



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

STRATEGY STATEMENT 2011-2014

Working for a Safer, Fairer Ireland

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STRATEGY STATEMENT 2011 -2014

Foreword by the Minister

The economic and fiscal challenges facing the Government are well documented. The Government's *Programme for National Recovery, 2011–2016* sets out an agenda of change and reform that aims to lay the basis for economic renewal and recovery. Addressing the gap between revenue and expenditure in the public finances, while at the same time creating the conditions in the economy that will foster a return to economic and fiscal stability hand-in-hand with employment growth, are key Government priorities. The Department of Justice and Equality has a vital role to play in creating the environment that will foster these conditions, not only by working towards a safer, fairer Ireland, but also by leveraging the justice and equality system to facilitate business and tourism development.

The Department's agenda in the Government's Programme is challenging and extensive. This Strategy Statement develops the commitments in the Programme and sets out how they will be implemented over the next three years. It is being written at a time of financial stress and must, therefore, be realistic in its scope. The focus is on maintaining the front-line justice and equality services on which our country and communities depend, as well as on consolidation and transformation of service delivery in order to maintain service levels against a background of diminishing resources. The goal: a safer, fairer Ireland for all our people.

I look forward to working with the Department and its agencies in the delivery of this Strategy to achieve the justice and equality commitments in the Programme for Government. The programme of work is already well underway.

Alan Shatter T.D.
Minister for Justice and Equality

Introduction by the Secretary General

I am very pleased to introduce this Strategy Statement. The Strategy outlines how the Department of Justice and Equality will implement Government priorities, as set out in the Government's Programme, and meet the challenges in the justice and equality area over the next three years.

The Strategy Statement is the core document from which all Departmental business planning emanates. It sets a planning framework for the efficient and effective management of the Department's mandate across the justice and equality sector. The period covered by this Strategy Statement, which will include the Irish Presidency of the European Union in 2013, will be challenging as resources diminish. Our mandate, as reflected in the Mission Statement and developed in the Strategy Statement, is equally challenging and the talents and commitment of all staff throughout the organisation and its agencies will be vital to fulfil it.

We will keep this Strategy Statement under review to ensure that it continues to reflect our priorities and, in its implementation, through a pro-active business planning process, contributes to the effective and efficient management of the Department and delivery of strategies.

A strong partnership approach with our staff, and with all our stakeholders, will be crucial to success and I look forward to working closely with all colleagues and stakeholders in the period ahead.

Brian Purcell
Secretary General

Part 1 – CONTEXT

Developing Strategy: an inclusive approach

This Strategy Statement sets out the overall high-level objectives and policy goals of the Department of Justice and Equality for the period 2011 to 2014. It has been developed following consultations across the Department, under the direction of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC), and with our staff, in a partnership approach. Other Government Departments and offices and all justice and equality agencies (listed in Appendix 2) were also consulted.

Operating environment: challenges and opportunities

The Department operates in a complex and challenging environment, both nationally and internationally, characterised by the following significant features:

- The Department's remit, through its agencies, covers, among other things, aspects of national life as diverse as the protection of life and property, the prevention and detection of crime, maintaining and promoting fairness and equality, services for the buying and selling of property, managing inward migration to the State, and providing a Courts Service. The justice and equality issues with which the Department deals are crucial to sustaining a democratic society.
- Much has been achieved in recent years, through the actions of the Department and others, to make Ireland a safer place to live, work, visit and do business, and to grow justice and equality systems in which the public have confidence.
- We have excellent committed staff at every level in the Department and across the sector: in all, some 24,000 staff work in the sector.
- The gross allocation for the Justice Group of Votes in 2012 is €2.317 billion of which €2.261 billion relates to current expenditure and the balance of €56 million to capital expenditure. The breakdown between the votes is as follows:

An Garda Síochána	€1.446 billion
Prisons	€336 million
Courts Service	€106 million
Property Registration Authority	€34 million
Justice and Equality	€395 million
TOTAL	€2.317 billion

