	18	17	14
Free Schemes	11	7	14	12	15	10	8	11	8	15	11
UB	12	11	7	7	9	13	12	6	16	8	10
Old-Age Contributory	9	9	6	8	17	7	7	9	2	8	8
UA	6	11	12	7	7	7	4	9	7	6	8
Child Dependent	3	5	6	14	2	6	10	1	4	4	6
FIS	2	4	4	5	2	7	6	5	9	6	4
Carer Payments	3	5	6	3	2	3	6	7	5	4	4
Old-Age Non Contributory	4	2	6	4	4	3	2	5	1	2	3
Means Tests	3	5	5	1	*	2	2	5	1	3	3
Widows	2	2	3	2	5	3	3	1	3	6	3
PRSI	3	3	3	1	8	2	2	2	2	0	3
Qualified Adult	3	1	2	4	3	1	2	3	3	1	2
Back-to-Work	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	6	*	2
Respite Care	*	*	1	*	*	1	*	2	*	*	*
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note *=<1%

5.3 Health Board Payments

Issues concerned with health board payments constituted 8% of all queries. Table 5.5 below shows that, within this category, queries concerned with Mortgage Interest /Rent Supplement payments accounted for more than 40% of these queries. As has been already stated (see 5.1), these payments have a housing as well as an income maintenance dimension. The equivalent finding for the 2000 Survey was 37%. Supplementary Welfare Allowances and Back to School Allowances were the next largest groups of queries.

Table 5.5: Distribution of Health Board Payment Queries

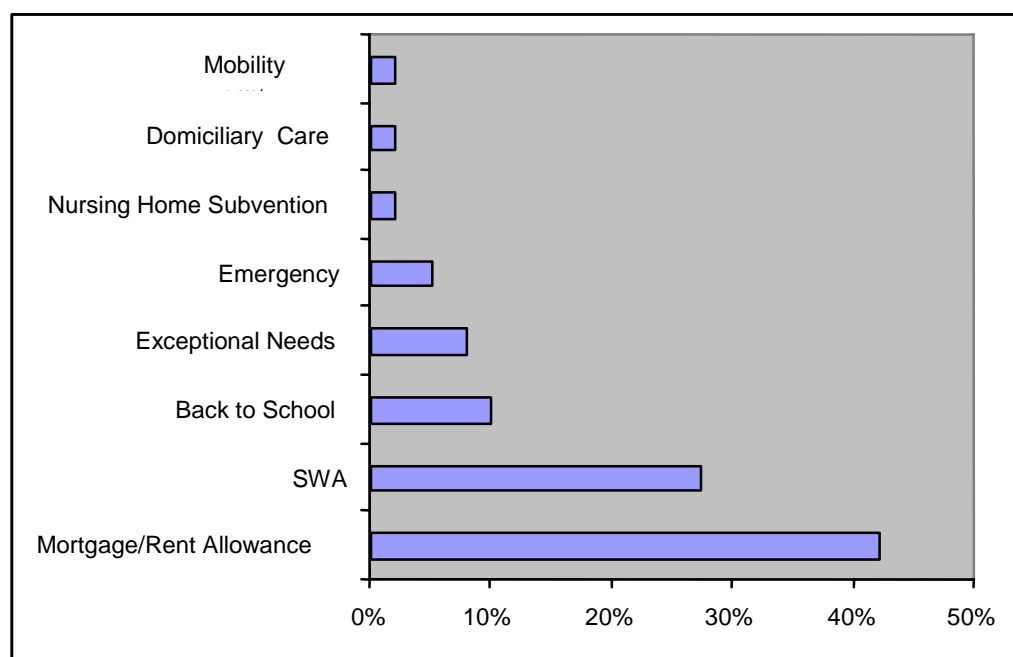


Table 5.6 below shows the percentage distribution of Health Board Payment queries across the 10 centres. Although overall, queries on Mortgage/Rent Allowances are the most dominant, within two centres, Galway and Longford, SWA queries are most frequent.

Table 5.6: Distribution of Health Board Payment Queries across Centres (%)

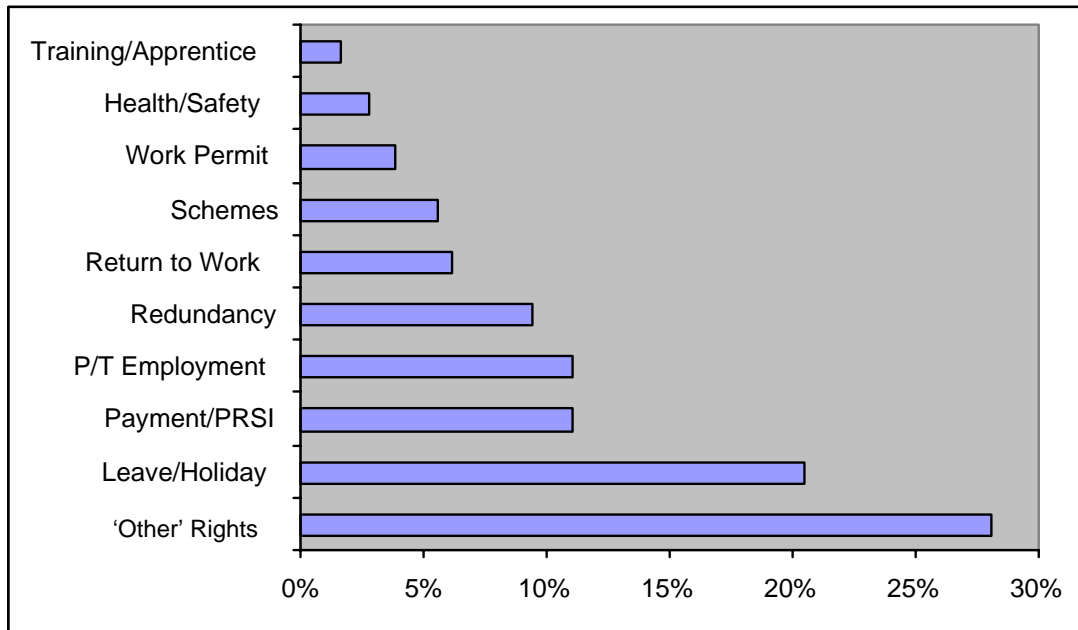
Health Board Payments	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Mortgage/Rent	46	36	41	43	46	44	43	27	49	44	42
SWA	29	42	19	19	23	36	21	36	22	18	28
Back to School	8	6	14	18	8	7	9	9	8	9	10
Exceptional Needs	7	5	9	15	12	6	6	6	11	4	8
Emergency	4	6	6	2	4	4	13	9	5	4	5
Nursing Home Subvention	3	1	3	1	4	3	2	*	*	4	2
Domiciliary Care	2	1	5	1	4	*	4	6	3	2	2
Mobility	*	3	3	1	*	*	2	6	3	13	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note *=<1%

5.4 Employment

Within Employment related queries, three-quarters concerned employment rights. As Table 5.7 shows, Holiday/Leave accounted for 20% , followed by payment of wages/PRSI issues (11%) and redundancy (9%). It should be noted that 28% of Employment related queries were classified as ‘other’ employment rights. This suggests some degree of complexity in these queries.

Table 5.7: Distribution of Employment Queries



There was considerable variation between centres. For example, as Table 5.8 below shows, the area of Holiday/Leave entitlements constituted 27% of all employment related queries in Galway, but only 5% of all employment related queries in Dublin Northside. Similarly, Payment of Wages/PRSI queries accounted for 14% of all employment related queries in Louth but only 2% in Dublin Northside.

Table 5.8: Distribution of Employment Queries across Centres (%)

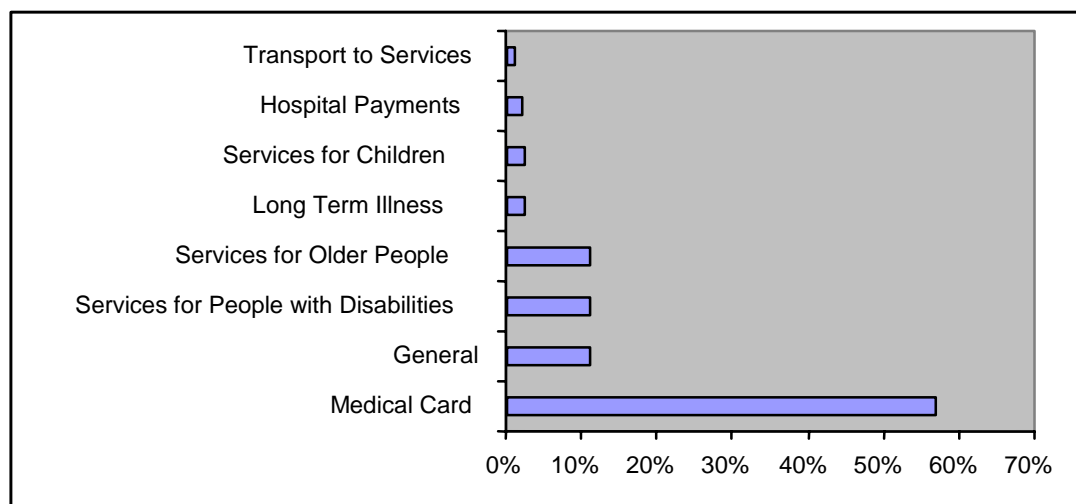
Employment	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Holiday/ Leave Entitlements	22	27	15	15	25	20	18	19	13	5	20
Payment/PRSI	10	13	12	14	8	8	12	9	15	2	11
P/T Employment	10	8	14	21	7	15	9	15	5	7	11
Redundancy	10	8	8	10	10	13	13	5	13	14	9
Return to Work	5	4	14	4	7	5	7	6	10	7	6
Employment Schemes	3	4	7	4	3	9	*	12	10	16	6
Work Permit	2	7	5	5	3	1	4	*	13	*	4
Health/Safety	5	1	2	1	5	2	1	4	*	7	3
Training/ Apprenticeship	1	1	1	2	3	4	1	3	3	*	2
'Other' Rights	32	28	21	24	30	24	34	26	20	43	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note *=<1%

5.5 Health Services

Table 5.9 below shows the distribution of queries in the Health Services category. In the 2000 Survey, as in the current survey, queries related to the Medical Card dominated health services queries, accounting for 47% in 2000 and rising to 57% in the current survey.

