

# TOWARDS 2030: Statement of Strategy

Office of the Ombudsman | Office of the Information Commissioner  
| Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information | Office  
of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner | Standards in Public  
Office Commission | Commission for Public Service Appointments





Corporate Spine

Our Vision and Values

Shared Strategic Themes

Individual Office Objectives

Annual Business Plans





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# Forewords



As Ombudsman, Information Commissioner, Commissioner for Environmental Information and Protected Disclosures Commissioner, I am pleased to share this Statement of Strategy with you. As a member of the Standards in Public Office Commission and the Commission for Public Service Appointments, I wish to thank the chairs and members of both for their ongoing support for the office.

While these six independent bodies are quite distinct, they exist for a common purpose: to promote fairness, accountability and transparency in public life, public services, and across wider society. And fundamental to this purpose is trust. Through our work, we aim to build trust in public institutions in various ways: by reviewing decisions made by public bodies and authorities; by ensuring that procedures are fair and transparent; and by providing avenues for people who have exhausted all other possibilities.

Our role in building trust between the public and public institutions is particularly crucial at present as we are seeing increasing division, distrust and polarised debate. We take comfort in the fact that one of the strongest themes emerging from our consultation around our new Strategy is the openness and approachability of our staff. Our staff survey highlighted collegiality and effective teamwork as strengths right across the organisation, while our external stakeholder surveys for each of the six bodies praised the availability, dedication and respectful engagement of our staff.

“

Our role in building trust between the public and public institutions is particularly crucial at present as we are seeing increasing division, distrust and polarised debate.

I would like to thank our staff therefore, not just for carrying out their duties effectively and efficiently, but for doing so with a personal touch. I look forward to working with all of them to implement this Strategy.

**Ger Deering,**  
*Ombudsman and Information  
Commissioner  
February 2026*



As Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission (Standards Commission), I welcome the inclusion of the Standards Commission staff in this Statement of Strategy. I am pleased that the Statement recognises both the shared values and the independence of the different Offices and the corporate support of the Office of the Ombudsman. Our shared objectives will promote transparency and accountability in public life, the former of which is a key objective of the legislation the Standards Commission supervises. I look forward to the Standards Commission contributing to the delivery of this strategy.

**Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne,**

*Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission  
February 2026*



As Chairperson of the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA), I welcome the inclusion of the Commission in an overarching strategy statement, encompassing the different independent Offices under the corporate support of the Office of the Ombudsman. This consistent approach aligns all of these offices in the common mission of promoting fairness, transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services and across wider society. It will allow these offices to continue to support the wider public service in reaching our shared goals. I look forward to the CPSA contributing to the delivery of this strategy.

**Ms Verona Murphy,**

*Ceann Comhairle, Chairperson of the Commission for Public  
Service Appointments  
February 2026*

# Introduction

Crafting a strategy which speaks to the work of six different statutory bodies is a complex task, requiring us to spend time reflecting on what unites us as an organisation, while clearly capturing the independent mission of each statutory body. Our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to its development with their time, their energy and their ideas.

Our six bodies are:



The **Office of the Ombudsman**, which investigates public service complaints;



The **Office of the Information Commissioner**, which reviews Freedom of Information decisions by public bodies;



The **Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information**, which reviews decisions made by public authorities on requests for environmental information;



The **Standards in Public Office Commission**, which oversees ethics, electoral, state finance and lobbying legislation;



The **Commission for Public Service Appointments**, which regulates recruitment and selection in the Irish public service;



The **Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner**, which facilitates reports of wrongdoing in the workplace.

Each of these Offices is independent, but is supported by a shared 'corporate spine'. Our colleagues in Legal, HR, Finance, ICT, Procurement, Facilities, Communications and Quality provide us with specialist support. This allows us to benefit from wider expertise and better resources than each individual Office could hope to enjoy working alone, while at the same time protecting the independence of each statutory body in all of our core work.



In terms of the structure of the Strategy, we first set out our vision, our values and our four shared strategic themes. Each of the statutory bodies, as well as each section of our 'corporate spine' then presents their objectives, and each objective links back to one of our shared strategic themes. Finally, we outline what we intend to do to combat climate change, and to promote equality and respect for human rights.