- The gross current expenditure allocations for the Justice Group for 2013 and 2014 are €2.198 billion and €2.083 billion respectively. The capital expenditure allocations for 2013 and 2014 are €56 million and €60 million respectively.
- *The Programme for Government, 2011-2016* sets out a challenging agenda for the Public Service and the Department while, at the same time, envisaging further reductions in public service numbers and expenditure.
- Budget allocations to the Group of Votes have fallen considerably in recent years and are targeted to fall still further over coming years. The very difficult budgetary environment means that the focus has now shifted to assessing the rationale, value, efficiency and effectiveness of programmes.
- Staff numbers are also falling in the context of the Employment Control Framework. Moreover, because of the age profile, we expect to lose further significant numbers of experienced officers to retirement over the period of the Strategy.

- At the same time, the demands on the system, as set out in the *Programme for Government* and other Government programmes, and as governed by our international obligations, are increasing.
- The culture in the Department of Justice and Equality and our agencies is one of responsiveness and adaptability in a changing environment. This culture is actively encouraged at all levels and underpins this Strategy and all our programmes.
- We are continuing to work to develop the Department in line with best practice generally. Real and measurable flexibility and productivity improvements are being delivered, in line with the *Public Service Agreement*.
- Resources are being freed up and service delivery rationalised so that the available resources are aligned in support of our strategic priorities to maintain services to the public against a background of reducing resources and increasing demands. This process will be sustained and accelerated over the period of this Strategy Statement and all opportunities and resources - internal, shared and external - will be harnessed to deliver better customer service and value for money.
- Ireland will hold the Chair of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Presidency of the European Union during the lifetime of this Strategy Statement, each of which will bring its own pressures.

Policy context: reflecting the Programme for Government

This Strategy Statement has been developed in accordance with Government policy and priorities, as set out in the *Programme for Government, 2011–2016* (see Appendix 3) and other relevant documents. Having regard to the policy context set out in these documents, the Department's focus is on:

- *Economic and fiscal recovery:*
 - to contribute to Government and other initiatives, such as the Jobs Initiative, which support economic and fiscal recovery
 - to provide an immigration system with appropriate policies which meets the needs of a changing society and which facilitates to the greatest extent possible national economic development
 - to provide a regulatory environment to support economic recovery
 - to deliver services in an economically viable manner/within budget
- *Crime and security:*
 - to protect the State and its people against terrorism in all its forms
 - to combat crime, including organised crime and white collar crime
 - to enhance safety in our communities and on our roads
- *Effectiveness of justice system:*
 - to give strategic direction and oversight to the justice system and the process of reform
 - to balance the needs of the community and those of victims of crime and the rights of those accused
- *Fairness, equality and integration:*
 - to promote equality and integration in Irish society in order to further economic growth, social inclusion and fairness

- *Law and regulatory reform:*
 - to continuously update criminal and civil law, including family law, and regulation to meet the changing needs of society and business
- *International obligations:*
 - to optimise Ireland's interests on the international stage
 - to contribute towards the success of Ireland's Chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2012) and Presidency of the European Union (2013)
- *Cross-functional and joint agency collaboration:*
 - to drive cross-organisational co-operation and goal-sharing between all justice and equality organisations and with other Departments and agencies
 - to contribute to effective cross-functional and joint agency collaboration, for example, in relation to social policy, children, substance misuse and other cross-Governmental issues
- *"Open Government" reform:*
 - to contribute to the Government's "Open Government" reform initiative, which encompasses constitutional, political, parliamentary, administrative, public sector and corporate reform elements
- *Delivering an excellent service:*
 - to contribute to improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness, knowledge management and service delivery
 - to provide an excellent and open service to our Ministers, to the Oireachtas and to our customers in line with our Customer Charter and Action Plan.