Table 5.9: Distribution of Health Services Queries



Medical Card related queries were also the most important health service queries in all 10 centres. As Table 5.10 below shows, Medical Card queries range from 71% of all health service queries in Dublin Northside to 37% in Mayo.

Table 5.10: Distribution of Health Service Queries across Centres (%)

Health Services	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Medical Card	45	64	37	66	53	64	67	55	63	71	57
General	14	10	13	10	16	11	5	7	15	14	11
Services for People with Disabilities	16	13	14	7	10	4	13	25	4	5	11
Services for Older People	12	6	21	11	14	11	9	5	11	9	11
Mobility Allowance	3	3	3	1	4	2	1	8	0	2	3
Services for Children	5	1	3	1	1	2	4	0	7	0	2
Hospital Payments	4	3	3	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Domiciliary Care Allowance	1	1	5	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note *= $<1\%$

5.6 Other Categories of Queries

Apart from Social Welfare, Health Board Payments, Employment, and Health Services, which accounted for almost 70% of all queries (excluding 'Miscellaneous'), the other categories of queries - ie, Family Matters, Law and Justice, Housing, Tax, Education, Consumer and Debt - accounted in total for the remaining 30%. Tables showing the distributions for each of these categories of queries can be found in Appendix 2.

The major findings from these other categories include:

- Queries concerned with family matters constituted 6% of all queries. As in the 2000 Survey, the area within this category which evoked most queries was that of separation/divorce. These queries accounted, in both surveys, for almost one-third of all family matter queries.
- Issues concerned with law and justice also constituted 6% of all queries. Almost two-thirds of queries dealt with general issues, with a further quarter dealing with non-national, citizenship, refugee and asylum issues.
- Housing issues constituted 5% of all queries. Within these queries, 44% overall were concerned with the area of private rented. The comparable figure in the 2000 Survey was 37%. Given that 42% of Health Board Payment queries (8% of all queries), related to Mortgage and Rent Supplement, housing and accommodation issues are in reality approximately 3% higher than the 5% recorded, bringing housing related queries to approximately 8%.

- Taxation issues constituted 4% of all queries.. Within this category, PAYE queries constituted 73% of taxation queries. This was very similar to the finding (72%) for the 2000 Survey.
- Education related queries also accounted for 4% of all queries. In this category 40% of all queries concerned back-to-education programmes.
- Consumer related queries constituted 3% of all queries. Almost 60% of these queries were concerned with consumer rights.
- Issues concerned with debt accounted for 1% of all queries.

5.7 Queries Classified as ‘Miscellaneous’²

Of the 11,196 queries covered by information givers, 12% were classified under the 'Miscellaneous' heading. As already noted earlier in this chapter, in about a third of all these cases, the Miscellaneous category was used to elaborate on a query which was *already* noted in one of the given categories e.g.:

- Services for Older People - charge for maintenance in nursing home
- Part-time Employment - holiday pay entitlements
- Free Schemes - qualifications for a free TV licence

As would be expected the range of remaining queries varied very widely, and indicate the breadth and depth of information issues and queries that CICs deal with on a daily basis.

Many of the miscellaneous queries can themselves be grouped under a number of headings:

Local information: many of the miscellaneous queries were from clients looking for very local information, e.g.,

- The opening hours for the local library
- Directions to a dental practice
- How to find a local firm
- Query on local night courses for adults
- How to contact the local drama groups

Social welfare systems abroad or Irish social welfare system for those living abroad e.g.:

- Details of social welfare in Spain
- UK pension entitlement
- Couple retiring from UK - pension and other queries
- Sisters retiring from USA- local information and social welfare information
- Transferring income support from the UK

² It should be noted that information workers were asked to use the 'Miscellaneous' category on the Data Sheet only if a query could not 'within reason' fit into any of the categories provided. It appears that in practice this Guideline was not adhered to strictly.

Personal issues: this is a very important area, with bullying and counselling issues coming up frequently e.g.:

- Bullying at work
- Disturbance from next door neighbours
- Illegal activities by next door neighbours
- Where to find counselling

Issues to do with Garda Siochana e.g.

- Knowing rights in relation to a search warrant
- Child abduction
- Complaint re garda treatment

Issues to do with non-nationals e.g.

- Asylum seeker wishing to know her rights to travel
- Seeking information about the African community in Dundalk.

Apart from these areas, the example of queries below is a further indication of the extensive range of queries presented to CICs during the survey period:

- Application for/information on waiver of waste charges (multiple queries)
- How to go about becoming a volunteer
- How to write a cheque
- How can pensioners get back into workforce
- How to contact the Ombudsman
- How to renew a heavy goods licence
- What are the rights of unmarried fathers
- What is the minimum wage
- Changing name by deed poll
- Computer classes for person with spinal injury
- Health and safety at school
- Information on PLC courses
- Parental consent on a child passport
- Eviction issues
- OPFP and renting out a room
- Problem with insurance company
- Theory test application form
- Information on child payments from FAS while doing a FAS course
- Problems with not having a TV licence
- Guidelines for starting a creche
- How to access a surgical bed
- Problems with wheelchair access in the workplace
- Child expelled from school
- How to complain about a member of the legal profession

5.8 Key Issues Emerging

- Social Welfare, Health Board Payments, Employment, and Health Services queries accounted for almost 70% of all queries
- As in the 2000 Survey the highest proportion of queries overall related to Social Welfare, with Employment and Health in second and third place respectively. The percentage of Social Welfare queries has dropped from 43% in the 2001 survey to 35% in the present survey.
- Although Social Welfare is the most frequently recorded category in all 10 centres, there is some variation between centres.
- The Social Welfare category that evoked most queries was that of Invalidity/Disability Payments, followed by One Parent Family Payments and Free Schemes. In the 2000 Survey, the three largest areas were also Invalidity/Disability Payments, followed by Free Schemes and One Parent Family Payments.
- Within the Health Board Payments category, more than 40% of queries concerned Mortgage/Rent Allowances. This was similar to the 2000 Survey finding and needs to be considered when examining the housing and accommodation query category.
- Almost half of all Employment related queries concerned Employment Rights including Holiday/Leave entitlements.
- As in the 2000 Survey, queries related to the Medical Card dominated Health Services queries, accounting for 47% in 2000 and 57% in the current survey. Medical Card related queries were the most important Health Service query in all 10 centres.
- The other categories of queries – i.e. Family Matters, Law and Justice, Housing, Tax, Education, Consumer and Debt - accounted for 30% of queries.
- As in the 2000 Survey, the area within the Family Matters category, which evoked most queries was that of Separation/Divorce. These queries accounted, in both surveys, for almost one-third of all Family Matter queries.
- Almost a quarter of Law and Justice queries dealt with Non-National, Citizenship, Refugee and Asylum issues
- The range and variation of queries, classified as 'Miscellaneous', indicate the breadth and depth of information issues and queries that CICs deal with on behalf of their clients.

Chapter 6: Process

6.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report is concerned with the processes used to deal with the presenting queries. It includes the actions taken by the information giver, the sources of information used by the information giver, and whether or not the query was deemed to have social policy implications.

6.2 Actions taken by Information Givers

It is a key service policy objective of Comhairle to ensure that the information and advice services offered in CICs are of a high quality. This involves the delivery of quality information, advice and advocacy.

Information givers were asked to indicate any actions taken by them in respect of clients' queries. Actions were defined as:

- Information actions: ie providing verbal information; providing printed information; referring client to another agency/service/professional
- Advice actions: ie discussing options; providing advice
- Advocacy actions: ie assisting client with form or applications; making representations on behalf of client; assisting with an appeal.

Altogether 12,959 actions were recorded, covering information, advice and advocacy: Of these, 66% were information actions, 28% were advice actions and 6% were advocacy actions.

6.2.1 Information Actions

Table 6.1 below shows that 80% of clients were provided with verbal information, 33% received printed information and 23% were referred to another agency/service/professional. A total of 8571 information actions was taken.

Table 6.1: Types of Information Actions

Information Actions	Number	% of Clients who received this action
Verbal information provided	5054	80
Printed information provided	2098	33
Referred to another agency/service/professional	1419	23
Total	8571	

Clearly many clients received more than one information action (Table 6.2). In the case of 56% of clients only one information action was taken; in 31% of cases, two information actions, and for 6% of clients, three information actions. For almost 7% of clients, the information givers did not make a record here.