We will focus on the 'human' in human rights in our work, continuing to promote and demonstrate respect, empathy and regard for others. This is both more challenging, and more important than ever. Technology is advancing rapidly and while we intend to embrace new developments, in order to deliver more value and efficiency in how we work, we will not lose focus on the importance of the human interactions that remain at the core of what we do.

Similarly, we will seek to empower our staff to innovate - to suggest, to trial and to implement new ideas as we continue to try and improve delivery of our services. The key here is not necessarily large scale initiatives, but creating safe spaces for staff at all levels to challenge the norms, contribute new ideas, and come up with solutions for improving services and processes in ways both big and small.

We strive always to promote a collegiate atmosphere, and to give our staff opportunities to collaborate and work together on cross-cutting issues. There was great engagement from every part of the Office in developing this Statement of Strategy. As we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that will present themselves in the coming years, I am grateful for the support of all of our staff, of the Ombudsman, and of the Standards Commission and CPSA Commissioners, in delivering on the commitments which we have made.



**Elaine Cassidy,**  
*Director General*



# Our vision and values

Our vision is to promote fairness, transparency and accountability in public life, the delivery of public services and across wider society.

## Our values are:



### Independence

We are committed to ensuring practical and demonstrable independence in the exercise of our functions across all of our statutory offices.

### People focus

We will have a strong focus on our values and the humanity of the individuals at the heart of our work, whether those be members of the public, civil and public servants, or our own staff. We strive to remain approachable, accessible and personal in the services that we provide.

### Fairness

We will engage fairly with public bodies, the public and our own staff. We will listen carefully to all sides, and make impartial decisions based on relevant evidence.

### Respect

We often work with some of the most marginalised members of society, and those who have exhausted all other avenues open to them. We are committed to ensuring that we treat all people with respect and dignity, which includes starting with the presumption that everyone concerned is acting as they think best.

### Integrity

We seek to uphold the highest ethical standards and to act with honest and integrity. We are transparent, open and truthful in how we deliver our services, while respecting the sensitivity of the information we receive.



## What do these values look like in practice?

### Independence · People Focus · Fairness · Respect · Integrity

Respondents to external surveys for each of the six bodies praised the thoughtful engagement of our staff and the appreciation of balance of responsibilities and rights in delivering public services.



“There is very positive, respectful and constructive engagement with our organisation and there is much evidence of a deep understanding of the challenges faced in delivering services while maintaining the rights of citizens and discharging its duties in a balanced way.”

Public Service Provider

Values should be evident internally as well as externally in an organisation and our staff survey applauded positive team work, open communication and a genuine desire to improve public services.



‘Some people fall through the cracks, you know, and we can help them.’

Ombudsman staff member

Our values mean that we take a human approach to reviewing each case. We are able to look beyond the ‘terms and conditions’ to the fundamental question of ‘what is fair’.



‘Even when we don’t decide in favour of an applicant, we are promoting trust in the system by examining it.’

OIC staff member

Much of our work consists of independently examining decisions made by public bodies, understanding and explaining why they took that decision. This shines a light on the process, providing reassurance that decisions have been made in good faith.

# Our shared strategic themes

## 1 Better public services

We will provide the best possible public services in our own work by supporting effective, transparent and timely decisions and procedures. We will aim to make our processes efficient and accessible for those who engage with us, including both members of the public and the public bodies that we work with. We will keep the public interest at the heart of everything that we do.



## 2 Awareness and engagement

We will seek to make systematic improvements to wider public services and public life, through structured engagement with public bodies and other stakeholders. We will also work to increase stakeholders' awareness and understanding of our functions and the principles we uphold, paying particular attention to the most marginalised in society.



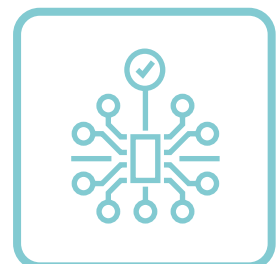
## 3 Staff who are supported and innovative

We will empower, enable and equip our people to fulfil their potential within the organisation. We will foster a culture of positive change and innovation in our workforce, ensuring that our staff play a key role in improving public services.



## 4 Technology Enabled Delivery

We will harness digital technology developments to deliver value and efficiency for our service users and staff, to better support the delivery of our strategy and ambitions. We will design for Cyber-Security across all of our digital and technology activities.





