

# JUSTICE PLAN 2021



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice



# Minister's Foreword

Our first responsibility in the justice system is the protection of our people and our State.

But our policies and duties in the Department of Justice extend much further, and span across Irish life and society.

As well as ensuring our people are safe and secure, it is our duty to provide an equitable and accessible path to justice; to support victims and communities; and to treat those who seek refuge on our shores, or to make a new home for themselves in ours, with respect.

To support those who rely on us every day in their business, family and community life, or those who need us to respond with compassion and understanding at moments of crisis and difficulty.

I want to build a justice system that works for everyone.

Our Justice Plan, and the actions we will implement this year to begin our programme of reform, charts a course for us to achieve that aim. Working across the sector to receive feedback and to ensure we hold each other to our targets, we will update this Plan annually with new actions and timelines.

The Plan sets out our ambition for a justice sector which will innovate and embrace a Digital First agenda: making our services and those of the entire justice sector easily accessible and ensuring they work for those who need them. A sector which will implement climate action policies not only to contribute to efforts to tackle climate change, but to lead by example.

Covid-19 has shown the great people who work in our Department and across our sector at their best. The Irish Prison Service responded with professionalism in keeping our prisons safe during the pandemic and the Courts Service adapted with speed and innovation to maintain legal services.

By cementing its relationship with our communities, An Garda Síochána has done so much more than just police the pandemic. Over the course of our Plan, we can look forward with confidence to An Garda Síochána completing its transformation to a world class policing service, working for the safety of our communities.

Stronger legislation and additional resources will also support An Garda Síochána in tackling the organised crime gangs dealing in misery. The justice system will not back down in its determination to take on the gangs, nor will it let them take hold of our young.

Irish society in recent decades has been transformed not just by a series of social changes, but also by an acknowledgment of the darker chapters from our short history and the damage done to many of our people.

I firmly believe that future generations will look back on the scourge of domestic, sexual and gender based violence and ask why it was tolerated as a lesser form of crime or abuse for so long. That period is over.

Our reforms in this Plan mean victims of sexual, domestic and gender based abuse will be supported by the criminal justice system, and their abusers punished. They, like all victims of crime, will know that our system is there to serve them when they are at their most vulnerable.

Building a justice system that works for everyone also requires us to make our courts and legal services more accessible.

It means making the system more sensitive to the needs of families going through periods of immense difficulty and sensitivity, which we will achieve through a new Family Court and reformed court procedures.

Improving access to justice also means driving down costs to help businesses, consumers and communities. This means

reducing legal fees and the cost of insurance.

Our cultural and hospitality sectors have been the worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our cultural institutions and venues have not opened their doors in a year. These sectors will soon colour the days and nights of our lives once again and we will help them get back on their feet.

Over the course of our Plan, we will modernise our licencing laws to support the development of the night time economy so our cities can take their place among the cultural capitals of the world.

The justice system reaches across many aspects of our lives.

Through our Justice Plan, I believe we can implement ambitious reforms to build a justice system which contributes to the improvement of society.

To build a justice system that works for everyone.

**Helen McEntee TD**  
Minister for Justice



## Minister of State's Foreword

I welcome this Action Plan and the accompanying Statement of Strategy and look forward to working with the Department to build on some of the great work done over the past few years in bringing us closer to our vision of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

As in other sectors the Justice sector has had to significantly adjust to changing times and I am very pleased to have seen how staff of the Department and its agencies have risen to the challenge. This strategy provides a pathway for further improvements and innovations in the way we work and the services that are delivered to the public.

Commitments given in the Programme for Government are set out in this Action Plan with clearly defined goals and timelines. Many of these are ambitious, but I have every confidence that we will work together

and meet them. I especially look forward to progressing work on the regulation of gambling and working for our communities, both urban and rural, in the delivery of youth justice interventions and working to combat anti-social behaviour.

**James Browne T.D.**  
Minister of State for Law Reform

# Introduction from the Secretary General

The five high level goals set in our Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 reflect the breadth, complexity and importance of the Department's mission to work for a safe, fair, inclusive Ireland.

Justice Plan 2021 is our detailed action plan to deliver against those goals. We have set ourselves an ambitious work programme in addition to the ongoing priority of work on Covid-19.

A key element to support our work, particularly in our key service delivery areas, is the start of a programme of significant investment in our information management and technology systems, building our

capacity to deliver public services online. This is particularly essential given our reliance on outdated systems and paper based records. Clearly these do not facilitate the blended working methods which will be essential as we emerge from Covid-19.

These developments will also underpin our organisational culture as well as allowing us to gather, interrogate and transparently exploit data and research, supporting external partnerships to explore policy options and evaluate outcomes. A new HR strategy will also further strengthen our culture by supporting and developing the skills of our

dedicated staff and planning for the future, fostering talents at all levels. The strategy also outlines the organisational and individual action required of all of us to contribute to our climate agenda. And we will underpin all this with meaningful authentic collaboration with the people most impacted by our work. Increasingly, this approach to problem solving gives us valuable insight and leads to better informed and sustainable outcomes.

As this plan is derived from the Statement of Strategy, it will in turn inform our business planning and

individual performance management processes. Progress on delivery will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year by the Management Board and the Ministers, and we will publish an implementation update on what we have delivered at mid-year and at the end of 2021.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oonagh McPhillips". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

**Oonagh McPhillips**  
Secretary General

# Introduction

A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland is the statement of strategy for the Department of Justice for the years 2021-2023. Within that strategy, we have set out five overarching goals for the Department over this three year period:

1. Tackle crime, enhance national security and transform policing
2. Improve access to justice and modernise the courts system
3. Strengthen community safety, reduce reoffending, support victims and combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence
4. Deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age
5. Accelerate innovation, digital transformation and climate action across the justice sector

We have also committed to the publication of an annual action plan that will set out in further detail the objectives and actions to be prioritised in each year. Justice Plan 2021 is the first annual action plan in this series.

This action plan is set out in five chapters, structured around the five goals set out above.

In each chapter, we begin with the commitments set out in our statement of strategy for the relevant goal, which is followed by a detailed table of objectives and actions to be delivered in 2021.

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**Goal 1** Tackle crime, enhance national security and transform policing



# Goal 1: Tackle crime, enhance national security and transform policing

Our aim is to build a safer Ireland by reducing and preventing crime, continually working to enhance national security and transform and strengthen An Garda Síochána.

The Department is responsible for leading the strategic direction of the criminal justice system with the objective of protecting the public, upholding human rights and procedural fairness, and maintaining public safety, confidence and trust.

An Garda Síochána is rightly held in high esteem by the Irish people and, through its model of policing by consent, has further enhanced its standing during the Covid-19 pandemic by drawing on its core values and connection to the community. The timeline of this strategy will see An Garda Síochána complete its major transformation and develop into a model of policing excellence.

The necessary development of powers, resources and effective technology, balanced by a strong and effective

system of governance and oversight, will support An Garda Síochána to achieve this ambitious goal. The new Policing and Community Safety Bill will be the cornerstone of this reform.

New structures, systems, culture and greater support for diversity within the service, to better reflect the Ireland of today, will bring An Garda Síochána even closer to the rural and urban communities it serves, while investment in professional development and leadership will help drive and sustain excellence and innovation.

We will reform our laws to effectively deal with those who seek to spread hatred, fear and harassment in any form – both online and off.

Emerging and continually evolving threats require us to work with European and international partners to ensure our national security is protected and terrorism is tackled wherever it emerges: at home or abroad.

The fight against organised crime stretches beyond our borders and An Garda Síochána work closely with their international colleagues to break the networks of serious criminals and prevent them from inflicting misery in our communities.

International collaboration is also central to further developing our capacity to combat the exploitation of technology for cybercrime.




As set out in our Statement of Strategy 2021-2023, over this three year period, we will focus on the following strategic objectives to deliver against this goal:



1. Developing a leading edge and accountable policing service through the implementation of A Policing Service for our Future
2. Deliver a comprehensive programme to improve the operation of the criminal justice system




3. Combat cybercrime, support online safety and prepare for the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence through stronger policies and legislation
4. Strengthen measures to tackle terrorism and other serious and organised crime through domestic action and international co-operation
5. Reform, review and modernise criminal law and procedure to enhance and support the efficient and effective operation of the criminal justice system
6. Ensure strong governance in all bodies across the criminal justice sector; and provide challenging yet supportive oversight to these bodies




To achieve these objectives, we have identified 65 actions to be delivered in 2021, which are set out in detail below.