Table 6.2: Numbers of Information Actions Taken on Behalf of Clients

Information Actions	Number of Clients	%
One information action	3535	56
Two information actions	1972	31
Three information actions	364	6
No record	435	7
Total	6306	100

For men and women, there was no difference in the information actions taken. Similarly with age and evidence of disability. There were, however, some interesting differences between the centres (Table 6.3). For example, in Blanchardstown, almost 20% of the clients were given both verbal and printed information and were referred to another agency/service/professional, compared to only 3% in Galway and 4% in Cork South Mall.

Table 6.3: Distribution of Information Actions across Centres

CIC	One action	Two actions	Three actions	No record	Total
Cork South Mall	61	29	4	6	100
Galway	68	25	3	4	100
Mayo	53	34	5	8	100
Louth	56	33	5	6	100
Dun Laoghaire	51	36	7	6	100
Carlow	50	35	5	10	100
Newbridge	48	37	8	7	100
Longford	64	23	6	7	100
Blanchardstown	31	37	20	12	100
Dublin Northside	47	33	9	11	100

6.2.2 Advice Actions

Table 6.4 below shows that, in terms of advice actions, options were discussed with 28% of clients and advice was given to 29%. The majority of clients (53%) did not receive either of the advice actions: 38% of clients received either one or other of the advice actions with 9% receiving both.

Table 6.4: Types of Advice Actions

Advice Actions	Number	% of Clients who received this action
Discussion of options	1759	28
Advice provided	1805	29
Total	3564	

As with information actions, there were no discernible differences between advice actions taken on behalf of men and women, or younger and older people. There were, however, substantial differences between those with evidence of a disability and those without. As Table 6.5 shows, for those with evidence of a disability, 57% received advice, compared to 49% of those without evidence of a disability.

Table 6.5: Disability and Advice

Disability Status	Advice Action	No Advice Action	Total
Evidence of Disability	57	43	100
No Evidence of Disability	49	51	100

$p \leq 0.0001$

Again, there were considerable variations between centres, with, for example, 19% of all clients in Mayo receiving both advice actions, compared to only 5% in Louth.

Table 6.6: Distribution of Advice Actions across Centres (%)

CIC	% One advice action	% Two advice actions	% No advice action	Total
Cork South Mall	36	8	57	100
Galway	37	7	57	100
Mayo	38	19	43	100
Louth	40	5	55	100
Dun Laoghaire	36	8	56	100
Carlow	39	9	52	100
Newbridge	43	7	50	100
Longford	20	10	70	100
Blanchardstown	46	15	39	100
Dublin Northside	52	18	30	100

6.2.3 Advocacy Actions

In the case of 6% of clients, assistance was given with forms and/or applications. Representations were made on behalf of 6% and assistance with an appeal was given to fewer than 1% of clients (0.009%).

Table 6.7: Types of Advocacy Actions

Advocacy Actions	Number	% of Clients who received this action
Assistance with forms/applications	383	6
Representations made on behalf of client	386	6
Assistance with an appeal	55	*
Total	824	

Note *=<1%

There appeared to be both an age related and disability related dimension to advocacy. 10% of those under 25 years received at least one advocacy action compared to 23% of those aged 66+. Similarly, 28% of those with evidence of a disability received at least one advocacy action, compared to 12% of those without evidence of a disability.

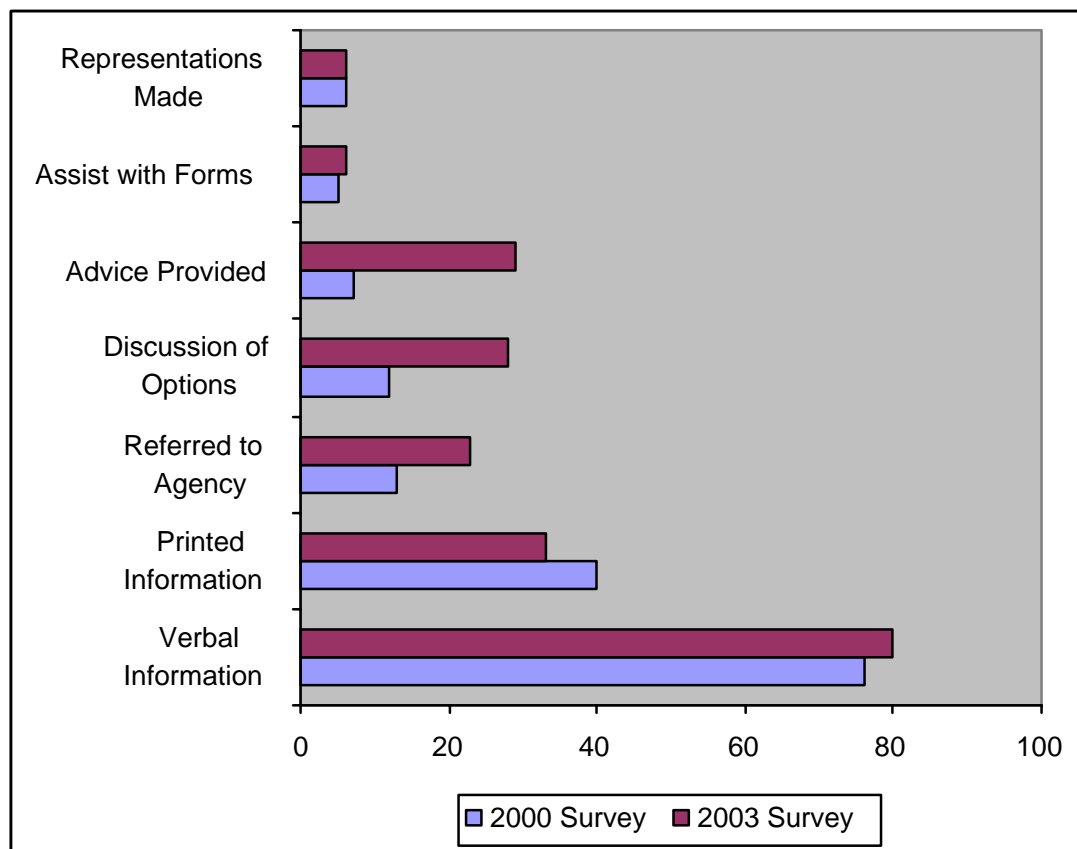
The numbers of advocacy actions were too small to examine across centres.

6.2.4 Comparisons with 2000 Survey

In Chapter 1, it was pointed out, that because of a methodological difference between the 2000 Survey and the current survey (in the 2000 Survey, the information givers were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual *query*: in the current survey they were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual *client*) only broad and general comparisons can be made. This is because, although there is a considerable correlation between 'query' and 'client' in the earlier study, some clients had more than one query. In spite of this restriction, there are some interesting differences between the actions taken by information givers in these two surveys (Table 6.8).

As Table 6.8 below shows, in the case of 'information actions' (especially the provision of verbal and printed information) and 'advocacy actions' (assistance with forms and representations made on behalf of client) the two surveys are broadly similar.

Table 6.8 Actions Taken: A Comparison with Survey 2000 *



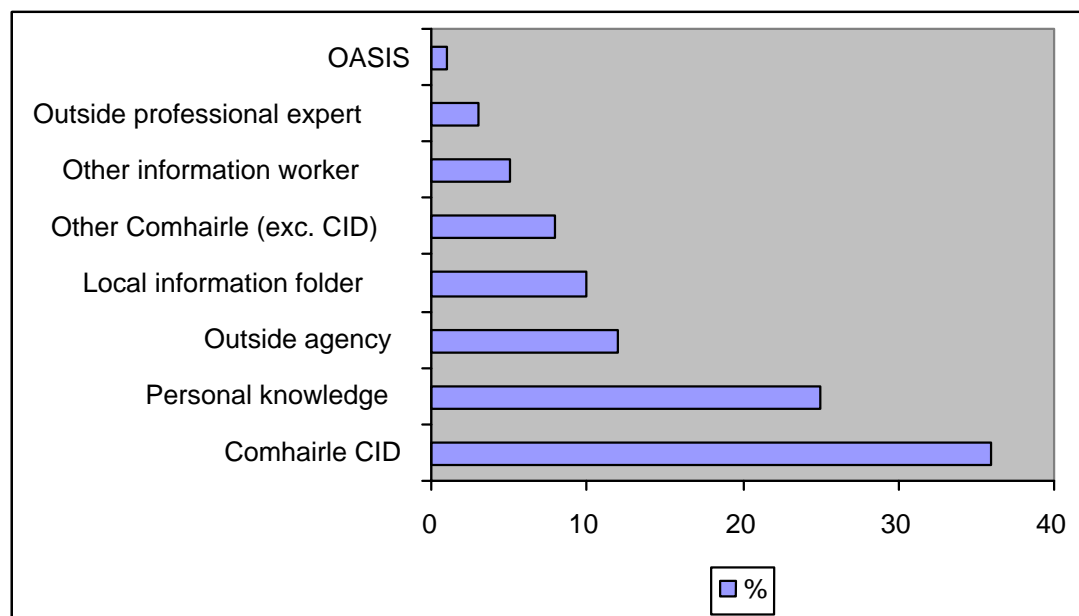
*Note: The advocacy action 'assistance with appeal' is not included in the above table, as it was not measured in the 2000 Survey, and the numbers in the current survey were too small to display

In the area of 'advice actions', there are, however, considerable differences. In the 2000 Survey, options were discussed in 12% of queries, whereas in the current survey they were discussed with 28% of clients. An even greater difference occurs in providing advice. In the 2000 Survey, advice was provided in 7% of queries. This figure rose to 29% of clients in the current survey. In spite of the methodological caution referred to above, these are very substantial differences.