Critical success factors: the things that will help us realise our goals

In order to deliver on our Strategy in a period of reducing resources, we will enhance organisational capacity and capability, develop our people and maximise the return from every euro at our disposal. In particular, we will:

- commit to change and reform – flexibility, efficiency and innovation - underpinned by the *Public Service Agreement*
- through our organisational structures, allocate and align our resources to support our strategic priorities
- give strong visible leadership within the Department and agencies
- improve cross-agency and cross-programme collaboration
- proactively contribute to cross-Governmental programmes, including shared services
- communicate effectively and engage with stakeholders (internal and external)
- implement effective risk management, budgetary controls and accountability
- achieve procurement economies
- ensure that the processes and systems on which our services depend are efficient and resilient, with most effective use of technologies to facilitate and drive performance and delivery
- improve performance evaluation and outcome measurement.

The main risk to our Strategy is the non-availability of staff and financial resources to deliver the commitments set. Increasing customer and stakeholder demands and the challenges provided by the internal and external change environment also have the potential to impact negatively on the Strategy.

Other organisations with which we work to achieve our goals

The Department works in partnership with other Departments and offices/agencies on cross-cutting issues to achieve our goals. The scale and scope of this collaboration is illustrated by, but is not limited to, the following:

- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform: public expenditure and public service reform
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: an immigration system to assist economic recovery
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation: business/employment facilitation and regulation
- Department of Social Protection: Jobs Initiative and social inclusion issues
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs: youth justice
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport: road safety and the development of tourism
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government: emergency management and joint policing
- Department of Defence: security co-operation
- Department of Health: National Drugs Strategy and mental health services
- Office of Public Works: National Procurement Service
- Revenue Commissioners: interaction between justice legislation and the tax system.

These are just some examples. The Department of Justice and Equality, by the nature of its functions, plays a role in economic and social developments right across the Government sector.

Part 2 – STRATEGY

Our Mission Statement

To maintain community and national security, promote justice and equity, and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with the common good.

Our Vision

A safer, fairer Ireland

Our values: how we do our work

We seek to:

- facilitate access to justice
- apply fair and equitable standards to all
- respect and value the individual with whom we engage
- show courtesy and integrity
- provide excellent services and value for money to the public
- demonstrate accountability for our actions.

Our goals: what we're working towards

We aim to:

- maintain a secure Ireland
- work for safe communities
- facilitate the provision and administration of justice
- promote equality and integration
- represent Ireland's interests in the above spheres in EU and other international organisations
- contribute to economic recovery.

Our programmes:

We will:

- put in place a policy direction and framework for **tackling crime**, including prevention, intervention and enforcement measures, and money laundering
- set the strategic direction for an **integrated justice system** and support all elements of the system; in particular, continue to provide safe, secure and humane custody for those committed to prison by the courts, as well as developing alternatives to custody and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- support **community policing models and partnerships**, including interventions directed at young offenders, as a response to anti-social behaviour and low-level crime
- co-ordinate, develop and implement policies to promote **equality and integration**
- develop measures and maintain policies aimed at ensuring the **security of the State** and participate in/contribute to international initiatives to counter the threat of terrorism and serious/organised crime
- implement **immigration** and related policies and services that are responsive to the needs of Irish society, contribute to tourism and economic development, and comply with our national and international obligations
- enhance capacity to tackle **human trafficking, domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, and misuse of drugs, including alcohol**
- foster **North-South and international co-operation** in all relevant matters
- develop appropriate **legislative frameworks and instruments** as a basis for justice and equality interventions
- establish appropriate **regulatory frameworks** for the protection of individuals/organisations and as a basis for economic recovery and growth
- provide effective **governance** oversight of agencies within the Department's remit
- drive **organisational change and development** in the Department and its agencies, pursuant to the Public Service transformation and change agenda, optimising integration, shared services, strategic procurement and ICT, to maintain essential front-line services, in line with the *Programme for Government*.

Our strategic outcomes: what we aim to achieve

We aim to achieve:

- reduction in crime and more secure communities
- advancement of the security of the State
- a more equitable and inclusive society
- fair, effective, efficient and accessible justice systems
- greater public confidence/trust in justice and equality agencies/systems
- strengthened international relations which deliver on Ireland's interests
- a legislative and regulatory environment that fosters economic recovery
- value for money and excellence in delivery of justice and equality services.