	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS	 QUARTER	 LEAD
<b>Developing a leading edge and accountable policing service through the implementation of A Policing Service for our Future (APSFF)</b>			
1	Support continued recruitment of Garda members and staff and redeployment to frontline policing 1.1 Target of 400 redeployments achieved in 2021 to free up Gardaí for important frontline policing work	Q4	Criminal Justice - Governance
2	Support An Garda Síochána (AGS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to ensure the organisation can attract, retain and develop a diverse and inclusive workforce, including preparation of a diversity recruitment roadmap 2.1 Support the work of the Expert Review Group on Recruit Education and Entry Pathways within An Garda Síochána (Q4)	Q2	Criminal Justice - Governance
3	Work with AGS, D/Taoiseach and the D/Public Expenditure and Reform to co-ordinate and progress the delivery of the APSFF plan, including mid-year review and support the Minister on implementation	Q4	Criminal Justice - Governance
4	Progress the Policing and Community Safety Bill to provide a new coherent governance and oversight framework for policing 4.1 Approval of General Scheme of Bill (Q1) 4.2 Publication of Bill (Q4) 4.3 Commencement of legislative process (Q1 2022)	Q4	Criminal Justice - Governance
5	Conduct the review on the role of AGS in prosecution decisions 5.1 Publish the Interim Report Q1 5.2 Publish the Final report Q4	Q4	Criminal Justice Policy
6	Monitor progress on use of video link technology in criminal cases to maintain progress made in 2020 6.1 Publish a Progress report – Q2 6.2 Publish a Progress report – Q4	Q2	Criminal Justice Policy
7	Implement the recommendations of the review group on Courts Security	Q3	Criminal Justice Policy




	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
8	Review of the national security legislative framework 8.1 Review of the Offences against the State Act report - Q2 8.2 Review of other legislative provisions commenced (ongoing)	Q4	Criminal Justice – Policy		
9	Initiate project scoping process for implementation of Policing and Community Safety Bill once enacted	Q4	Criminal Justice - Governance		
10	Draft legislation for the deployment of body worn cameras (Digital Recording) and extended use of CCTV and ANPR technology for AGS 10.1 Publish the General Scheme – Q1 10.2 Publish the Bill – Q3	Q3	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
11	Draft the General Scheme of a Bill to codify police powers of search, arrest and detention	Q1	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
12	Support the operation of an effective security infrastructure in line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland through investment in modern information systems and specialist resources	Q4	Security & Northern Ireland		
13	Work with partners and stakeholders to progress the legacy measures contained in the Stormont House Agreement and commitments made further to the Good Friday Agreement	Q4	Security & Northern Ireland		
14	Establish an inter-departmental group to update and streamline how Garda vetting works	Q1	Security & Northern Ireland		
<b>Deliver a comprehensive programme to improve the operation of the criminal justice system</b>					
15	Begin to implement, in collaboration with other agencies, plans to tackle economic crime and corruption, following the publication of the Hamilton review 15.1 Publish the action plan addressing the recommendations (Q1) 15.2 Draft and consult on the terms of reference for the Advisory Council to address ownership, functions, structures, reporting and accountability (Q2) 15.3 Commence the Advisory Council, which will have a key role in overseeing implementation (Q3)	Q1	Criminal Justice – Policy		

 OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS	 QUARTER	 LEAD
16 Establish a cross-sectoral partnership based Advisory Council against Economic Crime and Corruption to lead implementation of the Action Plan on Hamilton, including the establishment of a new advisory board	Q3	Criminal Justice – Policy
17 Put a revised National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in place for identification and support of victims of trafficking 17.1 Publish NRM policy paper – Q2 17.2 Put in place additional practical supports for victims - Q1 17.3 Progress new legislation - Q4	Q4	Criminal Justice – Policy
18 Work with public sector and civil society stakeholders to review and strengthen our processes and legislative framework to combat human trafficking	Q1	Criminal Justice – Policy
19 Publish the Smuggling of Persons Bill to implement EU and UN obligations	Q2	Criminal Justice–Legislation
20 Introduce a supervisory regime for fine art dealers who are to be supervised by the Minister following enactment of the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act	Q4	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery
21 Carry out anti-money laundering inspections by remote means in cases where social distancing is not possible 21.1 50 remote inspections will be carried out in 2021	Q4	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery
22 Participate in Department of Finance-led Risk Assessment of trust or company service providers (TCSP)	Q1-4	Criminal Justice- Service Delivery
23 Publish Garda Inspectorate report on corruption 23.1 Publish operational implementation plan (Q3)	Q1	Criminal Justice Governance
<b>Support work to tackle cybercrime, improve online safety and prepare for the challenges ahead through stronger policies and legislation</b>		
24 Commence drafting of a general scheme of a Cybercrime Bill with a view to ratifying the Budapest Convention	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation
25 Continue to support hotline.ie by increasing industry participation and by working with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to ensure that the remit and focus of hotline.ie is aligned with and complemented by the proposed Media Commission and Digital Safety Commissioner	Q2	Criminal Justice – Policy

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS	 QUARTER	 LEAD
26	Continue to address illegal content online by strengthening notice and take down mechanisms to ensure the swift removal of all forms of illegal content. Work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to prepare for the implementation of the proposed EU Digital Services Act and the specific provisions relating to the regulation of illegal content online	Q3	Criminal Justice – Policy
27	Continue to work closely with the Garda National Cybercrime Bureau and support the expansion of the regional cybercrime hubs	Q1	Criminal Justice – Policy
28	Following the publication of the Law Reform Commission report, finalise proposals to deal with contempt of court sanctions for violations of social media rulings.	Ongoing	Criminal Justice – Policy
29	Collaborate with the lead Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht , Sport and Media and An Garda Síochána in relation to reducing harmful content online including violent videos and imagery	Ongoing	Criminal Justice – Policy
30	Commence the provisions of Coco’s Law, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 to outlaw image based sexual abuse, and launch an awareness campaign	Q1	Criminal Justice Legislation & Transparency
<b>Strengthen measures to tackle terrorism and other serious and organised crime through domestic action and international co-operation</b>			
31	Ensure the delivery by AGS of Ireland’s successful connection to SIS II to exchange information on individuals who are sought in relation to criminal activities 31.1 Enact necessary supporting legislation by Q2 2022	Q1 – Q2	Criminal Justice - Governance/ Criminal Justice – Legislation
32	Prepare for and support the implementation of the EU Regulation on Preventing the Dissemination of Terrorist Content Online 32.1 Establish working group with AGS – Q1 32.2 Decision on designation of competent Authority with a view to establishing authority in early 2022-Q3	Q3	Criminal Justice – Policy
33	Assess the legislative requirements necessary to transpose the ECRIS-TCN package into Irish Law. ECRIS-TCN extends the current system of information exchange among EU Member States on convictions to third country nationals	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
34	Publish Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Bill to support robust EU measures to combat terrorism with a particular focus on the risk related to travel to third countries to engage in terrorist activities	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
35	Progress policy preparations on legislation for the collection of intra-EU Passenger Name Record data	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
36	Development of direct carrier engagement solution to on-board additional carriers for the collection of extra-EU PNR data	Q3	Immigration Service Delivery		
37	Support the investigation of international criminality within the Mutual Assistance Framework	Ongoing	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery		
38	Support the operation of an effective system of extradition in accordance with legislation	Ongoing	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery		
39	Support the operation of the European Arrest Warrant in accordance with legislation	Ongoing	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery		
40	Participate in the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) and adopt best practice standards in AML/CFT regime in the Justice sector	Ongoing	Criminal Justice - Service Delivery		
41	Transpose the criminal justice aspects of the Fifth Money Laundering Directive by enacting and commencing the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Bill	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
42	Transpose outstanding EU criminal justice measures including on mutual recognition of custodial sentences and supervision measures, Protection of the European Union’s Financial Interests (PIF) fraud and counterfeiting; manage related CJEU cases 42.1 Commencement of the Criminal Justice (Mutual Recognition of Decisions on Supervision Measures) Act 2020 - Q1	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation		
43	Establish working arrangements with European Public Prosecutor’s Office	Q1	Criminal Justice – Policy & Legislation		
44	Support AGS in communicating, resourcing and implementing a new approach to community policing in both rural and urban areas	Ongoing	Criminal Justice Governance and Policy		

