

ANNUAL REVIEW 2012-13

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



Introduction

This Review summarises the work of the Citizens Information Board and our delivery partners in 2012 and into 2013. It shows how we are working to support our customers as their needs become more complex and more time-consuming.

I am proud of our reputation as an organisation that gets things done and that can adapt flexibly, appropriately and speedily to meet the needs of our customers. Our Strategic Plan focuses on change and sets out our priorities as we continue to adapt and develop in the face of a changing nation and a continually changing information landscape.

Tony McQuinn,
Chief Executive Officer

In 2012...

Over **6.6 million users** visited **citizensinformation.ie**

Over **600,000 people** visited a Citizens Information Service and over **150,000 people** telephoned the Citizens Information Phone Service

Over **46,000 people** got help with problem debt from MABS offices and the MABS helpline

The **Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline** was launched

About us

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is responsible for providing information, advice (including money and budgeting advice) and advocacy services to citizens. 'Citizen' means citizens of Ireland and everyone who lives in Ireland and who may use or need our services.

We deliver information directly to the public through our websites, periodicals and other publications. We fund and support key delivery partners to ensure that the public can access our services in the way that suits them best.

Our delivery partners are:

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



Citizen centred
Flexible
Impartial

Non-judgemental
Community
Trust and respect

Available to all

Confidential
Independent

Our remit

We ensure that people have accurate, comprehensive and clear information on social and public services. We support the provision of information and advice on budgeting and money management.

We help vulnerable people, in particular people with disabilities, to identify and understand their needs and options. We provide advocacy services for people with disabilities.

We promote greater accessibility, co-ordination and public awareness of social services.

We give feedback to government on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and we highlight issues of concern.

Our priorities

Our 2012-2015 Strategic Plan outlines five priorities:

1.

We will meet the changing information, advice, advocacy and budgeting needs of citizens, particularly of marginalised and vulnerable groups and individuals – by connecting and responding.

2.

We will implement consistent, high quality services with our delivery partners – by providing services to a high standard.

3.

We will work to develop and implement an integrated service delivery model that puts the citizen at the centre.

4.

We will lead the design and implementation of creative and flexible responses to meet emerging demands for information, advice, advocacy and budgeting support – by creating and adding value.

5.

We will measure the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery approach – by demonstrating outcomes through feedback from users.

Citizens Information

We deliver information through three channels: online, telephone and face-to-face. These three channels work together to ensure that the public can access information, advice and advocacy services in the way that suits them best.

Citizens Information Services (CISs)

Citizens Information Services (CISs) provide a face-to-face service to anyone who needs information, advice or advocacy. The service is free, impartial and confidential.

In 2012 **629,168** callers contacted Citizens Information Services and **269 staff, 210 employment scheme workers and 1,136 volunteers** answered almost **one million queries**. Social welfare questions accounted for 47% of all queries. In the first six months of 2013 over **300,000** callers contacted a CIS with over **470,000 queries**.

Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)

Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) provides a national telephone service on **0761 07 4000** from **9am to 8pm**.

In 2012 CIPS responded to **158,083 requests** for information and advice. On average each call lasted for just under 5 minutes.

Citizens Information Online

Citizensinformation.ie provides comprehensive online information for citizens.

The website had **6.6 million users** and more than **41 million page views** in 2012.



The presentation of the eGovernment Mobile Award to the Citizens Information mobile site (**m.cinfo.ie**). From left: Den Cureton, Information Resources, who helped design and develop the site and Tony McQuinn, CEO with Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service



The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** offers free, confidential and independent assistance for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt. National Traveller MABS advocates for the financial inclusion of Travellers (and other marginalised groups) to promote access to legal and affordable savings and credit.

MABS worked with CIB on a wide range of policy submissions during 2012, especially in relation to the new personal insolvency legislation. MABS launched its Approved Intermediary Service in 2013 which supports debtors applying for a Debt Relief Notice from the Insolvency Service of Ireland. Contact the MABS Helpline on 0761 07 2000 or visit mabs.ie

MABS had **26,163 active clients** on 31 Dec 2012 and during the year MABS saw **22,198 new clients**. There were **24,264 Helpline clients** in 2012. New clients owed €582.9m to creditors at the end of 2012. In the first six months of 2013 MABS saw **11,233 new clients**.



Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD at the launch of 'Issues of Personal Finance within the Traveller Community' with Nuala Ni Ghabhann (left) and Nancy Power, National Traveller MABS.

Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service

During 2012 the Government requested CIB to develop a range of measures in response to the mortgage crisis. **The Mortgage Arrears Information and Advice Service** includes the Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline, the keepingyourhome.ie website and a panel of accountants offering

independent financial advice for people being offered long-term restructuring proposals by the lenders. The Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline took its first calls on 31 July 2012 and was formally launched by Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection in September.

From 31 July to the end of 2012 the Mortgage Arrears Helpline received **1,815 calls**. In the first six months of 2013 the Helpline answered just under **4,000 calls**.

keepingyourhome.ie

Mortgage Arrears
Information Helpline
0761 07 4050
Monday to Friday 9.30am-5pm
Independent and confidential
Residential property information

Find out more about

Mortgage arrears

Code of Conduct on
Mortgage Arrears (CCMA)

Mortgage Arrears
Resolution Process (MARP)

Training services

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



CIS volunteers who have given over 20 years of service to their community with their award certificates with (front centre) Sylva Langford, Chair CIB and (back row from left) Eamonn Burgess (NACIS), Tony McQuinn and Phillip McCabe (NACIS).

In 2012 over **1,000 people** attended training events organised by the Citizens Information Board and **151 people received a FETAC level 6 award** in information provision.

Publications

We published a range of leaflets, booklets and journals in 2012 and 2013. All our publications are available online at citizensinformationboard.ie.



Advocacy services

We provide advocacy services for the public in general and for people with disabilities in particular. Information providers support their clients to act on their own behalf where possible, including those with a disability who are able to access mainstream services. They also advocate on

behalf of clients – for example, by attending meetings, hearings or appeals. In 2012 the Advocacy Support Worker Programme worked to build advocacy capacity and skills in Citizens Information Services.

Over **2,000 people** received an advocacy service in 2012.

The **National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities (NAS)** addresses the needs of more vulnerable people with disabilities who require a targeted service and who are unlikely to be able to access the service themselves without support. 2012 was the first full year of service for NAS. Contact NAS on 0761 07 3000.


Citizens
Information

**National
Advocacy
Service**
for People
with Disabilities

Over **1,000 vulnerable clients** were supported by the service in 2012. In the first six months of 2013 a further **867 clients** received NAS support.

President hosts St Patrick's Day event marking European Year of Citizens 2013

Citizens Information Service, Money Advice and Budgeting Service and National Advocacy Service staff are photographed here with President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina Higgins at the St Patrick's Day event to mark the European Year of Citizens 2013.

Pictured from left are Marian McKenna, Chair, Cristina Santamaria, Manager and Georgina Fedigan, Administrator, Northside Citizens Information Service.



Pictured from left are Sinead Byrne, Chair and Deirdre Power, Manager, Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS).

Pictured is Brendan Nestor, Chairperson, Galway North MABS.



Pictured is Catherine Hanlon, Money Advice Co-ordinator, Offaly MABS.





CIB staff with President Michael D. Higgins and his wife, Sabina Higgins at the St Patrick's Day event.

Pictured is Paula Lally, Money Advice Coordinator, Ballymun MABS.



Pictured from left are Geraldine Mohan, Money Adviser, Orla Nugent, Money Advice Coordinator, and Louise O'Brien, Administrator, Monaghan MABS.

Pictured is Claire Lehane, NAS Advocate, Meath.



Pictured is Michael O'Giollain, Board Member, Leitrim MABS.

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Assist Ireland

Assist Ireland provides information on assistive technology (aids and appliances) for older people and people with disabilities through its website, **assistireland.ie**.

In 2012 **assistireland.ie** had **359,851 users** and more than **3.4 million page views**.



The Sign Language Interpreting Service

The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)

is the national agency for the provision of sign language interpreting services in Ireland. It is an independent voluntary body with its own board of management and is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board. Contact SLIS on 0761 07 8440 or visit **slis.ie**.



Assuring the Quality of our Services

One of our strategic priorities is to implement consistent, high quality service across all our services – those we provide directly and those provided with our delivery partners. To achieve this, we have begun to implement a quality assurance programme. We carried out a public tendering process in 2012, and the chosen quality assurance programme is the European

Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Gold Star Service Excellence programme provided by the Centre for Competitiveness. This assesses customer service excellence with reference to a set of quality standards. The programme is being rolled out incrementally and during 2013 and 2014 all our services will aim to achieve the EFQM Gold Star Quality Mark.