Delivering the Strategy

This Strategy Statement is necessarily high level and intended to be a general roadmap for the Department for the next three years. Implementation will be effected through the Department's annual business planning process which will take account of changes in our environment and availability of resources, following the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure and the annual estimates processes.

Monitoring of progress

In Appendix 1, we set out more details of the actions we will take, under each of the programme areas, together with the related output indicators and strategic outcomes. These reflect Government policy, in particular as set out in the *Programme for Government, 2011–2016*. We will monitor progress through the business planning process and will report annually in our Annual Report.

Actions, Output Indicators and Strategic Outcomes*

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Tackling Crime</p> <p>Develop a <i>White Paper on Crime</i></p> <p>Continue to develop policy in relation to combating organised crime and cyber crime</p> <p>Enable white collar crime to be effectively tackled</p> <p>Establish a DNA database to assist An Garda Síochána in the investigation of serious crime</p> <p>Develop more competent, caring and efficient services for victims of crime</p>	<p>Overall framework for tackling crime, incorporating prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies, in place</p> <p>Review of legislation in relation to Criminal Assets Bureau complete and implementation of recommendations</p> <p>Enforcement strategies in place</p> <p>Appropriate legislation and structures in place</p> <p>Anti-money laundering/terrorist financing controls in place</p> <p>Legislative framework in place.</p> <p>Planning advanced for new Forensic Science Laboratory, with associated services</p> <p>Framework in place, comprising Government and voluntary initiatives, to support victims of crime</p>	<p>Reduction in crime and more secure communities</p> <p>Fair, effective, efficient and accessible justice systems</p> <p>Greater public confidence / trust in justice and equality agencies/systems</p>

* These programmes are based on commitments in the *Programme for Government, 2011 –2016* and other relevant strategy documents, including the EU/ECB/IMF Programme, where specifically indicated

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
Integrated Justice System		
Further develop cross-agency communications	Improved risk management and efficiencies	Reduction in crime and more secure communities
Expand ICT linkages within the justice system	Enhanced electronic linkages in place. Reduced duplication of effort in agencies	Fair, effective, efficient and accessible justice systems
Continue process of courts reform, including Judicial Council, Court of Appeal, judicial appointments, Circuit Civil Commercial Court and mediation	Enhanced procedures in place Delays reduced	Greater public confidence / trust in justice and equality agencies/systems
Continue process of reform of the management and administration of court functions	Enhanced processes in place Delays reduced Fines Act fully implemented	
Continue process of reform of legal aid to ensure service delivered at most economical cost	Increased efficiency of the criminal justice system	
Review penal policy	Review completed Better use of community service scheme	
Review prison development strategy and oversight mechanisms	Implement recommendations of <i>Thornton Hall Review Group Report</i> Prison oversight arrangements revised	

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Community Policing Models and Partnerships</p> <p>Strong and efficient policing</p> <p>Review of operation of Joint Policing Committees</p> <p>Improve effectiveness of Garda Youth Diversion Projects and other community-based interventions in relation to juvenile offenders</p> <p>Increase effectiveness of enforcement to improve safety on the roads</p>	<p>Effectiveness of Garda operations</p> <p>Effective operation of Joint Policing Committees and local policing <i>fora</i></p> <p>Reduction in level of offending behaviour in target groups</p> <p>Reduced road deaths and injuries</p>	<p>Reduction in crime and more secure communities</p>