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
45	Work with the National Rural Safety Forum to develop initiatives to promote community safety and to reduce the opportunity for crime throughout the country		Q4		Criminal Justice Policy, Transparency
46	As part of the evaluation of the Pilot Community Safety Partnerships in Longford and Waterford, we will consider in particular the impact of the Partnership model in rural areas. This work will inform the final make up of Local Community Safety Partnerships and ensure they can work as effectively as possible in improving safety in rural and urban Ireland as we move towards nationwide roll-out		Q4		Criminal Justice Policy
47	Monitor the outcomes of Operation Thor – the Garda operation against burglary and property crime in rural Ireland – as part of our work to develop indicators across the justice sector		Q3		Criminal Justice Policy, Corporate
48	Support the work of Crime Prevention Officers who actively engage with community groups to promote the Safer Communities Campaign and advise residents of ways to increase their personal safety and secure their property		Ongoing		Criminal Justice Policy
49	Work with Muintir na Tíre to support and expand the operation of the Text Alert scheme		Ongoing		Criminal Justice Policy
50	Review existing Garda powers in relation to dangerous weapons, including knives, to ensure they have the necessary legal tools to protect our communities. We will also focus on analysing existing data, as well as developing new sources of data, and looking at international best practice to inform policy in this area.		Q3		Criminal Justice Policy, Corporate
<b>Reform, review &amp; modernise criminal law &amp; procedure to enhance &amp; support the efficient &amp; effective operation of the criminal justice system</b>					
51	Introduce new legislation to deal with hate crime and incitement to hatred 51.1 Publish General Scheme of a Hate Crime Bill - Q1		Q4		Criminal Justice – Legislation
52	Publish the Criminal Procedure Bill to provide for pre-trial hearings, which will provide for a faster and more efficient court process for sexual offences, white collar crimes and organised crime		Q1		Criminal Justice – Legislation
53	Publish the Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill		Q1		Criminal Justice – Legislation
54	Publish the Communications (Data Retention and Disclosure) Bill which will replace the 2011 Act to take account of the rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the retention of traffic and location data for the purpose of criminal investigations		Q3		Criminal Justice – Legislation

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
55	<p>Introduce a scheme for the expunging of criminal records for gay men convicted of historical offences</p> <p>55.1 Review group established to examine the feasibility of identifying appropriate records which may support a decision to expunge a record of conviction for a consensual same sex relationship prior to decriminalisation in 1993 -</p> <p>55.2 Report of Review Group submitted for consideration -</p>	Q1	Q3		
56	<p>Introduce new Garda Compensation Scheme for malicious injuries incurred in the performance of duties</p> <p>56.1 Publish the Bill - Q1</p> <p>56.2 Prepare for the introduction of a new Garda Compensation Scheme – Q4</p>	Q3	Q4	Criminal Justice Legislation	
57	<p>Progress priority legislation, in consultation with Deputies and Senators in the Oireachtas, to amend section 252 of the Children Act 2001 to address matters which have arisen in a recent Court of Appeal decision</p>	Q1		Criminal Justice - Legislation	
58	<p>Amend Children Act 2001 to provide alternatives to suspended sentences for children</p> <p>58.1 Consult with Criminal Justice Policy re Law Reform Commission recent Report and Recommendations on this issue – Q1</p> <p>58.2 Consult with relevant statutory agencies/stakeholders – Q2</p> <p>58.3 Publication of a general scheme of a new Bill – Q4</p>	Q4		Criminal Justice Policy	
59	<p>Outline options for the introduction of a system of public defenders</p> <p>59.1 Submit policy paper to Minister for review</p>	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>Ensure strong governance in all bodies across the criminal justice sector; and provide challenging yet supportive oversight to these bodies</b>					
60	<p>Develop and ensure the implementation of best practice governance arrangements with all relevant bodies including through</p> <p>60.1 Development of meaningful Oversight Agreements, performance budgeting targets and Performance Delivery Agreements; and</p> <p>60.2 Regular liaison with bodies, including through formal governance meetings, to appraise compliance and performance and to address any issues arising</p>	Q4		Criminal Justice – Governance, Corporate	
61	<p>Implement a system to ensure agency expenditure is in line with budget and manage any required budget remediation</p>	Q4		Criminal Justice – Governance, Corporate	

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
62	Provide support to agencies in implementing their capital investment programmes across the Criminal Justice sector, ensuring compliance with statutory obligations and engagement with all relevant stakeholders	Q4	Criminal Justice – Governance, Corporate		
63	Provide leadership in the sector and work across government on the development of the revised National Development Plan	Q2	Corporate Civil and Criminal Governance		
64	Roll-out of Periodic Critical Review (PCR) of Department Agencies under new Department Public Expenditure and Reform Guidelines 64.1 Select agencies to undergo PCR - Q2	Q3	Criminal Justice Policy		
65	Develop proposals for an appropriate statutory footing for the Irish Prison Service	Q4	Criminal Justice Governance		





**Goal 2** Improve access to justice  
and modernise the courts system



## Goal 2: Improve access to justice and modernise the courts system

Access to justice is a fundamental right and a key enabler of an equitable and thriving society. The justice and courts systems must continually adapt to the development of our society and our economy.

The Department's responsibility includes widening access, and identifying and removing barriers, to the justice system so it meets the needs of the public, society and business.

Legal costs in Ireland are prohibitive and act as a barrier to people to exercising their rights before the courts. We know too the effect these high costs and complex systems have on our economy and our competitiveness, whether those are the cost of buying a house, enforcing a contract or purchasing insurance.

The introduction of new scales of legal costs will bring down such costs and provide greater certainty on

what people can expect to pay for legal services. We will assess if these scales should be binding, except in limited circumstances.

Working with the judiciary and the courts, the Department will introduce the most significant series of reforms in the last 100 years to how our civil courts operate, with a focus on the needs of the user of the court system.

The introduction of pre-action protocols will facilitate early resolution of claims. We must also work to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as a viable substitute for litigation. This will ensure greater efficiencies and reduce the length of legal proceedings.

To ensure our courts work for everyone, the new Family Court, combined with the development of pragmatic, sensitive and cohesive

family law procedures, will significantly improve the experience of families interacting with the legal system at a time of great difficulty.

The Courts Service has set out an ambitious agenda to modernise our courts and bring their proceedings into a modern age. Working together, we will put the Irish legal system on a firmly accessible footing and build on the reforms introduced during the pandemic, such as remote hearings and electronic filing of documents. Digital transformation will be a key driver of change.

The strength and independence of our judiciary has been one of the successes of our State, and our judges are respected throughout Europe and the world. The Judicial Appointments Commission Bill will streamline the process of appointing judges and ensure that the best people are appointed. This, combined

with our support for the work of the Judicial Council in bringing forward guidelines for judicial work and developing judicial skills, will further enhance the standing of our judicial system at home and abroad.

We will also ensure the justice sector is more reflective of modern Irish society by improving the diversity of the judiciary, the courts service and the professions, and by opening up legal education to give more people clear pathways to working in the legal sector. A new Gambling Regulator will be established and legislation to licence and regulate the gambling industry will be enacted. Proposals to update our defamation laws will strike the right balance between reputation and free speech.

Our cultural and hospitality sectors have been among the worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. But these sectors will revive and we

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will introduce reforms to support the development and regulation of the night time economy, including through modernised licensing laws.




This ambition is set out in A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland: our Statement of Strategy for the period from 2021-2023. To work towards delivering these goals, we have identified seven priority objectives in this area in the period to 2023:




1. Modernise the courts and legal system to improve the fair and speedy conduct of court proceedings
2. Establish a Family Court and a transformed family justice system
3. Modernise the operation of the judiciary to enable it to work more effectively; and reform the process for appointing judges
4. Support the reduction of legal costs and the length of legal proceedings and tackle the high cost of insurance
5. Support our economy and society through regulatory, licensing and civil law reform




6. Support the Dublin Coroner to commence the Stardust Inquests in 2021 and all coroners to do their jobs during the pandemic
7. Provide challenging yet supportive oversight of the civil justice bodies under our aegis and ensure that appropriate governance structures and relationships are in place across these bodies




To achieve these objectives, we have identified 45 actions to be delivered in 2021, which are set out in detail below.