# Office of the Ombudsman

## Investigating public service complaints

The Office of the Ombudsman investigates complaints from members of the public who believe they have been unfairly treated by certain public service providers. The Ombudsman also investigates complaints under the Disability Act 2005 about failures by public bodies to provide accessible buildings, services and information. We seek to promote fairness and inclusion, and to deliver improvements in public services, through lessons learned from individual complaints and our own-initiative investigations.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Conduct timely, accurate and thorough investigations; make well-reasoned and clear recommendations; and engage positively with public bodies to ensure our recommendations are implemented.	Better public services
2	Conduct and report on own-initiative investigations and projects, to highlight and address systemic issues in public services.	Better public services
3	Ensure that supports and opportunities are provided to new and existing staff, enhancing their capabilities both to aid their own development and to meet the evolving needs of the public.	Supported and innovative staff
4	Promote a positive, innovative and inclusive workplace culture and working environment.	Supported and innovative staff
5	Consistently evaluate our ICT systems and explore opportunities presented by emerging developments in the area of IT.	Technology Enabled Delivery
6	Develop and deliver outreach initiatives to improve reciprocal learning between our Office, public service providers and other 3rd party stakeholders, interest groups and the general public.	Awareness and engagement



# Office of the Information Commissioner

## Supporting the right to information

The Office of the Information Commissioner carries out independent reviews of decisions taken by public bodies on Freedom of Information requests.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Deliver timely, accurate and well-grounded decisions on reviews.	Better public services
2	Further develop and implement broad outreach programme to improve engagement with stakeholders.	Better public services
3	Ensure central involvement in the review of the FOI Act.	Better public services
4	Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities for OIC staff.	Supported and innovative staff
5	Develop and construct a new OIC knowledge management database.	Supported and innovative staff
6	Identify opportunities and implement appropriate procedures for the potential use of AI in our work.	Better public services



# Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information

## Ensuring access to environmental information

The Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information carries out independent reviews of decisions made by public authorities on requests for environmental information.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Deliver accurate and well-grounded decision on appeals.	Better public services
2	Continue to innovate and streamline our processes to ensure decisions are made in a timely manner.	Better public services
3	Promote greater understanding of obligations in relation to access to information on the environment, in particular relating to the proactive publication of information by public authorities.	Awareness and engagement
4	Support stakeholders with the access to environmental information process by developing up-to-date and accessible resources and engaging directly with public authorities where appropriate.	Awareness and engagement
5	Continue to provide supports and training for OCEI staff, together with an increased focus on knowledge exchange amongst staff and more widely.	Supported and innovative staff
6	Explore opportunities to learn about access to environmental information law and best practice in other jurisdictions.	Better public services
7	Identify opportunities and implement appropriate procedures for the potential use of AI in our work.	Better public services



# Standards in Public Office Commission

## Promoting transparency and accountability in public life

The Standards Commission oversees legislation regarding Ethics, Elections, State Finance and Lobbying.

The staff support the Standards Commission in providing guidance and advice to stakeholders; overseeing compliance and receipt of statutory returns from individuals and organisations; processing, publishing and approving reimbursement of election expenses; and processing complaints. Staff also maintain and update the Register of Lobbying and undertake outreach activities to ensure that those with obligations under the legislation overseen by the Commission can understand and comply with that legislation.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Fulfil regulatory mandate in relation to lobbying, ethics and electoral matters, and support the Standards Commission to improve compliance across each of these areas.	Better public services
2	Develop clear, comprehensive and timely guidelines, advice and FAQs in line with legislative change and Standards Commission policy.	Better public services
3	Continue with outreach programmes to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ensure that persons who have requirements under the relevant legislation are aware of and understand their requirements; and</li> <li>2. increase awareness of the role of the Standards Commission in promoting transparency and accountability for those involved in public life.</li> </ol>	Awareness and engagement
4	Review current processes and identify opportunities for efficiencies and streamlining arising from the modernisation of our technology and digitalisation.	Technology Enabled Delivery
5	Create a culture where staff are supported to continually review and improve processes and procedures and enable staff to partake in additional training.	Better public services