6.3 Sources of Information used to Deal with Query

Information givers were asked to record the sources of information used to respond to clients' queries and a total of 8074 sources of information were recorded. As with the 2000 Survey, the most frequently recorded sources of information were, in the same order, the 'Comhairle Citizens Information Database (CID)' and 'Personal Knowledge/Information. OASIS, as a source of information, accounted for less than 1% of recorded sources (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9: Sources of Information



There were a number of interesting variations between centres in the use of sources of information. As table 6.10 below shows, although the Comhairle CID at 36% was the overall most used source of information, this rose to a maximum of 53% in Galway and Longford, and to a minimum of 10% in Dublin Northside. Conversely, Personal Knowledge/Information which was, at 25%, the second most used source, had a maximum of 55% in Dublin Northside and a minimum of 10% in Longford.

Table 6.10 shows several other examples: eg Local Information was used as a source in 21% of instances in Cork, but only in 2% in Louth; Outside Experts were a source in 12% of instances in Blanchardstown, but only in 1% in Carlow.

Table 6.10: Distribution of Sources across Centres

Sources	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North Side	Total
CID	33	53	38	25	30	30	35	53	37	10	36
Personal knowledge	20	18	20	44	31	31	17	10	21	55	25
Outside agency	7	8	14	13	8	20	23	15	11	27	12
Local information	21	4	7	2	9	6	12	7	10	2	10
Comhairle (other)	7	12	12	5	11	8	7	9	5	3	8
Other worker	10	2	4	4	7	4	3	3	2	0	5
Outside expert	2	2	5	6	3	1	3	3	12	2	3
OASIS	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6.11 below shows that, for 56% of clients, only one source of information was used. For 23% of clients, two sources of information was used. For 8% of clients, 3 or more sources of information was used. In the case of 13% of clients no information source was recorded.

Table 6.11: Number of Sources Used

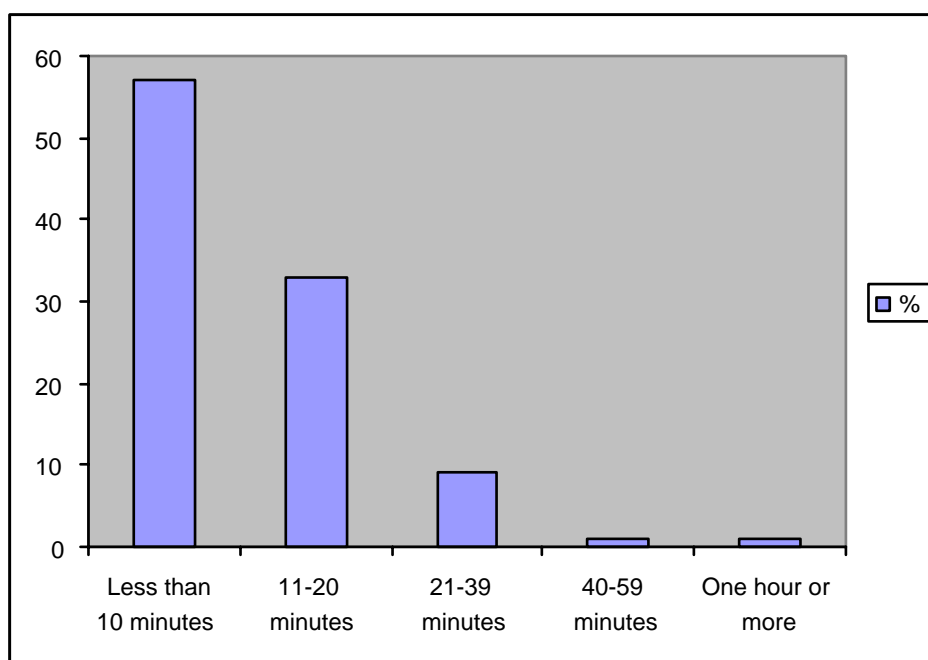
Sources	Number	%
One information source	3528	56
Two information sources	1452	23
Three or more information sources	507	8
No record	819	13
Total	6306	100

For the 56% of clients for whom just one source of information was used, in almost 55% of cases this was the Comhairle CID, with Personal Knowledge/Information accounting for a further 24%. The comparable figures for the 2000 Survey were 53% and 21%.

6.4 Time Spent with Client

Information givers were ask to record the length of time they spent with each client. This information was given for 5704 (90%) clients. As Table 6.12 below indicates, 57% of the client contacts took less than 10 minutes. Just over 1% of all client contacts took over 40 minutes. The mean time was between 11 and 20 minutes.

Table 6.12: Time Spent with Client



The findings of this survey are similar to those of the 2000 Survey, where 54% of all queries took less than ten minutes and a further 38% took between 11 and 20 minutes.

As Table 6.13 below shows, there was evidence of some variation between centres. For example, in Longford more than two-thirds (68%) of clients were processed in less than 10 minutes, while in Blanchardstown this was the case in only 35% of clients. Interestingly, in the 2000 Survey the comparable figure for Blanchardstown was 64% of queries.

Table 6.13: Time Spent with Client across Centres

CIC	Less than 10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21-39 minutes	40-59 minutes	One hour or more	Total
Cork South Mall	67	28	4	1	*	100
Galway	57	33	9	*	*	100
Mayo	47	38	13	2	1	100
Louth	55	30	12	3	*	100
Dun Laoghaire	62	28	8	1	*	100
Carlow	63	34	3	*	*	100
Newbridge	37	45	15	2	1	100
Longford	68	27	5	*	*	100
Blanchardstown	35	46	17	*	1	100
Dublin Northside	50	39	10	*	*	100

Note *=<1%

As with a number of variables, there was a substantial relationship between evidence of disability and time spent with client. Of those clients perceived as having a disability, 61% took 11 or more minutes to have their queries processed. This fell to 43% for those who were not perceived as having a disability (Table 6.14).

Table 6.14: Time Spent with Client, by Disability

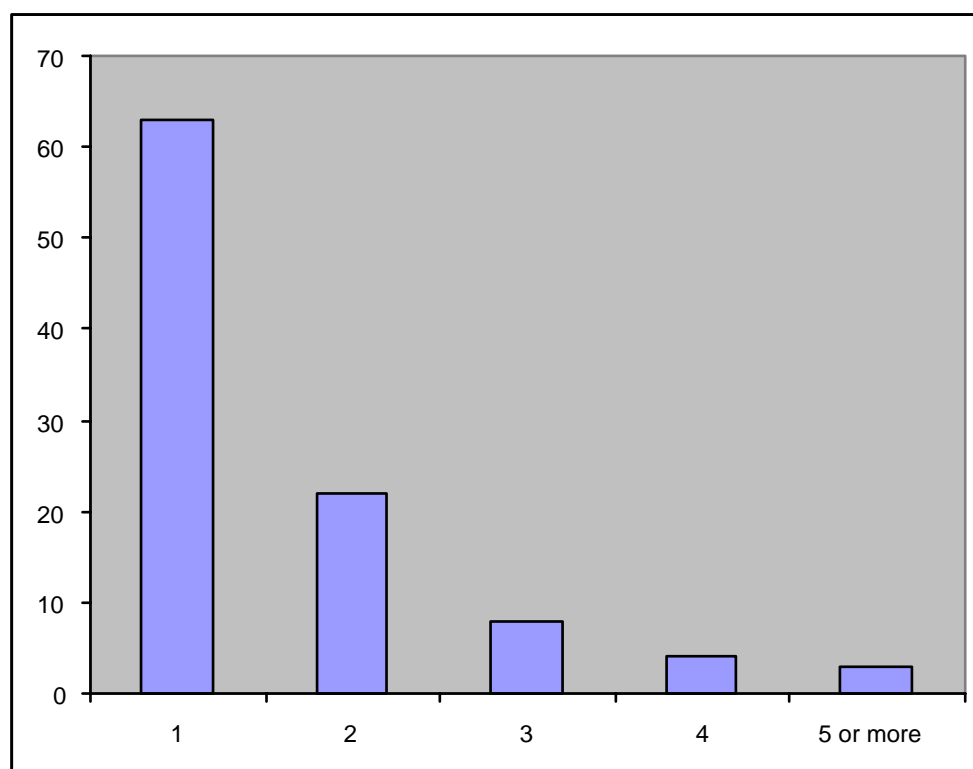
Disability	% Less than 10 minutes	% 11 or more minutes	Total
Yes	39	61	100
No	57	43	100

$p \leq 0.0001$

6.5 The Number of Queries Presented by Each Client

The information givers were asked to record the number of queries each client had during the contact. This information was recorded for 5711 (91%) clients. As Table 6.15 below shows, 63% of clients had just one query and just over 85% of all clients had either one or two queries. The mean was 1.68 queries.

