



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice

# A Safe, Fair and Inclusive Ireland

Statement of Strategy  
2024 - 2026





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## Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to welcome the publication of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2024-2026, which builds upon the significant progress achieved over the past four years. I am proud of the achievements including such a broad range of policy and legislative reforms. I am dedicated to our shared mission of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

Maintaining a safe and secure Ireland is our first goal, with a focus on fostering stronger, safer communities. In 2024 reform of An Garda Síochána, along with a number of new policing, security and community safety statutory bodies will create a complete transformation as part of the reforms envisaged under the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (COPFI).

We will launch community safety partnerships nationwide that will be combined with measures to reduce anti-social behaviour and divert people from engaging in criminal activities. We will strive towards zero tolerance in society towards domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence through the leadership of our dedicated statutory agency, Cuan.

We are committed to improving access to justice for all citizens. This means ensuring faster case processing and providing unwavering support to victims throughout their legal journey, whether in criminal, family, or civil proceedings. We will uphold the fundamental right to fair and equal access for all.

Our world has become more unstable due to major conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, which has put significant

pressure on our international protection systems. We will deliver a fair immigration system where those seeking refuge from conflict or persecution will be treated fairly and respectfully. Swift decisions will be made to facilitate their integration into our society or their return to their home country. We remain steadfast in our commitment to protect our borders from individuals who may pose a threat.

In an uncertain and unstable world, we must engage earlier and more vigorously in the EU and with international institutions. Strengthening our influence in Europe is vital for our nation's interests. All of this will greatly assist us in our preparations for the EU Presidency in 2026.

This Statement of Strategy will be delivered through our annual Justice Plans. Justice Plan 2024 will set out the actions required to deliver our reform agenda, fostering collaborative efforts and ensuring accountability. To enable this Investing in people to achieve excellence is fundamental.

I, together with James Browne T.D., Minister of State who is responsible for Law Reform and Youth Justice, will work collaboratively with colleagues across Government, communities across the country, civic society and all of the state bodies within the Justice Sector to deliver the goals within this Strategy.

**Helen McEntee TD**  
Minister for Justice



# Introduction from the Secretary General

I am pleased to present this Statement of Strategy 2024-2026 to the Minister. The five high level goals set out in this document reflect the breadth, complexity and importance of the Department's vision of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

This process has been informed by a wide-ranging public consultation, and we are grateful for the participation and insight from the public and our stakeholders in shaping our priorities for the years ahead.

It is a significant privilege and responsibility that the work we do impacts so directly on the public, often at times of vulnerability or personal crisis for them. We are committed to listening to and working closely with our stakeholders and the public to deliver better outcomes. I know that colleagues across the Department take this responsibility seriously and understand that this deep engagement delivers better outcomes. The Strategy makes a firm commitment to investing in our people to deliver excellent public services and developing the exceptional talent of our team will be a focus, through new HR and learning and development strategies. We will also continue to increase our digital and data skills and to invest in tools and technologies to support our services.

Each year, an annual Justice Plan will set out in greater detail the actions necessary to deliver the goals, objectives and outcomes set out in this Statement of Strategy. Progress will be monitored and measured throughout the period of the strategy, and twice a year we will publish updates on the progress we have achieved.

I want to thank and pay tribute to my talented and dedicated colleagues across the Department and the sector. Each and every day, they work on some of the most significant challenges facing the State, and they do so with professionalism and creativity, and unwavering commitment to our values and vision.