	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Modernise the courts and legal system to improve the fair and speedy conduct of court proceedings</b>					
66	Progress work to open up and reform professional legal education, introduce independent oversight for the first time, and remove barriers to becoming a solicitor or barrister. Publish an implementation plan to give effect to the LSRA Report on the training of legal professionals and commence implementation	Q3	Civil Justice-Policy		
67	Facilitate the coming into operation of the new Legal Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal and embed other new justice structures to ensure improved outcomes for the public	Q2	Civil Justice- Governance		
68	Use Customer Insights to consider the impact of service modernisation on users of the courts and legal system and to promote the best customer journey 68.1 Submit report on customer insights to Management Board	Q4	Information Management and Technology (IM&T)		
69	Progress the centralisation and automation of court offices and processes through the publication of the Court and Civil Law Miscellaneous Provision Bill	Q2	Civil Justice - Legislation		
70	Respond to the McFarlane v. Ireland judgment of the European Court of Human Rights by putting in place a remedy for delays in Court proceedings 70.1 General Scheme of a Bill approved in Q2 70.2 Bill published in Q4	Q4	Criminal Justice - Legislation		
71	Provide for the introduction of new legal partnerships, which will enable barristers and solicitors to jointly provide legal services for the first time	Q2	Civil Justice Policy		
<b>Establish a Family Court and a transformed family justice system</b>					
72	Support the Family Justice Initiative through engagement with the Courts Service in relation to the various estate decisions arising and ensuring that the requisite financing is available	Q3	Civil Justice- Governance		
73	Progress the Family Court Bill, taking account of the outcome of consultations and the pre-legislative scrutiny process	Q4	Civil Justice – Legislation		

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
74	<p>Support the work of the Family Justice Oversight Group and consult with key stakeholders in the family justice area on the content of a Family Justice Strategy</p> <p>74.1 Report on consultation to Family Justice Oversight Group (FJOG) - Q2</p> <p>74.2 Draft strategy with necessary inputs by representatives of users and civil society – Q1 2022</p> <p>74.3 Convene regular meetings of FJOG</p>	Q4	Criminal Justice –Governance, Corporate		
75	Publish review of the operation of the provisions of the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964 relating to guardianship of children whose parents are not married or in a civil partnership	Q3	Civil Justice – Legislation		
76	Undertake research into the approaches to parental alienation taken by other jurisdictions including public consultations	Q3	Civil Justice – Policy Research and Data Analytics		
77	<p>Work with the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on issues relating to surrogacy and donor-assisted human reproduction arising from the report of the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection</p> <p>77.1 Examination of Report of Special Rapporteur completed in co-operation with relevant Departments and proposed response to the Department of Justice-related elements identified, and implementation plan drawn up.</p>	Ongoing	Civil Justice – Legislation		
<b>Modernise the operation of the judiciary to enable it to work more effectively; and reform the process for appointing judges</b>					
78	Publish new Judicial Appointments Commission Bill which will reform and modernise the way in which judges are appointed	Q1	Civil Justice – Legislation		
79	Establish a Judicial Appointments Commission: Progress on governance aspects of the project to establish the new Commission and make arrangements for relevant appointments including CEO designate and Lay Members	Q2	Civil Justice- Governance		
80	<p>Progress Programme for Government commitment to review the numbers and types of judges needed to ensure the efficient administration of justice over the next five years, including the need for specialist skills, the impact of Covid-19, and the extent to which efficiencies in case management and working practices could help in meeting additional service demands and/or improving services and access to justice</p> <p>80.1 Establish Working Group – Q1</p>	Q1	Civil Justice- Governance		

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
81	Commission research to provide evidence base to inform review on judicial numbers and skills, including appropriate international comparators to examine the experiences of other jurisdictions (particularly Common Law areas), and obtain accurate and up to date information on judicial practices and case management systems, together with caseload data in relation to Irish courts	Q1	Civil Justice- Governance		
82	Ensure, once personal injuries guidelines have been adopted by the Judicial Council that the Minister is in a position to make Orders bringing the relevant provisions of the Judicial Council Act 2019 into operation	Q3	Civil Justice – Legislation		
<b>Support the reduction of legal costs and the length of legal proceedings and tackle the high cost of insurance</b>					
83	Commence work to introduce new scales of legal costs which would be independently drawn up, in order to reduce legal costs and to provide greater certainty to the users of legal services in relation to cost 83.1 Complete a detailed examination of the recommendations contained within the Peter Kelly report on legal costs. As part of this work, we will carry out a detailed economic and legal evaluation, which will include examining making such scales binding, except where both parties agree to opt out (Q4)	Work commences in Q1	Civil Justice – Policy		
84	Designate a body by Ministerial Order as Mediation Council which satisfies the criteria set out in the relevant legislation, published in 2017, to support the development of the mediation profession as an important supplement and alternative to traditional judicial processes	Q2	Civil Justice- Governance		
85	Membership of Council to be agreed for designation by Government	Q1	Civil Justice- Governance		
86	Provide appropriate support for the Ireland for Law Initiative following Brexit	Ongoing	Civil Justice- Governance		
87	Ongoing management of the Criminal Legal Aid (CLA) Scheme including the timely provision of sanction for expert witness reports and the management of the CLA panels	Ongoing	Civil Justice – Policy Research and Data Analytics		
88	Publish General Scheme of the Criminal Legal Aid Bill to transfer the operation of the criminal legal aid scheme to the Legal Aid Board and otherwise update and modernise the law on criminal legal aid	Q4	Criminal Justice – Service Delivery		

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
89	Review civil legal aid scheme and bring forward proposals for reform. 89.1 Commence this review in Q3		Q3		Civil Justice – Policy
90	Work with partners across Government to prioritise the reform of the insurance sector Complete insurance related reviews on: a) Discount rates b) Occupiers' liability c) Law Reform Commission reports in relation to the capping of awards in personal injuries actions		Q1		Civil Justice – Policy
91	Make proposals to Government about any changes deemed necessary to the law on occupiers liability		Q2		Civil Justice – Legislation
92	Commence solicitors advertising regulations		Q1		Civil Justice – Legislation
93	Examine and give effect to Government commitment on feasibility of obliging fraudulent claimants to pay the legal costs of defendants along with reviewing and increasing the penalties for fraudulent claims		Q3		Civil and Criminal Justice – Policy
94	Place the offence of perjury on a statutory footing through the enactment of the Perjury and Related Offences Bill 2018		Q2		Criminal Justice – Legislation
<b>Support our economy and society through regulatory, licensing and civil law reform</b>					
95	Building on existing work, begin a formal programme to establish a statutory gambling regulator, using a project management approach and cross-functional programme team		Q1		Civil Justice Governance / Civil Justice – Legislation
96	Publish General Scheme of legislation to reform licensing regime for gambling and establishment of the gambling regulator, and		Q3		Civil Justice – Legislation

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
97	Finalise responsibilities for Director/CEO designate of new statutory gambling regulator (Q2), publicly advertise the position (Q3) and finalise appointment of Director/CEO designate	Q4	Civil Justice Governance		
98	Engage with the work of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce with a view to reviewing and modernising alcohol licensing	Ongoing	Civil Justice – Legislation		
99	Introduce new pre-action protocol regulations (clinical negligence) which will encourage early resolution of allegations of negligence, promoting timely communications between parties, and reducing the number of clinical negligence actions which are brought	Q3	Civil Justice – Legislation		
100	Review and reform defamation laws, to ensure a balanced approach to the right to freedom of expression, the right to protection of good name and reputation, and the right of access to justice 100.1 Complete and publish statutory review of Defamation Act 2009 – Q1 100.2 Prepare Scheme of Defamation (Amendment) Bill – Q4	Ongoing	Civil Justice – Legislation		
101	Enact the Personal Insolvency (Amendment) (No.1) Bill to ensure that sufficient supports are in place for mortgage holders with repayment difficulties including those due to the pandemic	Q1	Civil Justice – Legislation		
102	Complete statutory review of Personal Insolvency Acts 2012-2015	Q2	Civil Justice – Policy		
103	Prepare Scheme of Personal Insolvency (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill based on outcome of review	Q4	Civil Justice – Legislation		
104	Publish the Private Security Services (Amendment) Bill to bring about required reform for licences	Q2	Civil Justice – Legislation		
<b>Support the Dublin Coroner to commence the Stardust Inquests in 2021 and all coroners to do their jobs</b>					
105	Provide all appropriate supports to enable the Coroner to commence the public facing elements of the Stardust inquests in early 2021	Q1	Civil Justice – Governance		
106	Produce a roadmap of supports necessary to address current issues and reform the coronial service, with a particular focus on the Dublin District Coroners' Office to guide the reform agenda including capturing the learning from the practical experience of the pandemic and the interaction with pathology services	Q4	Civil Justice – Governance/ Criminal Justice Governance		




**OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS**

**QUARTER**

**LEAD**

**Provide challenging yet supportive oversight of the civil justice bodies under our aegis and ensure that appropriate governance structures and relationships are in place across these bodies**

107	Develop and ensure the implementation of best practice governance arrangements with all relevant bodies including through Development of meaningful Oversight Agreements, performance budgeting targets and Performance Delivery Agreements; and Regular liaison with bodies, including through formal governance meetings, to appraise compliance and performance and to address any issues arising	Q1-Q4	Civil Justice – Governance
108	Support for appropriate resourcing of priority activities for all civil justice agencies, including active support for appropriately resourced Data Protection Commissioner	Q3	Civil Justice – Governance
109	Roll-out of Periodic Critical Review (PCR) of Department Civil Agencies under new Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Guidelines	Q4	Civil Justice – Governance
110	Review Abhaile Scheme in conjunction with State partners to ensure that it is ready to deal with the economic consequences of Covid-19 and in line with the Government's commitment to future resourcing under the Programme for Government, including appropriate consultation 110.1 Commence Governance review - Q1 110.2 Complete strategic review with recommendations for immediate changes to wider Scheme objectives, as necessary (Q4)	Q4	Civil Justice – Governance





**Goal 3** Strengthen community safety, reduce reoffending, support victims and combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence



## Goal 3: Strengthen community safety, reduce reoffending, support victims and combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence

People all across the country deserve to feel safe in their communities and in their homes. We will strive to provide that safety by engaging communities, tackling recidivism, and supporting victims.