Table 6.15: Number of Queries Presented by Clients



There was some variation between centres in the number of queries clients presented with. In Dublin Northside, for example, 50% of clients presented with 2 or more queries, compared to 26% of clients in Dun Laoghaire (Table 6.16).

Table 6.16: Variation between Centres in Number of Queries Presented

CIC	1 query	2 queries	3 queries	4 or more queries	Total
Cork South Mall	63	24	7	6	100
Galway	64	21	8	7	100
Mayo	54	24	11	11	100
Louth	71	19	7	3	100
Dun Laoghaire	74	18	5	3	100
Carlow	56	25	11	8	100
Newbridge	62	21	8	9	100
Longford	61	19	12	8	100
Blanchardstown	66	21	8	5	100
Dublin Northside	50	33	11	6	100

There were no differences between men and women, or across the age groups, in the number of queries presented. There were, however, differences between those classified as disabled and those not. Clients with evidence of a disability, were more likely to have to have 2 or more queries, than those without evidence of disability. In the former group, 48% had two or more queries compared to 37% in the latter group.

There was also a strong relationship between number of queries and mode of contact. Those who had multiple queries also tended to present in person. It is not possible to say whether they present in person because they have multiple queries, or whether being there in person makes it easier for them to develop their queries.

As would be expected, there was a very strong relationship between number of queries and length of time spent with client. Of those clients (63%), who only had one query, 70% of these were processed in under 10 minutes. Of those clients (22%) who had 2 queries, 44% were processed in 10 minutes. This figure fell further to 25% for those clients (8%) who had three queries.

6.6 Social Policy Implications

As pointed out in Chapter 1, one of Comhairle's key service policy objectives is to identify and bring to the attention of the relevant authorities the feedback of citizens and information providers in relation to the operation of social services (Comhairle, 2003).

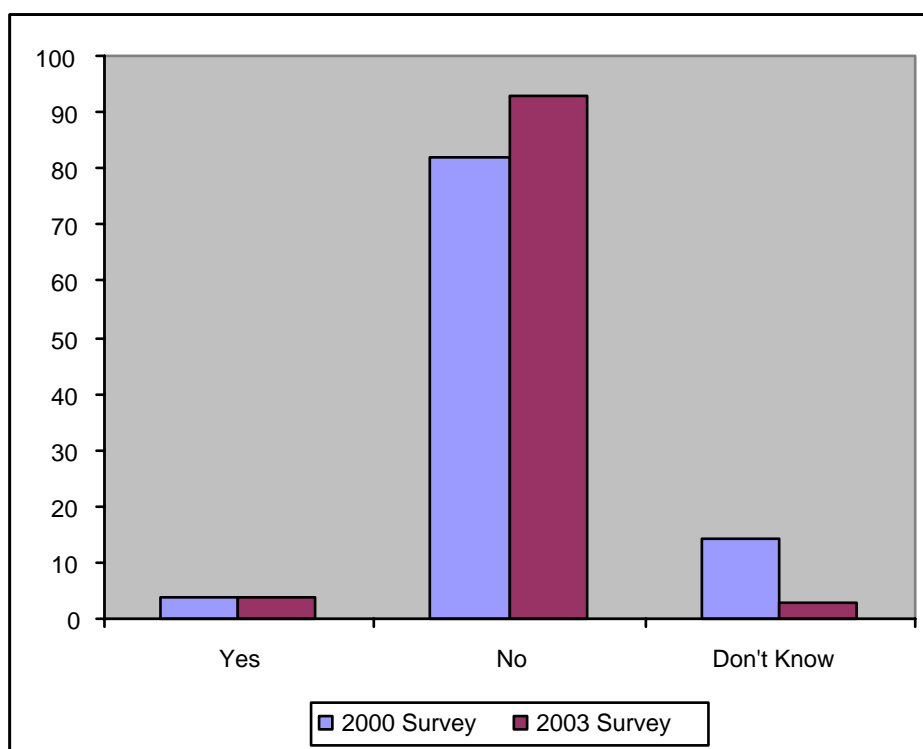
The 2000 Survey reported that information givers considered that 4% of queries had a social policy feedback dimension with a further 14% being placed in the 'don't know' category. At the time, Weafer and Browne concluded:

This latter category suggests a need for additional training and skill enhancement for the information workers in the area of identifying policy feedback elements of queries to CICs.

In the current study, information givers were asked if they thought that the query (queries) had social policy implications. The information givers responded in the case of 4412 (70%) clients.

Table 6.17 below shows that the information givers considered that 4% of clients' query (queries) did have a social policy implication and 93% did not. In just over 3%, the information giver did not know. Even bearing the mind the methodological differences between these surveys, this latter finding is a considerable reduction in the don't know category on the 2000 Survey.

Table 6.17: Social Policy Implications: A Comparison with Survey 2000



There was considerable variation between centres (Table 6.18). Whereas the information givers in Blanchardstown felt that 12% of their queries had social policy implications, this figure dropped to only 1% in Longford and Dublin Northside.

Table 6.18: Queries with Social Policy Implications across Centres

CIC	Yes	No	Don't Know
Cork South Mall	3	95	2
Galway	3	94	3
Mayo	7	86	7
Louth	3	96	1
Dun Laoghaire	2	95	3
Carlow	8	89	3
Newbridge	3	93	4
Longford	1	97	2
Blanchardstown	12	79	9
Dublin Northside	1	99	0

As might be expected, there is a strong relationship between whether or not a query is thought to have a social policy implication and the length of time spent with the client. Of those queries that were judged to have a social policy implication, only 25% of them were processed in under 10 minutes, compared to 58% of those judged not to have social policy implications. Similarly, 25% of those judged to have a social policy implication took 21+ minutes to process compared to 10% of those not so judged (Table 6.19).

Table 6.19: Time Spent in Processing Queries with Social Policy Implications

Social Policy Implication	Less than 10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21 + minutes	Total
Yes	25	50	25	100
No	58	32	10	100
Don't Know	35	43	22	100

$p \leq 0.0001$

6.7 Key Issues Arising

- Information givers were asked to indicate any actions taken by them in respect of clients' queries. Altogether 12,959 actions were recorded, covering information, advice and advocacy: Of these, 66% were information actions, 28% were advice actions and 6% were advocacy actions.
- A total of 8571 information actions was taken. About 80% of clients were provided with verbal information, 33% received printed information and 23% were referred to another agency/service/professional.
- In terms of advice, 3654 actions were taken. Options were discussed with 28% of clients and advice was given to 29%. The majority of clients (53%) did not receive either of the advice actions: 38% of clients received either one or other of the advice actions with 9% receiving both.
- In the 2000 Survey, advice was provided in 7% of queries. This figure rose to 29% of clients in the current survey.
- A total of 824 advocacy actions was taken. In the case of 6% of clients, assistance was given with forms and/or applications. Representations were made on behalf of 6% and assistance with an appeal was given to fewer than 1% of clients.
- As with the 2000 Survey, the most frequently recorded sources of information were, in the same order, the 'Comhairle Citizens Information Database (CID)' and 'Personal Knowledge/Information. OASIS, as a source of information, accounted for less than 1% of recorded sources.
- There was considerable variation between centres in the use of sources of information
- 57% of the client contacts took less than 10 minutes with just over 1% of all client contacts taking more than 40 minutes. The mean time was between 11 and 20 minutes.
- Just over 85% of all clients had one or two queries, with the remainder having 3 or more queries. The mean number of queries was 1.68 queries.
- The information givers considered that 4% of clients' query (queries) did have a social policy implication and 93% did not. In just over 3%, the information giver did not know. The corresponding figures for the 2000 Survey were 4%, 82% and 14%.

Chapter 7: Key Findings and Issues Arising

7.1 Introduction

Following on the earlier 2000 Survey (Weafer and Browne, 2001), the purpose of this survey was to:

- provide a profile of CIC users
- obtain information on the nature and type of queries with which people present
- examine the processes and the sources of information used by centres in dealing with the queries presented

In order to facilitate comparisons between the 2002 Survey and the current Survey, a similar methodology was used. Like the 2000 Survey, this survey covered 10 key CICs (and all the smaller CICs associated with these) for a period of 4 weeks.

There was, however, one important methodological difference between the 2000 Survey and the current survey, which was discussed in Chapter 2: the current survey has the '*client*' rather than the '*query*' as its unit base. In the 2000 Survey, the information givers were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual query: in the current survey they were instructed to complete a Data Sheet for each individual client, regardless of the number of queries. Although it is the case that the majority of clients only have one query, a significant minority have 2 or more queries. This means that although comparisons can be made with the 2000 Survey, these are broad and general comparisons only.

7.2 Profile of CIC Users

Women clients still considerably outnumber men, as was the case in the 2000 Survey and the 1998 CIC Survey (Comhairle, 1998). Although the proportion of male clients was higher in 2000 (36%) than in 1998 (34%) in the current survey it was lowest at 31%. Men attending CICs tended to be considerably older than women, with 42% over the age of 45 years compared to 33% of women.

Weafer and Browne (2001) raised questions as to why there was an apparent relative lack of use of CICs by men. Are information-related issues, given that they pertain largely to welfare and health areas, perceived more as being the domain and responsibility of women? Or are there more practical issues involved such as the location of CICs, their opening hours, or the way in which they are perceived in the community?