**Oonagh McPhillips**  
Secretary General



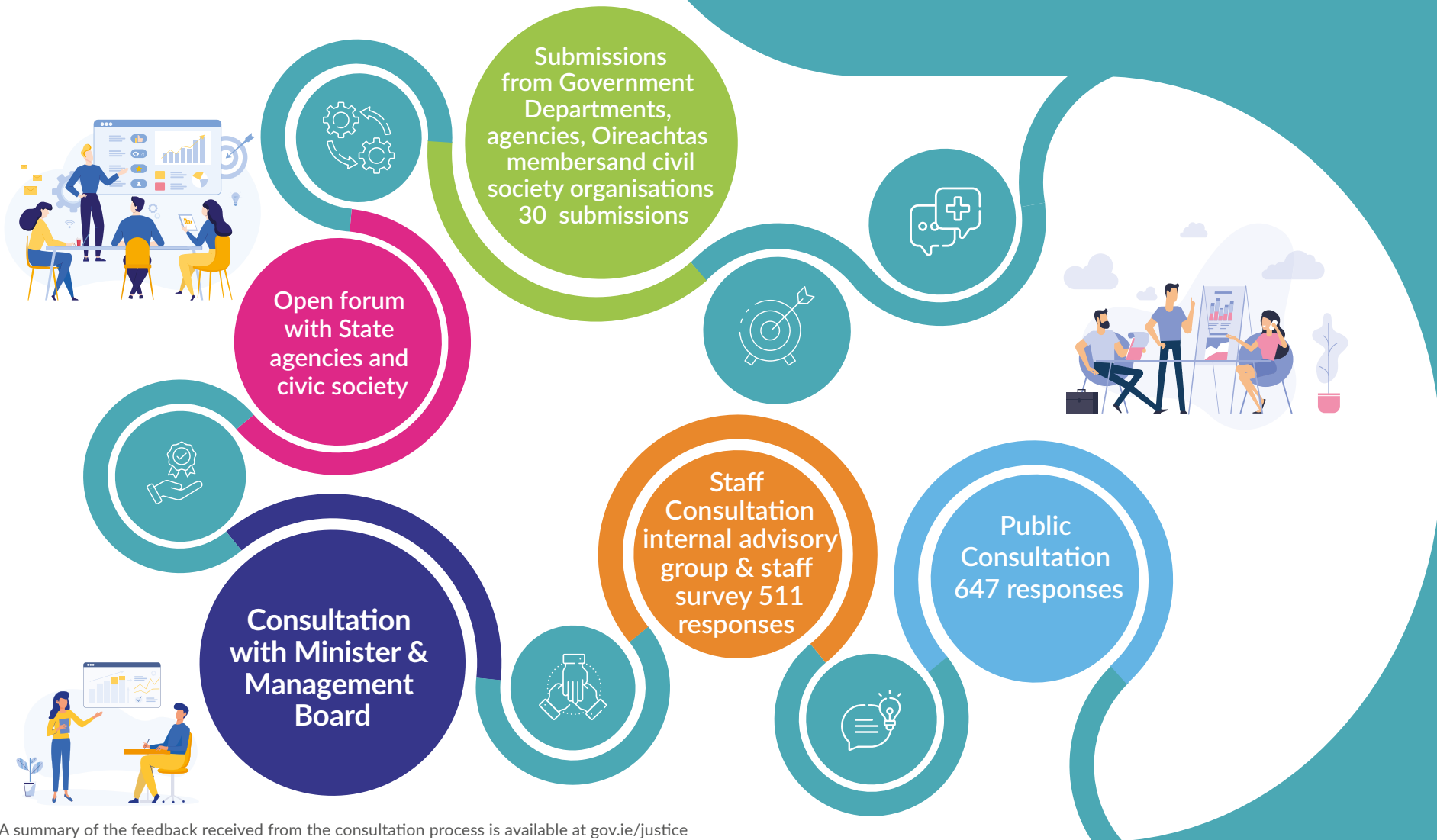
# How the Strategy was developed

## Research



# Consultation<sup>1</sup>

## How the Strategy was developed



<sup>1</sup>A summary of the feedback received from the consultation process is available at [gov.ie/justice](http://gov.ie/justice)

# Our Vision and Values





# Our Strategic Goals



Maintaining a safe and secure Ireland



Improving access to justice for all



Delivering a fair immigration system



Strengthening our influence in Europe



Investing in people to deliver excellence





# Maintaining a safe and secure Ireland

Keeping people safe and secure is at the core of what the Department does. That means resourcing An Garda Síochána with the Gardaí, Garda staff and Reserves needed to deliver policing services and protect the security of the State, and providing them with the technology and equipment required for a modern fit-for-purpose policing and security service. It also means keeping the criminal law up to date and relevant, and ensuring that the criminal justice agencies are resourced to fully play their part.

Establishing Community Safety Partnerships across the country is a key priority. These new structures will bring together the Garda Síochána, the local authority, local interests and all the various state agencies to develop and implement Community Safety Plans tailored to the needs of their own areas aimed particularly at making their communities safe and secure.

Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence is a cancer in our society. The implementation of Zero Tolerance – the third national strategy to combat Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) will be a priority. The Department will work with colleagues to support the vital work of Cuan – the new DSGBV agency – and continue to invest in services to victims.

The impact of crime on the lives of victims can be devastating. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy, our efforts will intensify to ensure their voices are heard and taken into account as part of our progress to keep Ireland safe and secure.

The Department's agencies play a critical role in delivering on our mission and in many cases have significant statutory powers and responsibilities. The Department will continue to develop its capacity to exercise effective governance and oversight of these agencies and work with them to deliver on their mandates.

While the Department is committed to preventing crime, it remains the case that crimes are committed and detected. Our aim is to divert as many people as possible from the criminal justice system to services that are better equipped to deal with their mental health, addiction and other issues. For those who properly come within the scope of the criminal justice system, the Department will continue to focus on increasing effective alternatives to prison through investment in youth justice structures, the Probation Service, community services and restorative justice and, more resources will be targeted at rehabilitation



of offenders in our prison system to reduce levels of recidivism.