The scourge of sexual, domestic and gender based violence is one we are determined to do more to tackle. The objective is to bring perpetrators to justice and to ensure that victims know they will be supported.

We will build a new infrastructure on how sexual, domestic and gender based violence services are organised and supported across Departments. This will more effectively serve victims and assist the vital work of organisations working this area.

All victims will be placed at the centre of our criminal justice system, and we will work to remove the fear many

victims have of coming forward to report what happened to them.

Supporting a Victim's Journey, our plan to help victims and vulnerable witnesses in sexual violence cases, will be implemented in full. It will reform the criminal justice system at every point a victim comes into contact with it. A national public awareness campaign on consent will further strengthen work to prevent these crimes.

Greater ownership and input from communities themselves, working with public services, will help to improve community safety and reduce harm. Across the country, new Community Safety Partnerships will make communities safer for residents, families and businesses.

To deliver community safety we have to provide the right community

response at the right time. A particular problem may be better addressed through education, through social workers, or through youth intervention programmes.

Together with local representatives, community representatives, business groups and State agencies, communities will draw up their own plans on how to prevent crime and prioritise effective solutions. Communities will be central in identifying and implementing innovative solutions. Work to develop effective partnership approaches to community safety will be informed by pilots in Dublin's North Inner City, Longford and Waterford.

We will publish a report on the cause and impact of criminal gangs in Drogheda; co-operate with Dublin City Council to implement its report on

Darndale, Belcamp and Moatview; and continue our work on the Greentown project.

Breaking the link between criminal gangs and the vulnerable young people they try to recruit will be essential if we are to divert young people away from lives of crime. We will continue working on a whole of Government basis to tackle the root causes which can allow criminality take hold in disadvantaged communities and legislate to outlaw the grooming of children into a life of crime.

A new Youth Justice Strategy, together with a Forum on Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, will be key elements of our efforts to support young people.

The overriding imperative of our Prisons Policy, through a Penal Reform Action Plan, will be to develop policies which support reductions in the rate

of reoffending, and help re-integrate those who have committed crimes safely back into their communities.

Extending the range of spent convictions will help us in our work to improve the job prospects for people with convictions and alternative community-based sanctions to prison will also help break the cycle of reoffending.

We will also work to address the problems of mental health and addiction in prisons and support early interventions in the community.




To deliver against this ambition, we have identified nine strategic objectives to be prioritised over the next three years:




1. Drive community participation in a new approach to make communities safer, and work across government and with State agencies to support this goal
2. Combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence and support victims of crime
3. Implement Supporting a Victim's Journey: A plan to help victims and vulnerable witnesses in sexual violence cases




4. Divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour
5. Establish the Parole Board on a statutory footing to take better account of the concerns of victims and survivors
6. Reduce re-offending rates for those convicted of crime
7. Deliver restorative justice safely and effectively
8. Publish the legislation to implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture
9. Lead the development and implementation of strategies and actions to reduce offending and bring greater coherence and shared purpose to the criminal justice sector

59 detailed actions have been identified to ensure meaningful progress is made on this goal in 2021, and these are set out on the following pages.









	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Drive community participation in a new approach to make communities safer, and work across government and with State agencies to support this goal</b>					
<b>111</b>	Publish policy paper on community safety 111.1 Establish pilot Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) in Dublin North Inner City Area.	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy, Transparency	
<b>112</b>	Establish pilot Local Community Safety Partnerships in Longford and Waterford	Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>113</b>	Appoint an independent evaluator of the process and outcomes of the pilot programmes	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>114</b>	Appoint an independent chair to each pilot Partnership	Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>115</b>	Engage actively with local community, business, and residents to identify members of pilot LCSP	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>116</b>	Engage actively with relevant Government Departments, agencies and local public bodies to identify appointments to pilot LCSP	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>117</b>	Establish support committee with Department of An Taoiseach and relevant local authority to support work of LCSP	Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>118</b>	Support the work of LCSP through identification and provision of training supports for partnership members	Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>119</b>	Commence the process of interim evaluation, to focus on the outcomes achieved through these policy interventions	Q4		Criminal Justice – Policy	
<b>120</b>	Support community safety in disadvantaged communities by 120.1 Publishing the scoping exercise on criminal activity in Drogheda and agreeing a cross Department implementation plan (Q2) 120.2 Supporting and working with Dublin City Council to ensure the implementation of the report on Darndale, Belcamp and Moatview in North Dublin City. (Ongoing) 120.3 Supporting the prioritisation of any recommendations in the revised Government Capital Plan 2021-2030 (Ongoing)	Ongoing		Criminal Justice Policy Criminal Justice – Policy and Governance	




	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence and support victims of crime</b>					
121	Continue to drive implementation of the Second National Strategy for Combatting Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, while working to develop the Third National Strategy, including any legislative proposals		Q4		Criminal Justice – Policy
122	Complete the audit of responsibility for domestic, sexual and gender services		Q1		
123	Publish the Sex Offenders Amendment Bill to improve post-release monitoring of sex offenders		Q2		Criminal Justice - Legislation
124	Fully implement the EU Victims of Crime Directive and deliver the enhanced supports for victims set out in the O'Malley Implementation Plan's recommendations		Ongoing		Criminal Justice Policy
125	Keep under review the implementation of the Victims Charter 125.1 Establish a Victims' forum – Q2 125.1 Conduct a review of the implementation progress – Q4		Q2 Q4		
126	Publish the research study on familicide and outline next steps		Q1		Criminal Justice Policy
127	Complete the review of Part 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017		Q4		Criminal Justice Policy
<b>Implement Supporting a Victim's Journey: A plan to help victims and vulnerable witnesses in sexual violence cases</b>					
128	Secure Government approval to reform the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and set out timelines to 128.1 Publish a revised scheme 128.2 Agree longer term reforms 128.3 Commence work on legislation to place the Scheme on a statutory basis		Q2		Criminal Justice Service Delivery
129	Publish a new Sexual Offences Bill to deliver reforms to sexual offences legislation arising from the O'Malley report and the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission on reasonable belief in consent		Q4		Criminal Justice - Legislation
130	Input into and monitor the development of the necessary specialist programmes of training for serving members of An Garda Síochána, legal professionals and others who are participating in a professional capacity in sexual offences investigations and trials 130.1 Report on progress – Q2		Q4		Criminal Justice Policy




	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
131	<p>Develop a scheme for the use of Intermediaries for victims of sexual offences and establish a pilot. Include engagement with stakeholders and invite expressions of interest from 3rd level institutions to provide appropriate training and accreditation for relevant professionals to be recognised as intermediaries</p> <p>131.1 Agreement with 3rd level institution in place (Q2)</p> <p>131.2 Pilot scheme established (Q3)</p>	Q1, Q2 and Q4	Criminal Justice - Policy		
132	Support training programmes for those who may have contact with a victim of coercive control to ensure there is a clear understanding of the nature of this relatively new offence	Ongoing	Criminal Justice – Policy		
133	Complete the mapping exercise to identify the nature, spread and level of services that may be encompassed by the ‘Supporting a Victim’s Journey’ plan and identify where gaps in supports exist and how to ameliorate those gaps	Q2	Criminal Justice - Policy		
134	Draft legislation to expand access to legal aid under Section 26(3A) Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 in line with O’Malley report recommendations	Q4	Criminal Justice – Legislation/ Civil Justice Legislation		
135	Develop and launch a public awareness campaign for the higher education sector around the meaning of consent, in partnership with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, and with stakeholder engagement	Q2	Transparency		
136	Develop and launch an awareness campaign on consent for broader society	Q4	Transparency		
<b>Divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour</b>					
137	Implement the actions in the Youth Justice Strategy	Ongoing	Criminal Justice – Policy		
138	Complete the evaluation of the Youth Diversion Projects	Q4	Criminal Justice – Policy		
139	Complete the evaluation of the Youth Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) initiative	Q2	Criminal Justice – Policy		
140	Bring forward the work of the new Anti-Social Behaviour Forum	Q4	Criminal Justice – Policy		
141	Publish new legislation to deal with adults who groom children into criminal activity	Q4	Criminal Justice - Legislation		
142	Disrupt the recruitment of children into criminal gangs through the continued roll out of the Greentown project pilots. Assess and evaluate progress to make sure this intervention and related youth justice interventions are making the greatest impact in the communities concerned	Ongoing	Criminal Justice Policy		