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Equality and Integration</p> <p>Oversee the implementation of the <i>National Women's Strategy, 2007–2016</i> and implement a programme of positive actions to foster gender equality; and assist Government Departments and public bodies in taking note of gender equality issues and rights in carrying out their functions</p> <p>Support integrated policies and activities to further the integration of the Traveller Community</p> <p>Raise awareness of and co-ordinate and support the equal participation of people with disabilities in society</p> <p>Support and facilitate the integration of legally-resident immigrants into Irish society</p>	<p>Enhanced achievement of the key gender equality target indicators measured by the European Commission</p> <p>Enhanced consideration of gender equality issues in national policy proposals</p> <p>More integrated service delivery and enhanced communication</p> <p>Disability Act 2005 implemented across the public sector</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities ratified</p> <p>Disability awareness-raising measures undertaken</p> <p>Effective consultation with migrants and other stakeholders</p> <p>Review approaches to migrant integration and modify as necessary</p> <p>Anti-racism measures and measures to promote integration of migrants developed</p>	<p>A more equitable and inclusive society</p>
<p>Security of the State</p> <p>Counter the threat of violence by terrorists</p>	<p>Enhanced effectiveness of Garda operations</p>	<p>Advancement of the security of the State</p>

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Immigration</p> <p>Develop the immigration system to contribute to investment in the State and to assist in economic development</p> <p>Maintain the integrity of the asylum and immigration system</p>	<p>Increased numbers of tourists from countries covered by the UK Visa Waiver Programme</p> <p>Number of new investment/ entrepreneur-related residence permissions granted</p> <p>General Permissions regime tailored to maximise economic activity</p> <p>Provisions of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill implemented when enacted</p> <p>The integrity of the Common Travel Area with the UK maintained and enhanced</p> <p>Improved co-operation and understanding with other State agencies by adopting a more joined up approach to immigration-related matters</p> <p>Improved rate of processing of applications such as citizenship</p>	<p>Advancement of the security of the State</p> <p>A legislative and regulatory environment that fosters economic recovery</p>

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Tackling Human Trafficking, Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, and Misuse of Drugs, including Alcohol</p> <p>Complete review of <i>National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Human Beings in Ireland 2009–2012</i>; develop new plan</p> <p>Implement <i>National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, 2010 to 2014</i></p> <p>Contribute to implementation of <i>National Substance Misuse Strategy</i></p>	<p>Progress in the implementation of relevant strategies and responses</p>	<p>Reduction in crime and more secure communities</p>
<p>North-South and International Co-operation</p> <p>Continue to seek to enhance North/South and international co-operation across the range of justice areas</p>	<p>Progress in reflection of Ireland’s interests in international <i>fora</i></p> <p>Successful discharge of EU Presidency functions in 2013</p>	<p>Advancement of the security of the State</p> <p>Strengthened international relations which deliver on Ireland’s interests</p>
<p>Legislative Frameworks and Instruments</p> <p>Implement agreed Government legislative programme -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to enhance the protection of persons, property and society from criminality by progressively reforming the criminal law ▪ to continue to reform our civil laws ▪ to ensure that legislative programme reforms meet our EU and international commitments ▪ this will include the Personal Insolvency Bill, which will provide for a new framework for settlement of debt and personal insolvency (the commitment under the EU/ECB/IMF Programme of Financial Support for Ireland is to publish the Bill in Q1 2012) 	<p>Legislation enacted and relevant administrative frameworks in place</p> <p>Criminal and civil law, including family law, kept under review in light of developments</p>	<p>A more equitable and inclusive society</p> <p>Greater public confidence/trust in justice and equality agencies/systems</p> <p>A legislative and regulatory environment that fosters economic recovery</p>