The threats to the security of the State are changing all the time and the Department will work with partners at home and abroad to equip ourselves to meet the challenges we face.

Figure 1: Maintaining a safe and secure Ireland - Objective and Outcomes

## Objectives



## Outcomes



# Improving access to justice for all

Access to justice is more than a phrase - it is a fundamental principle of fairness. Our commitment is to address barriers to anyone seeking justice, regardless of their circumstances.

The Department will drive the significant reform needed across the State's legal system to deliver a faster, more effective justice system, with an increase in cases being heard within shorter timeframes. The system will be more victim-centred, trauma-informed and will support victims at every stage of their journey in the criminal, family and civil legal processes.

As part of this, the reform of family justice will provide Ireland with an effective, child-centred system that enables families to resolve their problems in a simpler, faster way. Through reforming, the law blockages will be reduced, and appropriate support systems improved, including where legal or other advice is necessary.

The Department is supporting the modernisation of the courts systems, and improving facilities and supports for those who are victims of, or witnesses to, crime. Key to facilitating greater access to justice are,

continued investment in resources for, and digitalisation of, the courts system. This will be in parallel to the development of a unique personal identifier across the justice sector.

Bereaved families interact with the Coroners Service at the most difficult time in their lives. The strategy commits to delivering a sensitive and timely service to the bereaved.

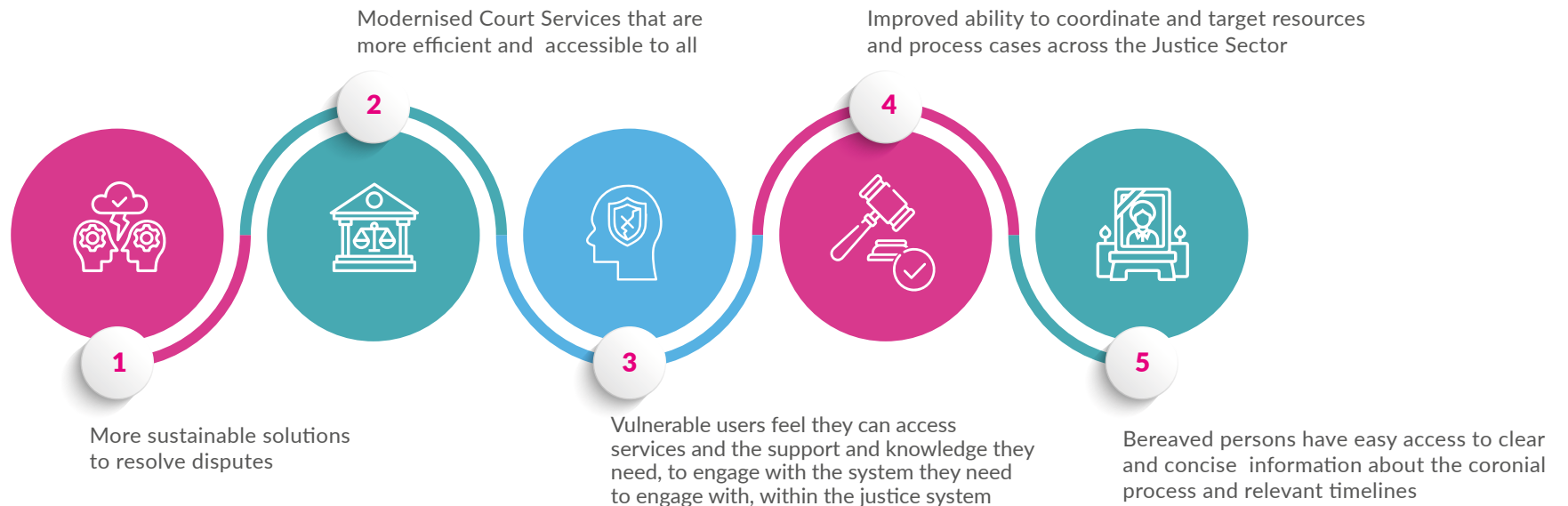
Reforming our laws on areas such as the sale of alcohol, licensing of firearms, defamation and censorship will provide more effective regulation of social, economic and recreational activities that are within the Department's policy remit.

Figure 2: Improving access to justice for all - Objective and Outcomes

## Objectives



## Outcomes





# Delivering a fair immigration system

Inward migration is not only beneficial for Ireland's continued socio-economic wellbeing, it is essential, given the demographic challenges that the country is increasingly facing with an ageing population. Migrants work in many vital sectors of the labour market - from specialist skills in IT and pharmaceuticals, through to housing construction, health and social care and contributes to social provision as well as support Ireland's economic growth.

Our country enriches and is enriched by the people who have chosen to come here to build better lives for themselves and their families or who may be fleeing conflict or persecution.