	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>143</b>	Identify areas in which to expand the JARC to target prolific and repeat offenders				
	143.1 Establish a new oversight and governance structure for offender management to coordinate and align offender management programmes, including SORAM, JARC, Domestic Violence & Complex High Risk Prisoners and Life Sentence Prisoners – Q1		Q1		
	143.2 Evaluate 5 of the existing Adult JARC projects in 2021 which will inform the further expansion of these programmes- Q4		Q4		Criminal Justice Policy
	143.2 Evaluate 2 Youth JARC pilots with a view to developing a package of tailored responses to meet the needs of cohorts of young people and their communities which will inform the future expansion of YJARC – Q4		Q4		
<b>144</b>	In cooperation with other stakeholders, develop community-based responses to provide positive alternatives for young people interested in scramblers and quads, to be supported by the network of Garda Youth Diversion Projects, local authorities and other agencies as appropriate				
	144.1 Work with other Departments, including the Department of Transport, to progress the Programme for Government commitment to introduce new legislation in this area		Q4		Criminal Justice – Policy
<b>Establish the Parole Board on a statutory footing to take better account of the concerns of victims and survivors</b>					
<b>145</b>	Selection and appointment of members to the new statutory Parole Board		Q2		Criminal Justice - Governance
<b>146</b>	Appoint the CEO to the new statutory Parole Board and begin assigning staff to the new organisation		Q2		Criminal Justice – Governance, Corporate
<b>147</b>	Secure premises and coordinate set-up of ICT and other essential services for the statutory Parole Board		Q2		IM&T , Corporate
<b>148</b>	Draft an outline Legal Aid Scheme and legal procedures under which the new body will operate		Q2		Criminal Justice – Legislation
<b>149</b>	Commence Legislation		Q3		Criminal Justice – Legislation

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Reduce re-offending rates for those convicted of crime</b>					
150	Publish a Policy Review on Penal Policy which will set out the actions to be taken to reduce the rate of re-offending 150.1 Establish a Penal Policy Consultative Council to advise on penal policy		Q3		Criminal Justice – Policy
151	Commence a policy review to consider custodial sentences of less than 12 months in consultation with the IPS and Probation Service		Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy
152	Commence a policy review of the Criminal Justice (Community Sanctions) Bill 2014 in consultation with the Probation Service and IPS in conjunction with a review of the operation of the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 152.1 Publish Policy Review – Q1 152.2 Validated and Revised General Scheme agreed – Q1 152.3 Publication of Bill – Q3				Criminal Justice – Policy
153	Establish the Taskforce on mental health and addiction challenges of people interacting with the Criminal Justice System and complete Health Needs Assessment for prisoners 153.1 Establish the Taskforce - Q1 153.2 Provide an update on progress – Q3 153.3 Publish final high level implementation plan– Q4		Ongoing		Criminal Justice - Policy
154	Implement the “Working to Change” Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021-2023 to improve the employment options for people with convictions. Focus on removing barriers and increasing opportunities for people with convictions to participate in both social enterprise and mainstream employment options, as well as entrepreneurship opportunities		Ongoing		Criminal Justice – Policy
155	Publish proposals to extend the range of the spent convictions legislation to widen the cohort who can benefit from greater employment opportunities		Q1		Criminal justice - Policy
156	Commission research on offender’s experience and interaction with state services in the areas of health, education, employment and housing to provide an insight into quality of life and integration into the community		Q4		Criminal justice - Policy
157	Work with industry experts to ensure employment focused training and up-skilling measures, offered throughout criminal justice agencies, are responsive and aligned to the identified skills gaps within the labour market		Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Deliver restorative justice safely and effectively</b>					
158	Map the current state of play of restorative justice		Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy
159	Activate a restorative justice website		Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy
160	Develop options for an appropriate mechanism and process to create awareness and availability of restorative justice at all stages of the criminal justice system with consistency of service ensuring quality in training and practice		Q3		Criminal Justice Policy
161	Consult with stakeholders on options and finalise a policy paper on the most appropriate choice		Q3		Criminal Justice – Policy
162	Publish policy proposals		Q4		Criminal Justice – Policy
<b>Publish the legislation to implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture</b>					
163	Approval of the General Scheme of a Bill to ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) 163.1 Drafting of Bill and publication Q3 163.2 Completion of legislative process Q4		Q1		Criminal Justice - Legislation
164	Prioritise necessary capital works to prisons in the revised National Development Plan to ensure the availability of humane detention facilities with adequate capacity		Ongoing		Criminal Justice – Governance
165	Finalise the terms of reference for a review of the existing functions, powers, appointment procedures and reporting processes for Prison Visiting Committees		Ongoing		Criminal Justice Policy

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Lead the development and implementation of strategies and actions to reduce offending and bring greater coherence and shared purpose to the criminal justice sector</b>					
<b>166</b>	Finalise the Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy and agree an action plan, focusing on improving the quality of individual interactions with the system, reducing delays, increasing public awareness and understanding of the system and delivering a more empathetic, understanding and trauma-informed system		Q2		Criminal Justice – Policy
<b>167</b>	Ensure related actions in relevant government strategies are aligned and coherent		Q3		Criminal Justice – Policy
<b>168</b>	Review implementation of the Action Plan on Offender Management through engagement with relevant agencies via a subgroup of Offender Management Governance and Strategy Group, with a particular focus on improving collaborative structures for offender management programmes such as JARC and SORAM		Q1		Criminal Justice – Policy
<b>169</b>	Hold quarterly meetings of the subgroup to monitor, drive and report on implementation of actions		Q4		Criminal Justice – Policy



**Goal 4 Deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age**



## Goal 4: Deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age

Ireland benefits economically, socially and culturally from the diversity brought to our country by those who choose to travel here to visit, to study, to work and to live.

Demand for Irish immigration services continues to increase at a significant rate. Our service users rightly expect immigration processes to be personalised, timely and responsive.

The Department has begun to transition from paper-based and labour intensive processes to efficient, robust and customer-centric frontline immigration services, in line with our Digital First policy.

Digital technologies and machine learning create new opportunities to reimagine our service delivery models, enhancing the user experience for all. We will publish a roadmap to transition all immigration services online.

In addition to making our services more efficient, we will make them easier to understand by simplifying our

processes and providing information in plain English. We will also make our websites available in the most common languages of our service users.

Equality and inclusivity remain core guiding principles for our Department as we work with colleagues across Government to provide responses to some of the largest global migration challenges, developing evidence-based policy and legislation.

The development of a long term migration strategy will allow us assess demographic, economic and larger migration trends and build a fair and balanced immigration system.

Covid-19 has also caused a significant backlog in processing citizenship applications due to the inability to hold citizenship ceremonies, which have become a welcome addition to our public and civic life.

We will clear the backlog of applications through alternative means and restore the citizenship ceremonies

as soon as is possible. The ceremonies, usually attended by hundreds of people, are joyous occasions and we are determined they will resume when the pandemic has passed.




We will create pathways for regularising the status of long-term undocumented people and their dependents and a sustainable and agile system for international protection applicants, including making it easier for international protection applicants to access the labour market.




To make progress against this goal over the next three years, we have identified the following strategic objectives in our Statement of Strategy:

1. Develop a fully digital, customer-centric immigration service
2. Protect the fairness and enhance the efficiency of our immigration system through new strategic policies and legislative proposals




3. Communicate effectively with our service users, recognising and understanding their diversity and supporting them to engage effectively with us
4. Restructure our immigration services to better serve our customers and our country
5. Ensure that effective controls are exercised at our borders in line with our international obligations and to maintain our national security
6. Eliminate processing backlogs across all immigration application types




This chapter sets out the 43 detailed actions which have been identified to make substantial progress against this goal in 2021.