** Indicative

Actions	Output Indicators**	Strategic Outcomes
<p>Regulatory Frameworks</p> <p>Legislate for independent regulation of the legal profession and transparency of legal costs in accordance with EU/ECB/IMF commitments (The Legal Services (Regulation) Bill 2011 was published by Government in October 2011 – see www.oireachtas.ie)</p> <p>Establish a Property Services Regulatory Authority</p> <p>Promote better regulation, including of gambling</p>	<p>Enactment of legal services legislation</p> <p>Enactment of legislation and provision of necessary establishment and implementation support arrangements (The Property Services (Regulation) Bill 2009 was passed by the Oireachtas in November 2011)</p> <p>Active, transparent regulation systems and processes in place</p>	<p>Greater public confidence/trust in justice and equality agencies/systems</p>
<p>Governance</p> <p>Implement effective governance of justice and equality agencies to ensure that they deliver on their mandates within allocated budgets and that they co-operate with each other on shared goals</p>	<p>Agency mandates delivered within allocated budgets</p>	<p>Greater public confidence/trust in justice and equality agencies/systems</p> <p>A legislative and regulatory environment that fosters economic recovery</p> <p>Value for money and excellence in delivery of justice and equality services</p>
<p>Organisational Change and Development</p> <p>Maintain front-line justice and equality services with reduced staff numbers and resources through transformation of work practices</p>	<p>Services maintained and rationalised as appropriate and shown by Justice Sector Action Plans and Progress Reports under the <i>Public Service Agreement, 2010-2014</i></p> <p>Effective procurement strategy devised and implemented</p> <p>Realise potential of the National Property Information Database maintained by the Property Registration Authority in context of delivery of public services</p>	<p>Value for money and excellence in delivery of justice and equality services</p>

** Indicative

Appendix 2

JUSTICE SECTOR OFFICES AND ORGANISATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Tel: 01 6028202 / www.justice.ie

COMMISSIONERS OF CHARITABLE DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS FOR IRELAND

Tel: 01 6766095 / www.charitycommissioners.ie

CORONERS SERVICE

Tel: 046 9091323 / www.coroners.ie

Cosc - the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

Tel: 01 4768680 / www.cosc.ie

COURTS SERVICE

Tel: 01 888 6000 / www.courts.ie

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION TRIBUNAL

Tel: 01 4768670

EQUALITY AUTHORITY

Tel: 0505 24126 / www.equality.ie

EQUALITY TRIBUNAL

Tel: 01 4774100 / www.equalitytribunal.ie

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY

Tel: 01 666 2910 / www.forensicscience.ie

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

Tel: 01 666 0000 / www.garda.ie

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

Tel: 01 408 6500 / www.gsinsp.ie

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION

Tel: 1890 600 800 / www.gardaombudsman.ie

IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Tel: 01 799 6100 / www.ifco.ie

IRISH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Tel: 01 8589601 / www.ihrc.ie

IRISH NATURALISATION & IMMIGRATION SERVICE (INIS)

Tel: 01 616 7700 / www.inis.gov.ie

IRISH PRISON SERVICE

Tel: 043 33 35100 / www.irishprisons.ie

IRISH YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

Tel: 01 6473000 / www.iyjs.ie

LEGAL AID BOARD

Tel: 01 644 1900 / www.legalaidboard.ie

NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY

Tel: 01 6080400 / www.nda.ie

OFFICE OF THE DATA PROTECTION COMMISSIONER

Tel: 1890 252 231 / www.dataprotection.ie

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF PRISONS

Tel: 067 42210

OFFICE FOR INTERNET SAFETY

Tel: 01 4086122 / www.internetsafety.ie

OFFICE FOR THE PROMOTION OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION

Tel: 01 4748627 / Tel: 01 474 8400 / www.integration.ie

OFFICE OF THE REFUGEE APPLICATIONS COMMISSIONER

Tel: 01 6028000 / www.orac.ie

OFFICE OF THE STATE PATHOLOGIST

Tel: 01 853 4872 / www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/State_Pathologist's_Office

PAROLE BOARD

Tel: 01 4748767 / www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Parole_Board

PRIVATE SECURITY AUTHORITY

Tel: 062 31588 / www.psa.gov.ie

PROBATION SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

Tel: 046 9090900 / www.probation.ie

PROPERTY REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Tel: 01 6707500 / www.prai.ie

PROPERTY SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY (NPSRA)

Tel: 046 903 3800 / www.NPSRA.ie

RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION AGENCY

Tel: 01 4183200 / www.ria.gov.ie

REFUGEE APPEALS TRIBUNAL

Tel: 01 474 8400 / www.refappeal.ie

VICTIMS OF CRIME OFFICE

Tel: 01 6028661 / www.victimsofcrimeoffice.ie

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

COMMITMENTS UNDER THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2011-2016