Information on clients' housing status was recorded for only 36% of clients. Within this caveat, there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of clients who were in the private rented sector. In the 2000 Survey, one fifth were in this sector, compared to almost one third in the current survey. This finding accords with the recent Census data (CSO, 2003) on home ownership where it was noted that:

The number of private rented dwellings almost doubled (from 71,000 to 141,000) between 1991 and 2002 following declines observed during the previous thirty years. One in nine dwellings are now rented privately.

The primary source of income was noted for 56% of clients in the current survey. As with the 2000 Survey, the balance between those who had social welfare and those who had employment as their primary source of income, was almost equal. As Weafer and Browne pointed out in the earlier study, this finding has implications for any activities which CICs may take locally in order to publicise their services.

As with the 2000 Survey, more than 99% of all contacts with CIC were either personal or telephone calls. Men, however, were substantially more likely than women to personally call rather than telephone. Across the 10 centres, the proportions of clients personally calling varied considerably.

Just over four-fifths of clients called on their own behalf, with the remainder either calling on behalf of somebody else or doing both. These findings were very similar to those for the 2000 Survey. Younger people were more likely to call on their own behalf than older people.

Clients had a variety of reasons for contacting the CIC. As with the 2000 Survey, most clients were seeking simple information. However, it is interesting to note that in two centres (Dublin Northside and Blanchardstown) seeking advice was a more common reason for making contact than just simple information. This trend is further discussed below.

Overall, for about 70% of clients, this was their first contact with the CIC. Again, this figure was very similar to that for the 2000 Survey. There were considerable variations between centres. For about 10% of all clients, their visit was a return visit in relation to an ongoing query. It is not clear whether this means that the queries were so complex that they required more than one visit, or whether the client did not get sufficient or appropriate information, advice or advocacy on the first visit.

Under the Comhairle Act, 2000, Comhairle is the national agency charged with providing mainstream information, advice and advocacy services for people with disabilities. It is therefore vital to have some sense of the numbers of people with disabilities using the services of the CICs. According to information giver feedback, there was evidence of a disability in 13% of clients. That however, is all that can be determined at this stage. No further information on type or severity of disability was sought. This is an area that Comhairle might choose to investigate in more detail.

There was the strong relationship between sex and evidence of disability, with male clients substantially more likely to have evidence of a disability than female clients. In other words, although men are much less likely than women to use the services of the CIC, those men who *do* use them, are much more likely to have a disability than those women who use the services. This is probably largely explained by the fact that men clients tend to be older than women clients.

7.3 Nature and Type of Queries

The number of queries, and the diverse range and nature of these queries, show very clearly that the information, advice and advocacy services provided by CICs are of great importance to people's lives. Over the four week period of this survey, the information givers were presented with over 11,000 queries, ranging from social welfare issues, through health services, employment rights, legal matters, family matters, consumer rights, issues of debt and a wide range of miscellaneous queries concerning local services and providers.

As with the 2000 Survey, while the percentage has dropped somewhat, this survey found that social welfare related queries were not only the most frequently mentioned of all queries, but

they were also the most consistently mentioned in *all* 10 centres participating in the study. These findings are broadly consistent with other Comhairle research (eg Haslett, 2001). The social welfare category that evoked most queries was that of Invalidity/Disability Payments, followed by One Parent Family Payments and Free Schemes (now known as 'Household Benefits Package'). In the 2000 Survey, the three largest areas were also Invalidity/Disability Payments, followed by Free Schemes and One Parent Family Payments in that order.

In the current survey, the 2000 Survey and the Haslett (2001) study, employment related queries followed social welfare queries in overall incidence. However, unlike the latter, employment related queries ranked second in only 7 of the 10 centres, In three centres, Louth, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin Northside, health service related queries were more frequent than employment related queries.

As in the 2000 Survey, queries related to the medical card dominated health services queries, accounting for 47% in 2000 and 57% in the current survey. Medical card related queries were the most important health service query in *all* 10 centres. Indeed, in Dublin Northside over 70% of *all* health service queries related to the medical card.

Initial reading shows a relatively low level of queries relating to housing. In the current study housing issues constituted 5% of all queries. The comparable figures for the 2000 Survey and the Haslett (2001) study are 8% and 6%. However under the category Health Board payments (which constituted 8% of all queries in this survey), 42% related to Mortgage Interest/Rent Supplement payments.

As in the 2000 Survey, although the proportion of queries on family matters was small, the category which evoked most queries was that of separation/divorce. These queries accounted, in both surveys, for almost one-third of all family matter queries. Similarly, although the number of law and justice queries was comparatively small, almost a quarter of dealt with non-national, citizenship, refugee and asylum issues.

The wide and varied nature of the miscellaneous queries was very striking, covering a diverse range of local information, complex queries on social welfare systems abroad, issues to do with non-nationals, and personal issues such as bullying.

Although this survey was only concerned with the gathering of information on the numbers and types of queries, it is not without merit, in view of the vast range of expertise that CIC information givers clearly have, to recap on some of the findings of the Haslett (2001) study. In this study, where the emphasis was more directly on the information exchange process between information giver and client, very high levels of satisfaction were reported by clients. The overall assessment of the process as a whole was described as satisfactory or very satisfactory by 90% of clients. Over 96% of clients felt that the information giver understood their query and 91% felt that they got sufficient information.

More than 87% of clients in the Haslett study felt that the information giver had done everything possible for them and almost 88% agreed that they were going to do something themselves to follow up the information that the information giver had given them. These figures would suggest that the experience of clients in CICs is a very positive one.

7.4 Processes: Information, Advice and Advocacy

A major principle which guides the work of Comhairle is to empower all citizens to access their rights and entitlements through the process of information, advice and advocacy, and to ensure that all of these processes are of the highest quality.

Information givers were asked to indicate any actions taken by them in respect of clients' queries. Altogether 12,959 actions were recorded, covering information, advice and advocacy: Of these, 66% were information actions, 28% were advice actions and 6% were advocacy actions.

Weafer and Browne (2001) identified a gap in their survey between the proportion of clients recorded as seeking advice (28%) and those recorded as having been provided with advice (7%). In the current survey this gap was not observed. In this survey, 22% of clients were recorded as seeking advice, and 29% of clients were reported as having been provided with advice.

This is a very encouraging finding. Browne (1999) noted that individual citizens do not experience problems in discrete categories but rather as a problematic whole. It is therefore important that the information provided is not only factually accurate and adequate, but also relevant and comprehensive. It is thus essential that all relevant options, including advice, are discussed and explored.

A total of 824 advocacy actions were taken. In the case of 6% of clients, assistance was given with forms and/or applications. Representations were made on behalf of 6% and assistance with an appeal was given to fewer than 1% of clients.

As with the 2000 Survey, the most frequently recorded sources of information were in the same order, the 'Comhairle Citizens Information Database (CID)' at 36% and 'personal knowledge/information' at 25%. OASIS, as a source of information, accounted for less than 1% of recorded sources.

7.5 Social Policy Aspects

The provisional returns to Comhairle for 2003 indicate almost 570,000 queries, of which 1150 had social policy feedback in the form of a social policy record. This is a rate of approximately 0.002%.

In both the current survey and the 2000 Survey, 4% of queries were deemed by information givers to have a policy feedback dimension. These figures are so far removed from the reality that they indicate a problem somewhere. If the figure of 4% was generalised to the 2003 returns, it would mean that over 22,000 queries (rather than 1150) had a social policy dimension. Why are the social policy returns so low?

Between the 2000 Survey and the current survey, the Haslett (2001) and other studies, addressed the issue of social policy returns. One of the findings of the Haslett study was that the nature and level of social policy feedback varied considerably from centre to centre, reflecting very different managerial practices with regard to its relevance and importance.

Arising from this and other findings, Comhairle instigated a number of training programmes which had entire modules devoted to understanding the term 'social policy', identifying social policy issues and dealing with these issues at local level. It would seem however, that this is an area which still needs to be addressed.

A Comhairle in-house analysis of the feedback social policy loop between CICs and Comhairle, carried out during the Summer of 2003, noted that a small number of CICs disproportionately submit the majority of social policy records. This analysis posited three key aspects of the process that would require further examination:

- The voluntary nature of the policy feedback relationship between CICs and Comhairle makes it difficult to set appropriate parameters and targets.
- The fact that for the most part CICs do not feed directly into the decision-making process results in a lack of clarity on their part about the utility of engaging in the process
- While Comhairle cannot guarantee results or positive outcomes in terms of its feedback to policy-makers, there needs to be greater clarity as to what it can achieve.

7.6 Main Differences between 2000 Survey and Current Survey

The findings of the current Survey were, in many instances, very similar to those of the 2000 Survey and followed patterns and trends which have been well established in this and earlier surveys. These include:

- Women clients still considerably outnumber men
- More than 99% of all contacts with CICs were either personal or telephone calls
- Overall, for about 70% of clients, this was their first contact with the CIC.
- The two most common reasons given for clients contacting the CIC were, respectively, 'request for simple information' and 'advice'.
- The highest proportion of queries overall related to Social Welfare, with Employment and Health in second and third place respectively.
- The Social Welfare category that evoked most queries was that of Invalidity/Disability Payments
- The most frequently recorded sources of information were, in the same order, the 'Comhairle Citizens Information Database (CID)' and 'Personal Knowledge/Information coming highest on the list.