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Develop a fully digital, customer-centric immigration service</b>					
170	Publish a roadmap for the transition of all immigration services to online application processes		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery
171	As part of a new ICT Strategy for the Department of Justice, publish a digital strategy for immigration		Q1		CIO / ISD
172	Begin accepting online payments for visa applications		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
173	Complete review of pilot “LIDPRO” visa scanning solution, and move to first phase implementation		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
174	Introduce eVetting for categories of immigration service applicants, increasing the efficiency of vetting applicants		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
175	Introduce a new online appointment scheduling system for customers who require in-person appointments to register their residency in Ireland		Q1		CIO / ISD
176	Expand the online appointment system to include the scheduling of interviews at the International Protection Office		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
<b>Protect the fairness and enhance the efficiency of our immigration system through new strategic policies and legislative proposals</b>					
177	Complete end-to-end process review of the International Protection Process.		Q1		IM&T
178	Leverage the end-to-end process review to design a revised process for the processing of International Protection applications		Q2		IM&T / ISD
179	Complete the implementation of all other Justice-related recommendations included in the Catherine Day Advisory Group report as appropriate. As part of this work, recommendations will be considered and implemented to include detailed policy analysis of potential opt-ins to the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and solution to accessing bank accounts, in addition to guiding any required legislative changes for processing applications and appeals		Q4		ISD/ Civil Justice Policy
180	Ascertain requirements for new legislation and amendments to existing legislation in the areas of immigration and international protection		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
181	Develop and implement a scheme for the regularisation of undocumented migrants considering responses to consultation and finalise scheme for publication 181.1 Draft proposals finalised – Q1 181.2 Scheme launched – Q3		Q3		Civil Justice – Policy
182	Begin accepting applications under regularisation scheme, using an online, customer friendly application process		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
183	Conduct review of legislation associated with the Common European Asylum System to identify any measures that Ireland could opt-in to, either now or at a later date when the negotiations on the EU Pact are completed		Q2		Civil Justice – Policy
184	Develop and progress legislation on citizenship, immigration and international protection to address a number of current issues		Q4		Civil Justice – Legislation
185	Finalise secondary legislation as required in relation to immigration and international protection		Q4		Civil Justice – Legislation
186	Carry out a review of additional application types which could transition to a pre-clearance model, providing applicants with certainty in advance of their arrival in Ireland		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
187	Review and expand to additional countries the Short Stay Visa Waiver and 5-year Multi-Visa options		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
188	Develop cross cutting initiatives and identify efficiency gains within ISD to support a fair and efficient immigration system		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
189	Reduce the waiting period for access to the labour market from 9 months to 6 months and increase in the validity period of a labour market access permission from 6 months to 12 months for international protection applicants		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery
<b>Communicate effectively with our service users, recognising and understanding their diversity and supporting them to engage effectively with us</b>					
190	Establish mechanisms to monitor customer service and customer satisfaction		Q2		IM&T



	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
191	Publish a new website for immigration services in Ireland, with all content written in plain language	Q1	Immigration Service Delivery / Transparency		
192	Ensure that the website is available in the five most common languages used by our customers	Q3	Immigration Service Delivery		
193	Expand the pilot chatbot function to permit a larger range of customers to receive immediate answers to immigration related queries	Q3	Immigration Service Delivery		
194	Ensure Plain English and promote the use of simple and clear language across all customer interfaces	Q3	Immigration Service Delivery / Transparency		
195	Develop the role of the Immigration NGO Forum to identify and resolve significant customer service issues	Q1	Immigration Service Delivery		
<b>Restructure our immigration services to better serve our customers and our country</b>					
196	Finalise a future design model for immigration services, along with a three-phased implementation plan for same	Q1	Immigration Service Delivery		
197	Pilot the move to the new model with the introduction of a centralised customer service unit focused on two case processing areas initially	Q2	Immigration Service Delivery		
198	Review the pilot centralised customer service function, and expand remit to include all areas of immigration	Q4	Immigration Service Delivery		
199	Complete first phase of transition to new model	Q4	Immigration Service Delivery		
200	Carry out a review of the operating model of the Border Management Unit at Dublin Airport to inform efforts to implement recommendations relating to immigration functions in A Policing Service for our Future	Q1	Immigration Service Delivery / CIO		
201	Establish steering group comprising representatives from An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice	Q2	Immigration Service Delivery		
202	Commence pilot transfer of immigration functions from the Garda National Immigration Bureau to the Department of Justice	Q4	Immigration Service Delivery		
203	Finalise and publish roadmap for the transfer of all immigration functions to the Department	Q4	Immigration Service Delivery		

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Ensure that effective controls are exercised at our borders in line with our international obligations and to maintain our national security</b>					
204	Maintain the integrity of border controls at Dublin Airport		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
205	Continue to benefit from the joint Department of Justice / Home Office Common Travel Area Forum (CTAF) to maintain the integrity of the Common Travel Area		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
206	Develop working group comprising staff of immigration services and the Garda National Immigration Bureau to identify gaps in immigration policies and procedures		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery
207	Expand the role of the quality office function in immigration services, and implement a case consistency board to support consistent decision making		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery
208	Review the policy of holding immigration detainees in prisons		Q2		Immigration Service Delivery
<b>Eliminate processing backlogs across all immigration application types</b>					
209	Develop key performance indicators for all immigration service business areas		Q1		Immigration Service Delivery
210	Publish at least twice a year statistics on the volume of applications received, cases completed, and typical processing times across all immigration areas		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
211	Deliver measurable reductions in case processing times across all areas, with a particular focus on applications for citizenship, international protection and EU Treaty Rights		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery
212	The Quality Office will develop targeted productivity measures with business units to contribute to the elimination of backlogs		Q4		Immigration Service Delivery



**Goal 5** Accelerate innovation, digital transformation and climate action across the justice sector



## Goal 5: Accelerate innovation, digital transformation and climate action across the justice sector

Accelerating innovation, digitalisation and climate action across the justice sector will be vital levers to deliver the significant reforms set out in our Statement of Strategy.

We will work with our agencies to adopt the Digital First agenda across all areas of the justice sector. This will be a core priority for the Department for this three year plan and over the next decade.

Delivering for the public is at the very heart of all that we do and the Digital First and modernisation agendas underpin all of our strategic goals.

We will continue to invest in Information Management and Technology (IM&T) to reduce the time spent on paperwork across the sector and to improve the customer service experience of the users of all of our services.

This will mean more Gardaí on patrol and on the frontline because of time saved in the station. An Garda Síochána will be better equipped with cutting edge technology so they can do their jobs with remote access to real time, secure information while on the beat.

It will mean an efficient and effective Courts Service; making access to justice easier, cheaper and quicker. And it will mean a streamlined and modern immigration service which meets the needs of our customers.

We will ensure that systems are integrated across the justice sector, enabling information to be shared across agencies safely and quickly and allowing individuals and businesses access regulatory bodies effectively.

We will promote innovation and excellence across the justice sector,

and recognise high achievement and seek to mainstream successful approaches. Through new leadership and innovation strategies we will connect and collaborate across the justice sector to scale successful innovations, develop leadership capacity, mainstream good ideas; and ensure supportive evaluation and quality assurance systems.

Climate disruption is the defining challenge of our time. We will fully align the actions and activities of the justice sector to the climate ambition in the programme for government.

The justice sector agencies, including An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service, are some of the most visible public sector agencies in the State and have a strong and visible presence in our communities. The Irish Prison Service and other justice agencies will also have a key role to play.

By cutting our reliance on carbon and by implementing climate action policies in areas such as fleet and estate management, as well as green public procurement and energy efficiency, these agencies will not only lead by example in the drive across Irish society to meet our climate change commitments, but will also encourage others to adopt practices that minimise their environmental impact and maximise community benefit. We will also examine the impact that we have as organisations and individuals on the climate agenda and take remedial actions to decrease our carbon footprint and go green across the sector.