Over the lifetime of this strategy we will work with other Government Departments on a more strategic approach to migration which addresses labour market needs and long-term demographic and social challenges.

The State also has a paramount duty to protect its borders from those who may cause harm, and to ensure that all those arriving at our borders are legally entitled to enter Ireland. This is a fundamental exercise of State sovereignty. This work is undertaken in a rules-based manner that fully respects the human rights of all concerned and fully upholds Ireland's Constitution and international legal obligations.

Humanitarian crises can have a major impact on our international protection system. This strategy recognises that climate change will have an impact on migration. It will also create the need for more and specialist skills as the economy transitions to net zero, through growing industries such as renewables, retrofitting housing, electric vehicles or forestry.

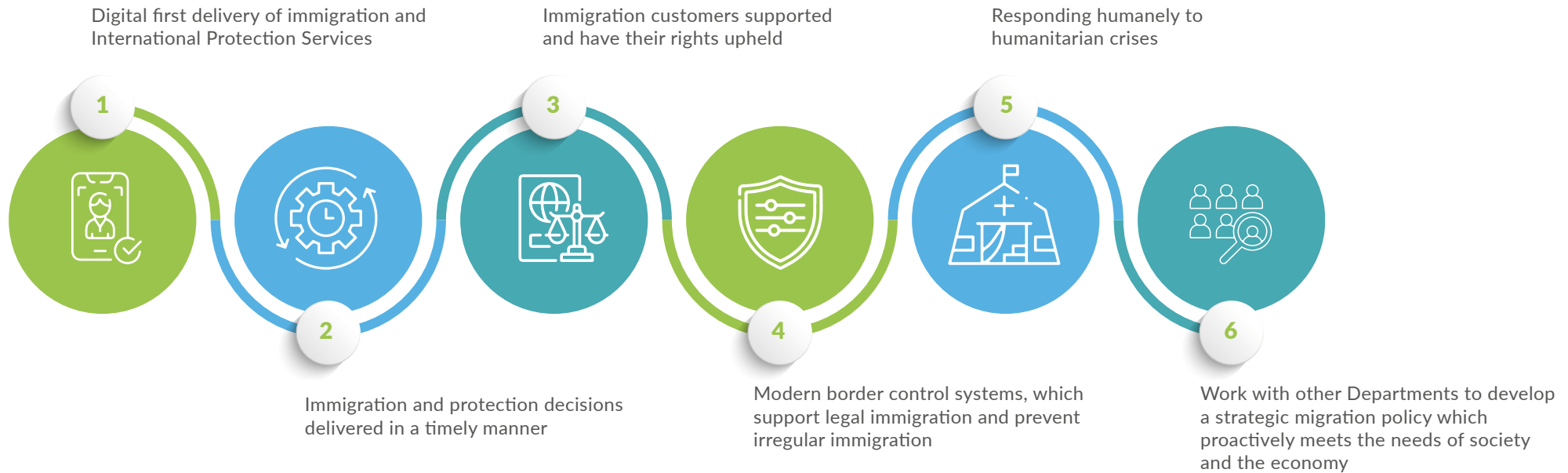
The Immigration and International Protection systems will continue significant modernisation programmes to ensure they are agile, robust and fully resourced to meet the unprecedented increase in applications in recent years. Accelerated procedures will be put in place for those arriving from Safe Countries, and we will ensure an effective returns process is in place for those not eligible for international protection.

The Department will continue to take all necessary steps in line with Government policy to manage the international protection process efficiently, effectively and humanely, while ensuring the integrity of the immigration system is maintained at all times.