<p>We will fast-track the substantial reforms needed for our bankruptcy legislation to bring us into line with best international standards, focusing on a flexible personal bankruptcy system that reduces discharge time for honest bankrupts.</p>
<p>We will legislate to end upward only rent reviews for existing leases.</p>
<p>We will explore the possibility of a new agreement on visitor visas with the UK, offering tourists the opportunity to visit the UK and Ireland with one visa, at a reasonable cost to tap into the tourism market for significant events such as the forthcoming London 2012 Olympics.</p>
<p>We will permit postgraduate students to be allowed work here for up to a year after they complete their studies. High-value research students will be permitted to bring families if they are staying more than two years.</p>
<p>A referendum to amend the Constitution to allow the State to cut the salaries of judges in restricted circumstances as part of a general cut across the public sector./ We will also provide a modern and reformed framework for judicial expenses.</p>
<p>We will amend the Official Secrets Act, retaining a criminal sanction only for breaches which involve a serious threat to the vital interests of the state.</p>
<p>We will halve the cost of the existing provision of ministerial transport. We will provide for the efficient use of transport including the release of Garda drivers to normal policing duties. We will end the automatic right to state cars for former office holders and other state officials.</p>
<p>Improve co-ordination and integration to delivery of services to the Traveller community across all Government departments, using available resources more effectively to deliver on principles of social inclusion, particularly in area of Traveller education through the DEIS programme</p>
<p>We will improve the quality of information available on the Irish housing market by requiring that the selling price of all dwellings is recorded in a publically available, national housing price database</p>
<p>Enact legislation to strengthen the rights of victims of crime and their families, to ensure that victims and their needs are at the heart of the justice process and that rights to information, advice and other appropriate assistance are met effectively and efficiently.</p>
<p>Ensure that rogue bankers and all those that misappropriate or embezzle funds are properly pursued for their crimes and that the full rigours of the law will apply to them.</p>
<p>Enact a new consolidated and reformed anti-corruption law to punish white collar crime and end the impunity from consequences for corporate behaviour that threatens the economy.</p>

Strengthen measures to ensure that convicted white collar criminals cannot transfer assets to spouses or other family members and we will empower the Criminal Assets Bureau to pursue such convicted white collar criminals for any legal aid costs awarded to them.
Enact legislation to strengthen the powers of the Criminal Assets Bureau in relation to forfeiting the proceeds of crime.
Establish a DNA Database to assist the Gardaí in the investigation of serious crime, such as homicides and sexual offences. The database will also be utilised to enhance cooperation with the EU in the area of asylum and immigration. There will be appropriate safeguards in relation to inclusion on and access to the DNA database.
Provide statutory guidelines for the witness protection programme.
Introduce x-ray scanners to all prisons to screen people and goods entering prisons to stop the flow of drugs and mobile telephones into prisons.
Ensure that administrative duties are carried out by civilian staff in order to free up highly trained Gardaí for preventing and detecting crime.
Reform the prosecution and judicial case management systems so as to reduce the number of Gardaí unnecessarily detained in the courts.
Fully implement the Fines Act 2010 and extend the use of Community Service Orders. Where a member of the judiciary is considering the imposition of a prison sentence of one year or less, he/she will be required by legislation to first consider the appropriateness of Community Service Orders as an alternative to imprisonment.
End the practice of imprisoning people who cannot pay fines and debts and introduce a system which takes a small amount of money from wages or social welfare by “attachment order” to pay off a fine or debt over time, as an alternative to imprisonment for people who refuse to pay.
Introduce legislation to ensure that aggravating factors are considered in sentencing and to allow for the criminal prosecution service to make a submission on sentence, which draws to the court's attention aggravating factors which relate to the crime.
Introduce a series of post-imprisonment restraint orders for violent and sexual offenders to include electronic tagging and other restrictions, which may be imposed at the time of sentencing.
Violent and sexual offenders may only earn remission based on good behaviour, participation in education and training, and completion of addiction treatment programmes and, where appropriate, sex offender programmes. We will review the workings of the Prison Act 2007 in relation to incentivising engagement with rehabilitative services in prison.
Strengthen the Inspector of Prisons, by putting the office on a statutory footing and removing restrictions on publication by the Inspector of Prisons of his/her reports.
Prison visiting committees will furnish their reports to the Inspector of Prisons who will be under an obligation to publish them. The Inspector of Prisons will make an annual report to the Minister for Justice and the Oireachtas Justice Committee, and will be empowered to appear before that committee on such other occasions as may be appropriate.
Ensure better coordination between the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service to create an integrated offender management programme