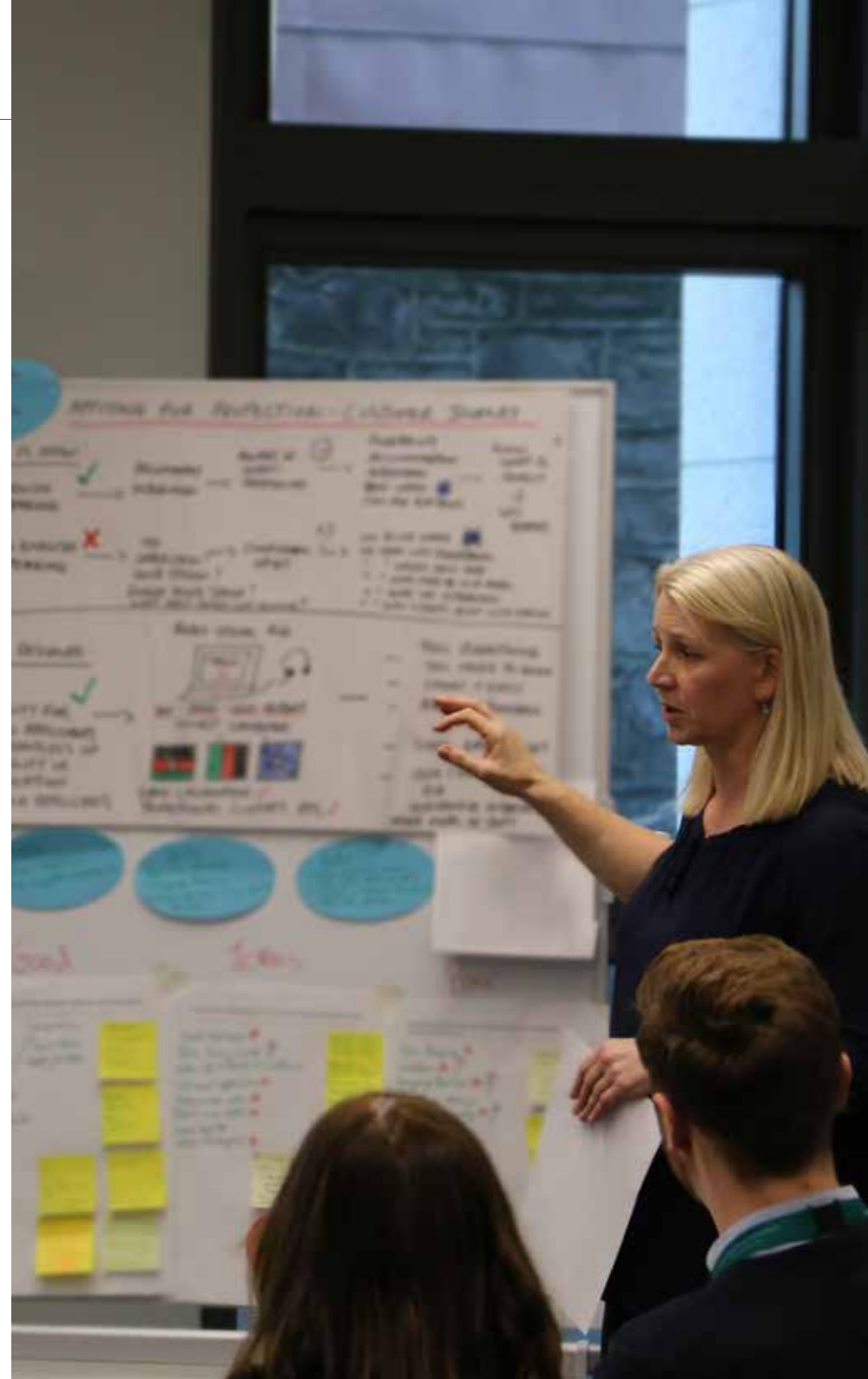
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Six strategic objectives will guide our work in this area over the next three years:




1. Dramatically increase digital services throughout the justice sector to support the modernisation of An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, and the Department of Justice itself, including our immigration services
2. Integrate digital messaging systems across the justice sector to enable greater sharing of information and increased co-operation
3. Implement plans and policies across the sector – including the management of vehicle fleets and estates - to support the achievement of Climate Action Plan goals
4. In re-designing our services, incorporate a focus on sustainability, digital solutions and reducing our carbon footprint
5. Ensure the user is at the centre of every service we develop across the justice sector




6. Develop innovation and leadership strategies for the justice sector

This chapter sets out the 28 concrete actions that will be delivered in 2021 to make substantial progress towards delivering these objectives.



	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
<b>Dramatically increase digital services throughout the justice sector to support the modernisation of An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Department of Justice itself, including our immigration services</b>					
213	Courts modernisation: provide appropriate support and challenge to the Court Service as they deliver their modernisation programme, consistent with the digitalisation of the criminal justice sector, to ensure interoperability of systems and coherence for all those who interact across the justice sector	Q2	Civil Governance & Corporate		
214	Put in place a modern systems development environment that can support complex case management systems	Q3		IM&T	
215	Implement a 'low code' platform to support simple workflow systems (and start the journey to moving us off legacy systems)	Ongoing		IM&T	
216	Increase the resilience of our digital service provision by enhancing our disaster recovery	Q4		IM&T	
217	Continue to support remote and flexible working	Ongoing		IM&T	
218	Start to build a 'bridge' between the Department and the Cloud, opening the potential for the utilisation of Cloud resources	Q2		IM&T	
219	Review ICT business cases submitted by AGS and submit to the Digital Governance Oversight Unit for sanction	Q4		Criminal Justice Governance	
<b>Integrate digital systems across the justice sector to enable greater sharing of information and increased co-operation</b>					
220	Develop a three-year plan for expansion of the Criminal Justice Operational Hub, facilitating greater automation of information exchange between criminal justice agencies, as well as access to data-informed insights to support policy development	Q2		IM&T	
221	At a minimum, deliver new projects to automate the exchange of information relating to court schedules, court outcomes and criminal charges between the Courts Service, An Garda Síochána, Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service	Q4		IM&T	
<b>Implement plans and policies across the sector – including the management of vehicle fleets and estates - to support the achievement of Climate Action Plan goals</b>					
222	Develop an Action Plan to implement ISO50001 certification for the Department	Q1		Chief Information Officer	

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
223	Publish a Justice Climate Policy Statement setting out how the justice sector will reach its ambitious climate and energy efficiency targets, including by the adoption of green public procurement	Q4		Chief Information Officer	
224	Actively manage energy consumption through ongoing monitoring, implementation of energy reduction strategies	Q4		Corporate Services, Energy Performance Officers and Energy Managers	
<b>In re-designing our services incorporate a focus on sustainability, digital solutions and reducing our carbon footprint</b>					
225	Develop service diagnostic tools to establish priorities	Q2		IM&T	
226	Plan to move suitable processes/services within ISD from being paper-based to entirely digital	Q3		Immigration Service Delivery	
227	Carry out Resource Efficiency Action Planning (REAP) for all Justice buildings	Q3		Corporate	
228	Record carbon generated by all official flights; purchase offsets for same and publish results	Q1		Corporate	
229	Develop digital solutions that assist with reducing printing and paper storage requirements	Q4		Corporate, IM&T	
230	Consider addition of sustainability criteria in the evaluation of tenders for goods and services where appropriate	Q2		Corporate, IM&T	
<b>Ensure the user is at the centre of every service we develop across the justice sector</b>					
231	Develop our project management capability, and continue to embed a project management mind-set and robust approach to portfolio prioritisation across the organisation	Q3		IM&T	
	231. 1 Dedicated tool in place to support effective portfolio management and reporting.				
	231. 2 Agreed project selection and prioritisation methodology in place				
	231. 3 Monthly management oversight of project progress, risks, resources and outcomes.				

	OBJECTIVES & 2021 ACTIONS		QUARTER		LEAD
232	Development and publication of the Customer Service Action Plan		Q3		IM&T
233	Take a user centric approach to designing new digital service offerings, including use of prototyping and user feedback. Use a Service Design lens to consider front and backstage processes and assess impact of changes on customer and employees		Q4		IM&T
234	Provide complaint and feedback mechanisms to customers, including on digital services, to identify design improvement opportunities		Q4		IM&T
235	Continue to develop cross agency networks to support innovation, sharing of ideas, sharing of lessons learned and best practice.		Q1		IM&T
236	Continue to develop indicators across the justice sector, which will focus on the outcomes of our policy interventions		Q3		Corporate
<b>Develop innovation and leadership strategies for the justice sector</b>					
237	Using the Public Sector Innovation Scorecard, a baseline audit of innovation with the Department of Justice will be carried out		Q1		IM&T
238	Review the Public Sector Innovation Strategy, and considering the baseline audit conduct gap analysis, ensuring alignment with IM&T Strategy		Q2		IM&T
239	Develop and publish an Innovation Strategy for the justice sector		Q3		IM&T
240	Invest in initiatives that support leadership, training and continued professional development in the justice sector 240.1 Publish a revised HR Strategy for the Department 240.2 Lead on implementation of the diversity measures identified under Action 16 of the OPS 2020 240.3 Support and monitor diversity initiatives as core part of governance of agencies		Q3		Corporate Civil and Criminal Governance







An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice