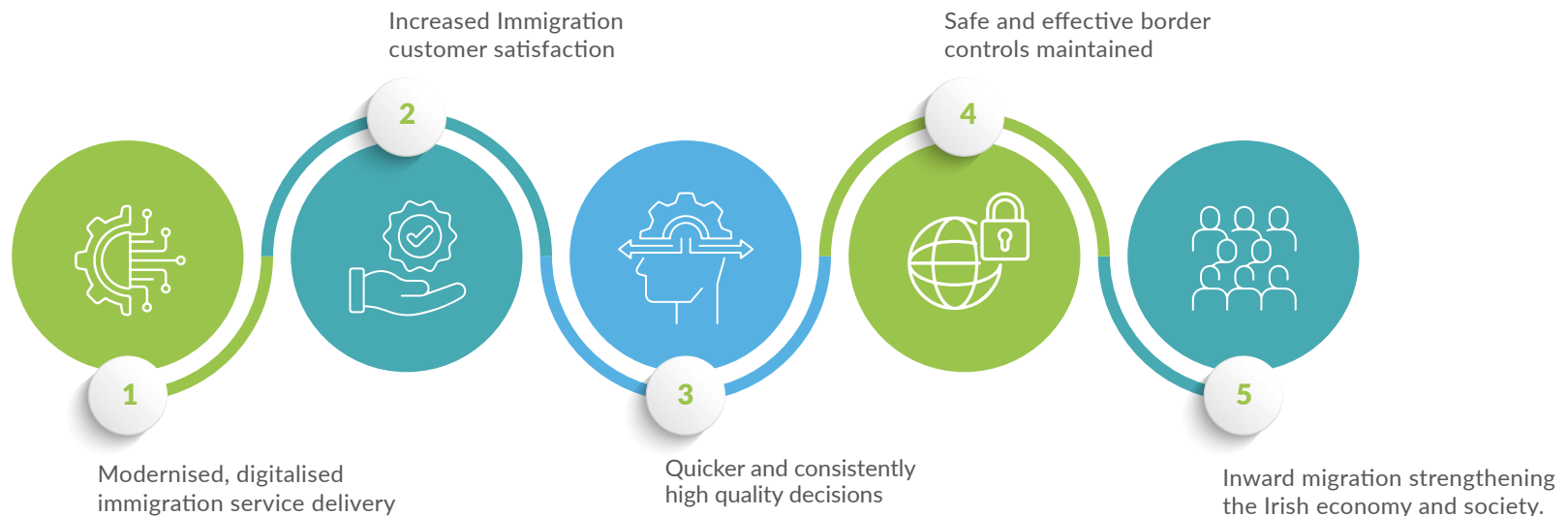


Figure 3: Delivering a fair immigration system - Objective and Outcomes

## Objectives



## Outcomes





## Strengthening our influence in Europe

Increasingly, many of Ireland's laws and policies originate in EU negotiations. Significant areas of policy responsibility for this Department, such as economic crime and corruption, violence against women and vulnerable victims, migration, privacy and international security, are a growing focus at EU level. Ireland's active involvement in shaping policy discussions offers mutual benefit.

This requires that we build stronger relationships, and deepen our alliances with EU member states and the institutions. Strengthening our capability and capacity enhances our reputation as a committed member state, and will ensure that Ireland's interests are understood, and our influence maintained to accommodate our legal and Constitutional framework.

The Department will develop skills and position resources to ensure a successful Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026, particularly in the policy domain of Justice and Home Affairs. We will develop an ambitious programme to progress during the Presidency, in line with Government policy.

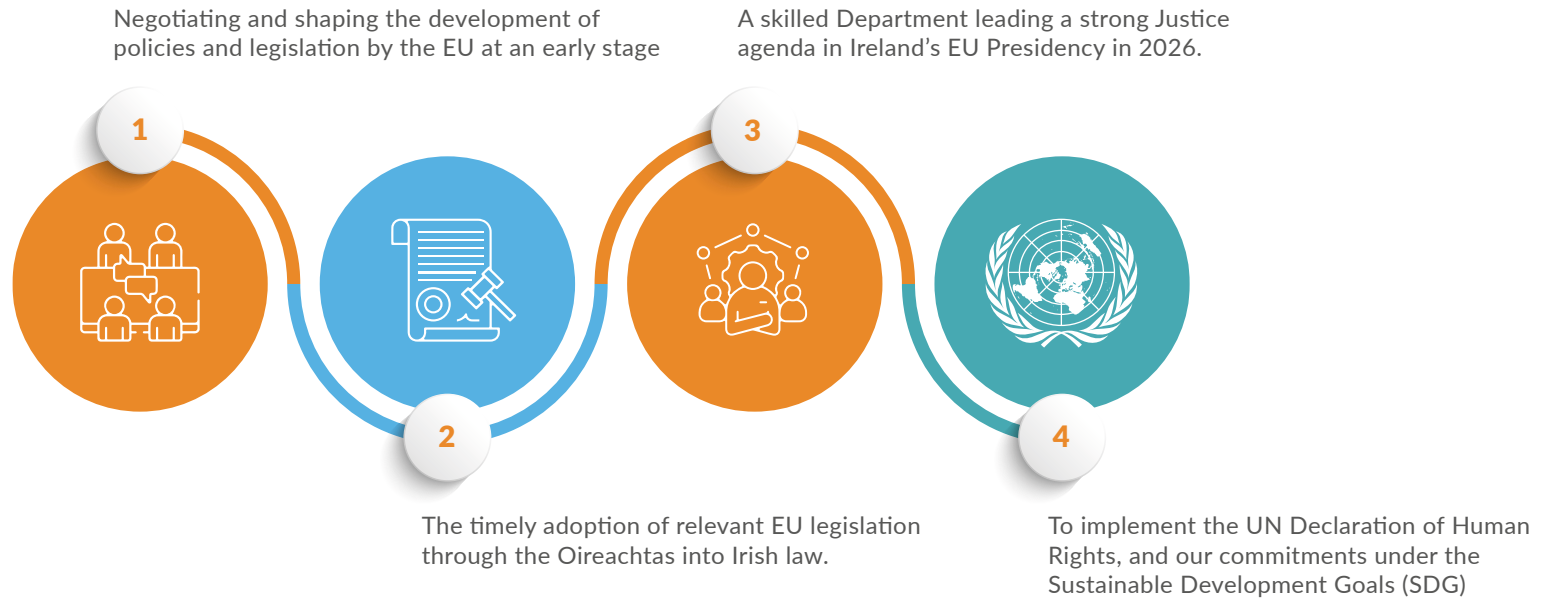
This will be achieved to protect citizens' security, to combat crime and terrorism, to counter extremist ideologies, to support victims of crime, to uphold fundamental human rights, and safeguard the rule of law, and to maximise law enforcement cooperation, and the ongoing modernisation of justice systems across the entirety of the European Union.