There were, however, a number of interesting differences, which are summarised here:

- Almost three-quarters of all clients were in the middle age groups (ie 26-65years) compared with only two-thirds in the 2000 Survey.
- Almost two-thirds of clients had dependent children, compared to just over half in the 2000 Survey.
- 42% of clients were owner occupiers, compared to 52% in the 2000 Survey. In the current survey, almost one third were in the private rented sector, an increase from one

- fifth in the 2000 Survey. This finding reflects the growth in the private rented sector as evidenced in recent Census data (CSO, 2003).
- Queries relating to the Medical Card accounted for 47% of Health Service queries in 2000 rising to 57% in the current survey.
- In the 2000 Survey, advice was provided in 7% of queries. This figure rose to 29% of clients in the current survey.
- In just over 3% of queries, the information giver did not know whether it had social policy implications. The corresponding figures for the 2000 Survey was 14%.

7.7 Conclusions

In Chapter 1 it was stated that in order to achieve Comhairle's service policy objectives, it is essential to deliver on a set of supporting objectives of an organisational and operational nature. These objectives include funding, quality control, promotion, and training issues. It is against this background that regular data sets are required in order to provide a valid picture of CIC clients, queries and activities which would assist in the monitoring of the nature and focus of CIC services and contribute to the ongoing development of supports in the areas of information and training.

The information collected in this survey, together with the 2000 Survey and the 1998 Survey, provides a series of significant data sets, which establish valid and reliable information with regard to the clients who use CICs, the nature and the types of queries with which they present, and the processes used to respond to these queries.

This third in the series of regular surveys is the largest and most representative so far. It provides an array of quality data which will be of very considerable use, not only to those working at the strategic and planning level, but also to CIC managers, information givers, and their trainers and mentors.

References

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Weafer J. and Browne. M (2001) *Citizens Information Survey Report*. Dublin, Comhairle

Appendices

Appendix 1. Guidelines and Survey Data Sheet

Appendix 2. Findings for Sub Categories of Queries

Comhairle CIC Survey

Monday 15 September - Friday 10 October 2003

Guidelines for Completing Data Sheet: Please read carefully before the Survey commences on Monday 15 September.

A Data Sheet should be completed in respect of **each** client regardless of the number of queries the client may have. You are asked to complete the sheet **immediately** after dealing with each client. This is important as it helps avoid confusing the details of one client with another. Initially you may find the process a bit time consuming but this will improve when you become familiar with the Data Sheet.

The following information should be provided on each data sheet in the space provided at the top:

- the name of the CIC
- the initials of the information worker who dealt with the query
- the date of the query.

There are four sections to the Data Sheet.

1. Query Source - there are 4 questions in this section. Each question here should only have ONE answer. If a client indicates that he/she is acting on someone else's behalf the details filled in should refer to **the person on whose behalf the query is made**. In completing the data sheet, please tick *clearly* each relevant box.

2. Client Details - Please record the **gender** of client. Other boxes should be ticked if the information, **e.g. age**, has emerged or can be inferred during the course of dealing with the client. Again, for the 9 questions under this category (ie Client Details) there should only be ONE answer in each case. **The final question in this section (ie Nationality) should only be completed if the client is NOT an Irish Citizen.**

3. Query Details - in this section the query details come under a variety of headings eg *Social Welfare, Health Board Payments* and so forth. **Please tick as many boxes under each category as are relevant to the query(or queries) for that client.** It may be that in some cases, a query cannot, within reason, fit into **ANY** of the boxes provided. In that case, use the *MISCELLANEOUS* section at the top of P.3 and briefly describe the query.

4. Process

Please tick all boxes relevant to both '*REASONS FOR CONTACT WITH CENTRE*' and '*ACTION TAKEN*'.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Tick '*Comhairle (other)*' if you use any Comhairle information other than the Citizens Information Database (CID). This includes *Relate, Comhairle Query Support Service* and *Comhairle Publications*.

SOCIAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS: The '*Yes*' box should be ticked if the query is considered to have a social policy feedback aspect, *i.e. the service/benefit available to the client is inadequate, inequitable, inappropriate and/or the system of delivery or access is unsatisfactory*. If there is a doubt or uncertainty, please tick the '*Don't Know*' box.

If you require clarification in relation to completing any part of the Data Sheet please contact: Dr Deirdre Haslett, Nua Research Services, Tel: 01-2955435

Appendix 2

Sub Categories of Queries

Family Matters

Queries concerned with Family Matters constituted 6% of all queries (n=677). As in the 2000 Survey, the area which evoked most queries was that of separation/divorce. These queries accounted, in both surveys, for almost one-third of all family matter queries (Table 1). Other important areas were those of custody/access/guardianship and queries concerning the family home.

Table 1: Family Matter Queries

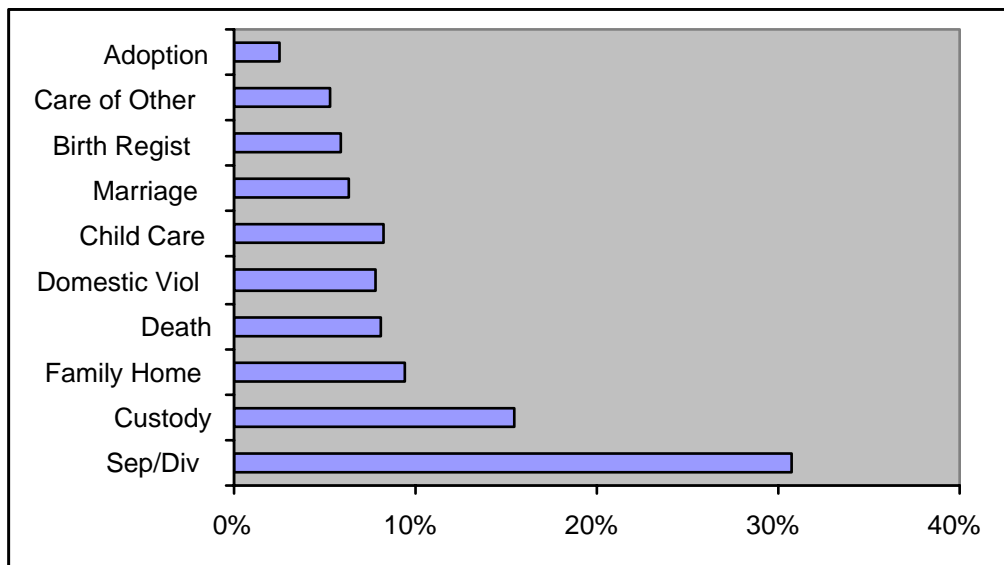


Table 2 below shows distribution of Family Matter queries across the 10 CICs

Table 2: Family Matters Queries across Centres

Family Matters	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Separation/ Divorce	35	26	23	33	24	34	26	18	33	49	31
Custody/ Access/ Guardianship	17	17	5	13	15	13	16	24	15	20	16
Family Home	6	9	15	5	14	8	12	9	17	15	9
Death	6	10	8	8	17	6	12	9	7	0	8
Domestic Violence	9	4	10	10	5	8	7	9	9	5	8
Child Care	9	4	10	7	17	11	6	6	11	2	8
Marriage	8	9	5	5	5	9	7	9	2	0	6
Birth Registration	1	14	5	16	0	4	6	3	4	5	6
Care of Other Dependents	7	6	15	2	3	4	9	6	0	0	5
Adoption/ Fostering	3	2	5	1	0	4	0	6	2	5	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Law and Justice

Issues concerned with Law and Justice also constituted 6% of all queries (n=675). Almost two-thirds of queries dealt with general issues, with a further quarter dealing with non-national, citizenship, refugee and asylum issues (Table 3).