Review will be conducted of the working of mandatory sentencing laws in the context of an overall review of drugs policy.
Review the proposal to build a new prison at Thornton Hall and consider alternatives, if any, to avoid the costs yet to be incurred by the state in building such a new prison. We are conscious of the need to provide in-cell sanitation to all prisons and, in so far as resources permit, to upgrade prison facilities.
Tackle anti-social behaviour and the plague of low level crime that is so destructive of community life.
Build on the existing community policing partnerships and forums to enhance trust between local communities and their Gardaí.
Give special emphasis to alternative programmes for juvenile offenders through extensions to the Juvenile Liaison Officer Scheme and the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme, and the extended use of Restorative Justice where appropriate.
Examine outcomes-based contracts with community organisations to help reduce re-offending by young people, based on the social impact bond model in the U.K.
Strengthen the supply reduction effort and criminal assets seizures, particularly at local level.
Reduce the flow of drugs to prisons.
Carry out a full review of the Drug Treatment Court Programme to evaluate its success and potential in dealing with young offenders identified as having serious problem with drugs.
Legislate to establish a Judicial Council, with lay representation, to provide an effective mechanism for dealing with complaints against judges.
Introduce a constitutional amendment to allow for the establishment of a distinct and separate system of family courts to streamline family law court processes and make them more efficient and less costly. We will take the necessary steps to create a permanent Civil Court of Appeal.
Encourage and facilitate use of mediation to resolve commercial, civil and family disputes in order to speed up resolution of disputes, reduce legal costs and ameliorate the stress of contested court proceedings.
Provide for a Commercial Court to facilitate speedy resolution of disputes at Circuit Court level, where monies in dispute do not warrant High Court jurisdiction.
Introduce legislation to facilitate courts making provision for structured settlements in circumstances where lump sums are currently awarded as a consequence of individuals suffering catastrophic injury because of the negligence of another.
Create an enforcement mechanism for District Court maintenance orders in family cases.
We will modernise and reform outdated elements of family law.
Introduce consolidated and reformed domestic violence legislation to address all aspects of domestic violence, threatened violence and intimidation in a manner that provides protection to victims.
Establish independent regulation of the legal professions to improve access and competition, make legal costs more transparent and ensure adequate procedures for addressing consumer complaints.

Introduce comprehensive reforms of the immigration, residency and asylum systems , which will include a statutory appeals system and set out rights and obligations in a transparent way.
Provide for the efficient processing and determination of citizenship applications within a reasonable time.
Ensure that all State boards have at least 40% of each gender.
Ensure that trans-gender people will have legal recognition and extend the protections of the equality legislation to them.
Require all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions.
Promote policies which integrate minority ethnic groups in Ireland, and which promote social inclusion, equality, diversity and the participation of immigrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities.
Publish, following wide consultation, a realistic implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy, including sectoral plans with achievable timescales and targets within available resources. Ensuring whole-of-government involvement and monitoring of the Strategy, in partnership with the disability sector.
Examine different mechanisms to promote the recognition of Irish Sign Language.
Reform the law on mental capacity to ensure the greatest degree of autonomy for people with intellectual disabilities or suffering with mental illnesses in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
We will enact legislation to amend tax and social welfare law in respect of civil partnerships. We will amend the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabiting Couples Act 2010 to address any anomalies or omissions, including those relating to children.
We will enhance the Irish role in EU judicial and home affairs cooperation