Delivering this will be balanced with our other international commitments and our priority to further progress in particular the UN Declaration on Human Rights and relevant sustainable development goals. During the lifetime of this strategy the Department will embed consideration of the Government's Wellbeing Framework and other strategies into all aspects of our prioritisation and policy formulation.

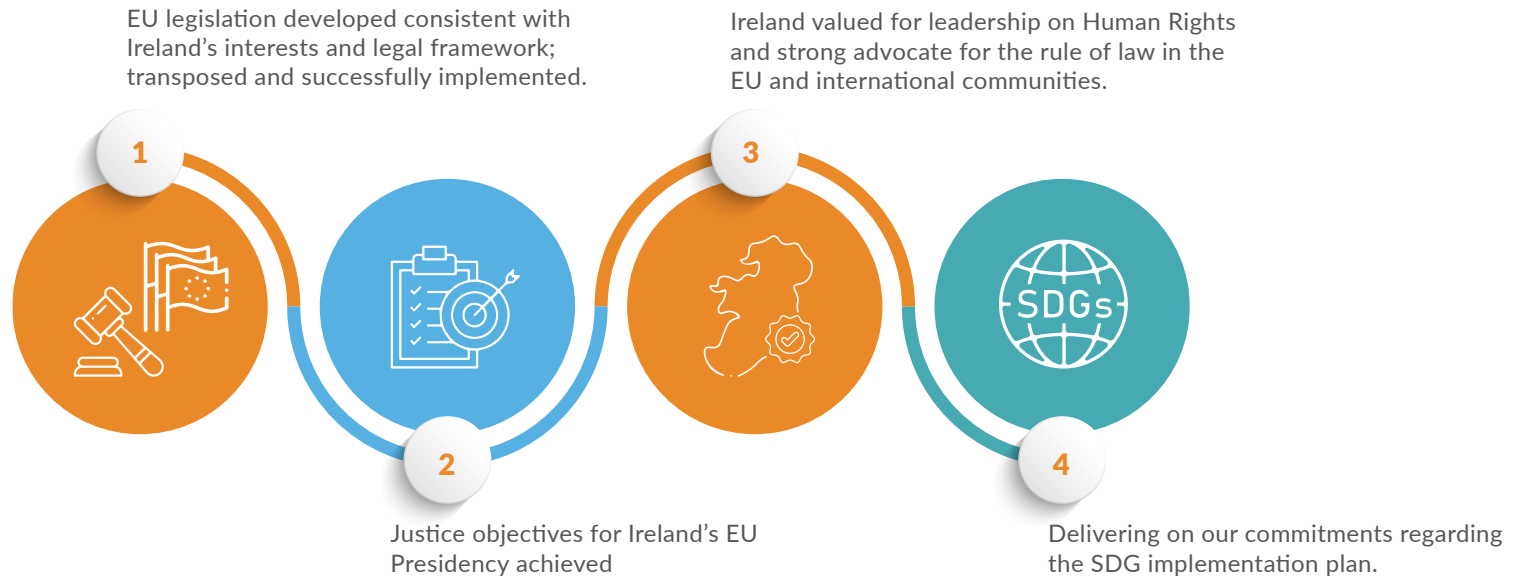


Figure 4: Strengthening our influence in Europe - Objective and Outcomes

## Objectives



## Outcomes





# Investing in people to deliver excellence

The Department will invest strongly in all our people, providing them with the supports they need to reach their potential to best deliver high quality services for Government and the public.

New skill needs will continue to emerge, and colleagues will be supported to develop their own and the organisation's capability, through accessible and lifelong learning. Our commitment is to provide a wide range of learning and development options, encouraging people to build on their capabilities by providing a wide range of learning and development options, including leadership and professional development opportunities, and educational supports. New HR & Learning and Development strategies will be developed and delivered in support of this commitment.