Table 3: Law and Justice Queries

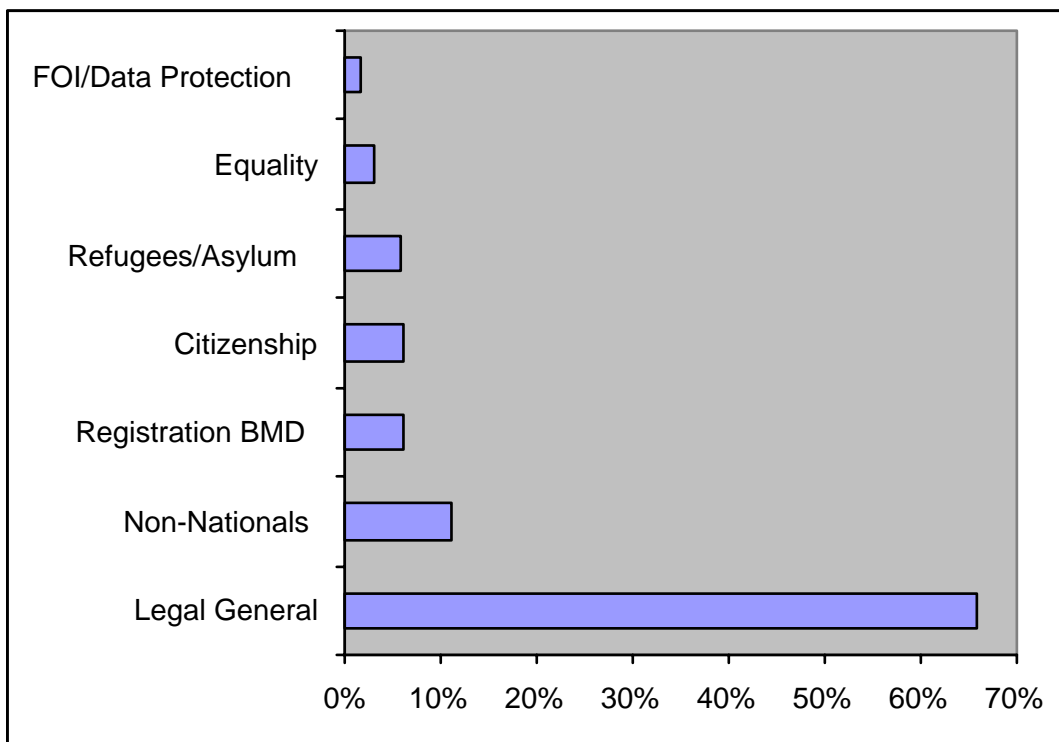


Table 4: Law and Justice Queries across Centres

Law & Justice	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Legal General	83	46	70	42	80	63	43	44	56	88	66
Non-Nationals	4	23	5	20	10	12	17	22	6	0	11
Registration of BMD	4	4	0	18	4	6	13	6	15	3	6
Citizenship	2	9	9	5	1	18	10	17	12	0	6
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	3	12	2	9	5	0	13	11	6	0	6
Equality	2	3	12	4	0	0	3	0	6	9	3
FOI/Data Protection	3	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Housing

Housing issues constituted 5% of all queries (n=533). Table 5 below shows that within housing queries, 44% overall were concerned with the area of private rented, 29% were concerned with local authority housing, 10% with queries related to grants, and so on. The comparable figures in the 2000 Survey were 37%, 17% and 12%.

Table 5: Housing Queries

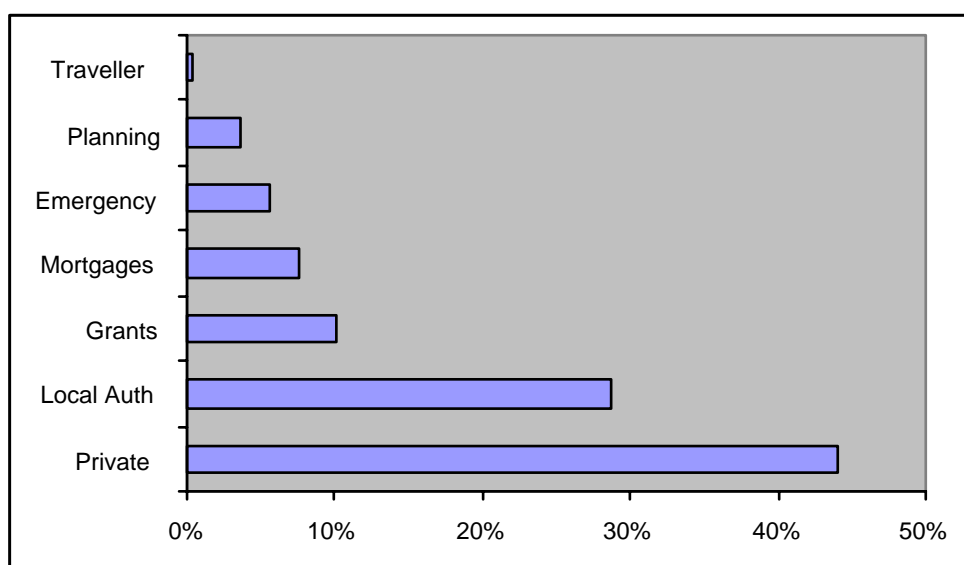


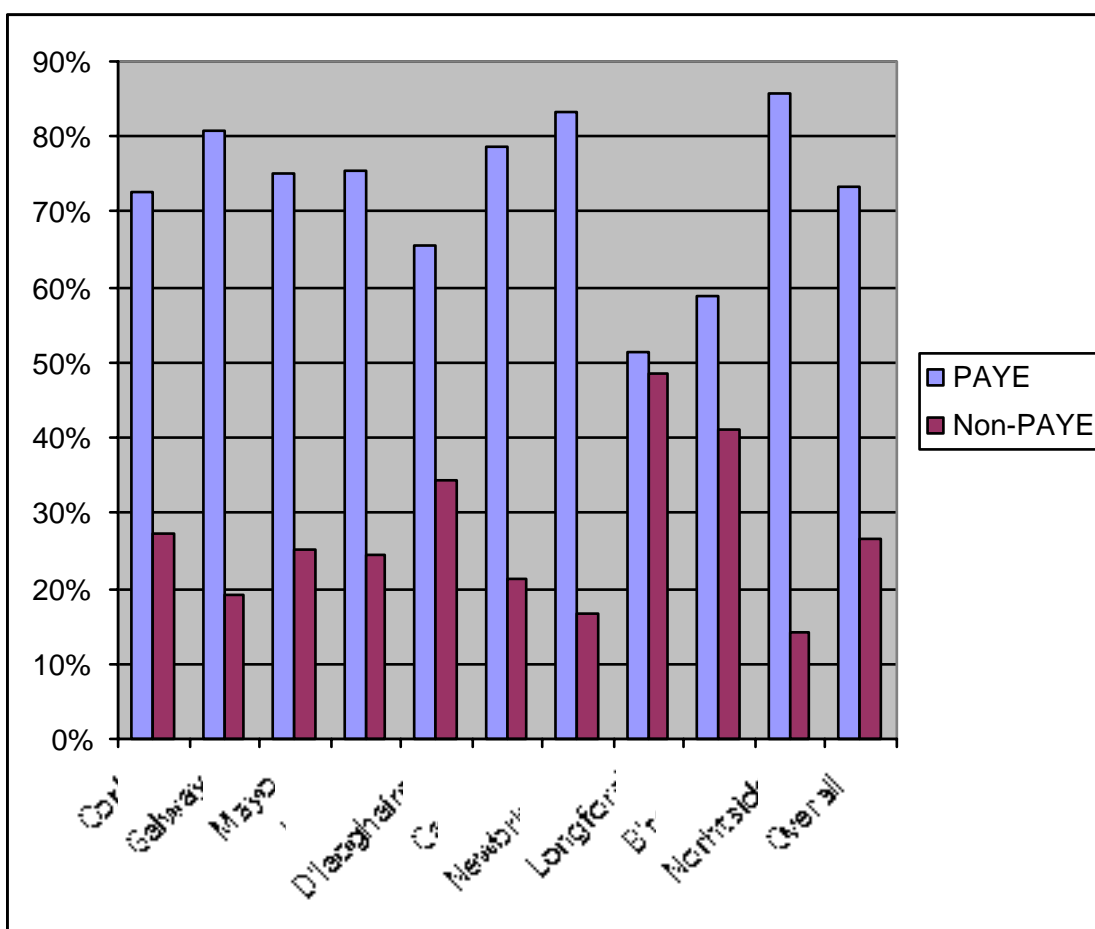
Table 6: Housing Queries across Centres

Housing	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North side	Overall
Private Rented	49	57	30	54	48	49	34	32	52	5	44
Local Auth	28	14	44	24	20	31	24	44	30	25	29
Grants	8	6	13	7	16	8	7	12	0	45	10
Mortgages	8	6	5	13	0	8	12	6	4	15	8
Emergency	4	6	3	1	12	3	20	0	13	5	6
Planning	4	11	5	1	4	0	2	6	0	0	4
Traveller	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Taxation

Taxation issues constituted 4% of all queries (n=460). Within this category, PAYE queries constituted 73% of taxation queries. This was very similar to the finding (72%) for the 2000 Survey.

Table 7: Taxation Queries across Centres



Education

Education related queries also accounted for 4% of all queries (n=430). In this category 40% of all queries concerned back-to-education programmes.

Table 7: Education Queries across Centres

Education	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North Side	Overall
Back to Education Programmes	41	51	44	38	52	30	33	45	30	31	40
Third Level Supports	33	26	39	36	39	43	30	38	45	31	35
Adult Education	24	20	11	16	4	15	24	14	25	35	19
Special Needs	2	2	5	4	4	11	3	3	0	0	4
School Transport	0	2	0	7	0	2	9	0	0	4	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Consumer

Consumer related queries constituted 3% of all queries (n=359). Almost 60% of these queries were concerned with consumer rights.

Table 8: Consumer Related Queries across Centres

Consumer	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North Side	Overall
Rights	53	64	63	67	50	57	44	44	80	25	58
Defective Goods/Services	35	33	32	31	42	43	56	44	20	63	35
Credit	11	3	5	2	8	0	0	11	0	13	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Debt

Issues concerned with debt accounted for 1% of all queries (n=116).

Table 9: Debt Queries across Centres

Debt	Cork	Galway	Mayo	Louth	D'Laoghaire	Carlow	New bridge	Long ford	B'town	North Side	Overall
Consumer	35	36	14	22	22	0	54	67	17	13	30
Bank	45	18	14	11	22	0	31	33	25	25	29
Utilities	15	18	14	44	33	75	0	0	50	25	23
Housing	5	27	57	22	22	25	15	0	8	38	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100