We recognise that successful transformation comes through understanding the Department's unique needs and challenges and implementing effective technology solutions to address them. Our focus is to develop a modern work environment that nurtures, equips and empowers people. Service delivery

will be modernised on a digital-first solution basis and new and emerging innovations will improve productivity and wellbeing.

The Department is helping to build a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across the public service. Continuing to lead in embedding, promoting and living our own commitment to EDI will help to position the organisation as an employer of choice. Providing an inclusive work environment can support and retain people to flourish and do their best work.

The Department will continue to support central Government public service reforms and will show demonstrable leadership and commitment across a range of areas including accessibility, innovation, diversity, the digital agenda, combatting climate change and promoting sustainability.

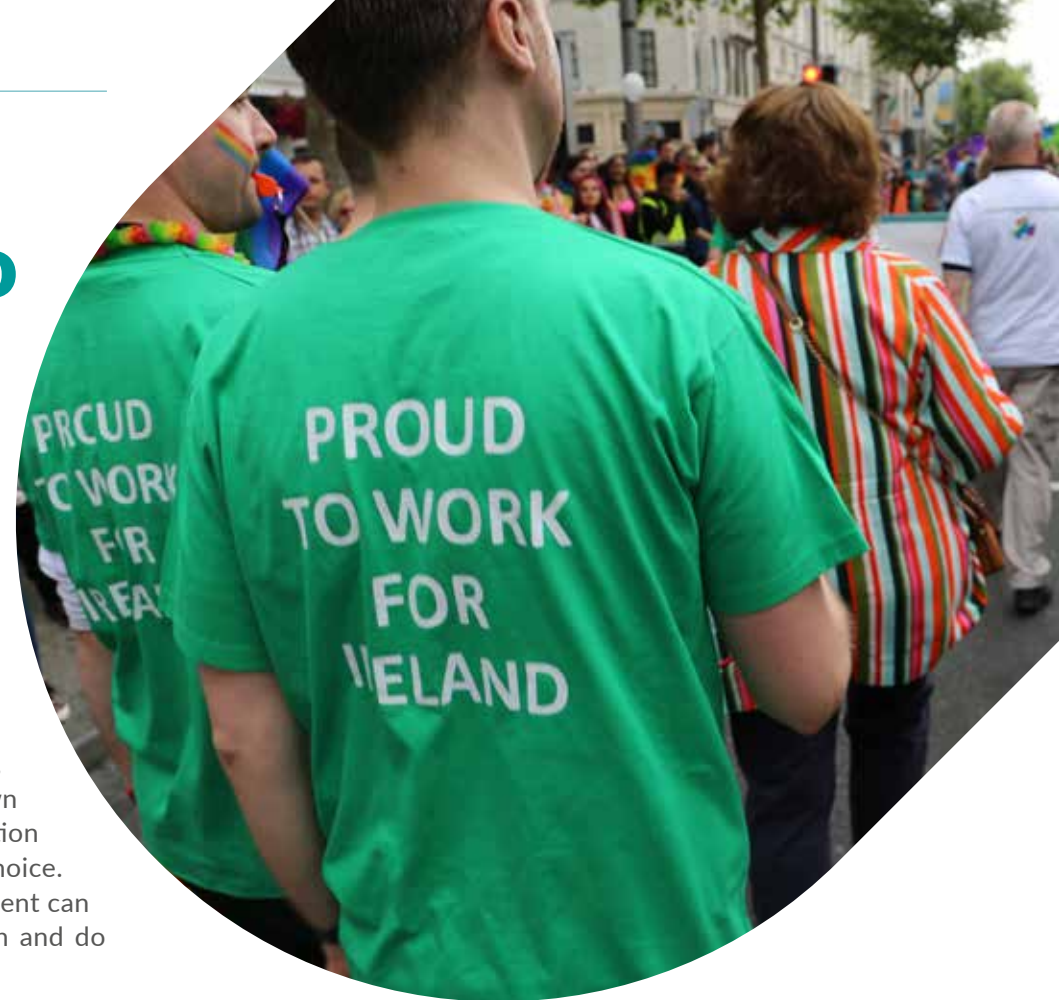


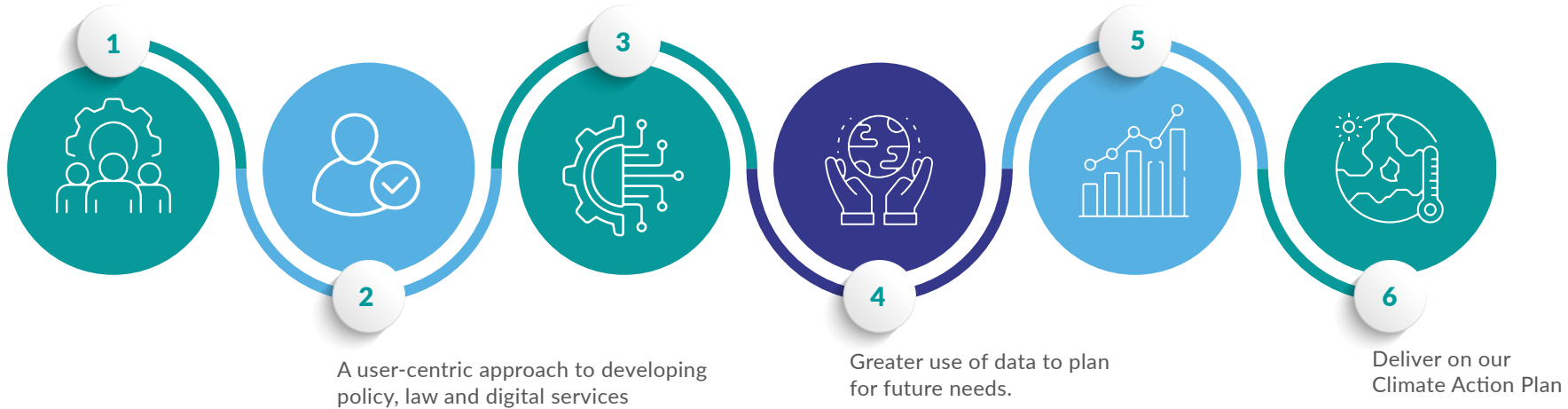
Figure 5: Investing in people to deliver excellence - Objective and Outcomes

## Objectives

A highly people-focussed organisation delivering on its mandate for Government and the public

Business solutions designed around effective processes which harness the benefits of the evolving technological landscape

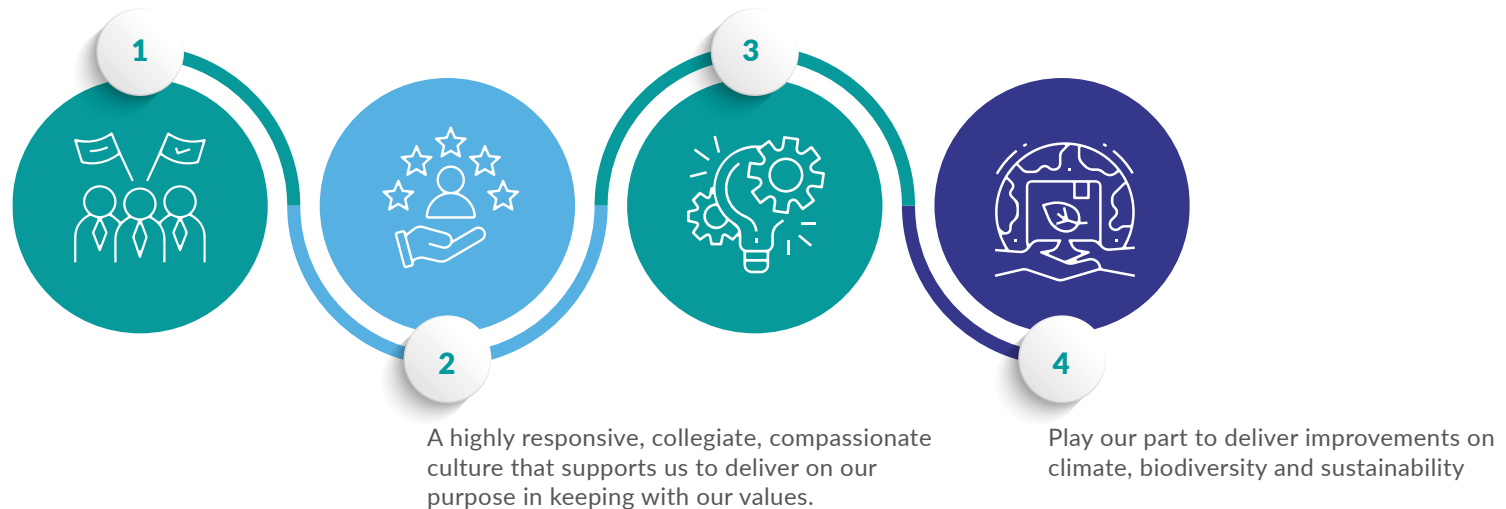
Develop clear and measurable indicators and benchmarks



## Outcomes

A flourishing diverse Department where workforce needs are anticipated and planned for to the greatest degree possible.

Focused measurable innovative delivery, supported by data and evidence, reported on transparently



# Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The strategy statement will be supported by an annual action plan, published each year with updates published biannually.

These plans will provide more detail on each of the Goals, Objectives and Outcomes, and set details of the actions to achieve progress, the function responsible and the expected timescale of delivery.

Each year, an evolving set of indicators will be developed to measure progress against the outcomes set out in this Statement of Strategy.

The annual action plans will be published, and progress reports will be published twice a year.







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