# Commission for Public Service Appointments

## Safeguarding public sector recruitment and selection

The Commission for Public Service Appointments ensures that appointments to positions in the public service are fair and transparent. We aim to support the effective delivery of public services by continuously promoting best practice in recruitment and selection.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Fulfil CPSA's regulatory mandate with respect to public sector recruitment, including processing reviews, following up on protected disclosures and carrying out CPSA's licencing functions, and identify ways to improve these processes.	Better public services
2	Review and modernise the Code of Practice to ensure that it is fit for purpose, providing for the fair and transparent recruitment of talented and committed individuals to positions in the civil and public service.	Better public services
3	Maintain a proactive regulatory programme for recruitment in the civil and public service, including careful awards of recruitment licences, as well as monitoring compliance by holders of recruitment licences and approved agencies.	Better public services
4	Engage with public sector recruiters, candidates, Public Jobs, and the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation to promote best practice.	Awareness and engagement
5	Provide supports, training and development opportunities to all staff, and monitor staffing levels and structures to ensure resilience and effectiveness in a small team.	Supported and innovative staff
6	Review current processes and identify opportunities for efficiencies and streamlining arising from the modernisation of our technology.	Technology Enabled Delivery



# Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner

## Facilitating reports of wrongdoing in the workplace

The Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner transmits reports of work-related wrongdoing to the most appropriate body for their initial assessment and follow-up. Where the Commissioner considers that there is no appropriate person, the Commissioner will accept the report for follow-up himself, as the recipient of last resort.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Transmit reports of wrongdoing to the most appropriate recipient(s) within the statutory deadlines, keeping procedures under regular review and adjusting where appropriate in response to emerging trends.	Better public services
2	Review approach and improve timeliness in following up on reports accepted by the Commissioner as recipient of last resort.	Better public services
3	Promote a culture of accountability, integrity and transparency by encouraging employers across the public and private sector to properly follow up on reports of wrongdoing made by workers at the earliest opportunity.	Awareness and engagement
4	Provide information and resources, through our website and outreach, to assist both reporting persons and those receiving reports to better understand and navigate the complexities of the protected disclosures regime in Ireland.	Awareness and engagement
5	Actively engage in the statutory review of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.	Better public services
6	Ensure all designated persons are adequately trained and given opportunities for further development, and that staffing levels and structures are regularly monitored to ensure resilience in a small team operating within tight statutory deadlines.	Supported and innovative staff
7	Review current processes and identify opportunities for efficiencies and streamlining arising from the modernisation of our technology and digitalisation.	Technology Enabled Delivery



# The role of our Corporate Spine

While each of the Offices carries out separate and distinct statutory functions, we share a corporate framework under the rubric of the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office is funded on the basis of its direct Exchequer vote, rather than other sources such as grants in aid. The Office is not, therefore, reliant on a Department or a Minister for funding.

This allows us to provide a strong 'corporate spine' which contributes to the substantial independence of the statutory bodies, providing them with ICT support, human resources, finance, procurement, legal services, communications, facilities and quality assurance. Sharing these key services across our Office delivers efficiency and value to the public, while allowing the staff of the independent bodies to concentrate on their core objectives.

Below, we outline our key objectives with regard to four core areas of our work in the corporate spine: People and Culture; ICT; Quality, Stakeholder Engagement and Communications and Legal Services. We also commit to maintaining strong financial governance and value for money and ensuring that our programmes and processes are as efficient as they can be, to best serve staff across the organisation.

## People, Culture & Integrity

We will empower, enable and equip our people to fulfil their potential within the organisation. We will foster a culture of positive change and innovation in our workforce, ensuring that our staff play a key role in improving public services.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Ensure compliant and efficient financial governance encompassing green procurement and value-driven contract management.	Better public services.
2	Plan for a Workforce of the Future ensuring timely hiring and ensuring our staff have optimum skills training and working conditions.	Supported and innovative staff
3	Enable a high-performance culture, empowering our people to achieve their maximum potential, and ensuring that our processes are efficient and timely.	Supported and innovative staff
4	Champion staff wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, through staff networks and champions, and inclusive leadership training.	Supported and innovative staff.
5	Maintain safe, efficient and sustainable facilities.	Supported and innovative staff

## ICT

We will harness digital technology developments to deliver value and efficiency for our service users and staff and to better support the delivery of our strategy and ambitions. Cyber security will be a foundational principle across all technology and digital initiatives ensuring trust, resilience and compliance by design. Our ICT strategy will contain the following four core objectives.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Modernise and secure systems, standardising platforms and automating operations.	Technology Enabled Delivery
2	Ensure high standard cyber security resilience, and fully align with EU NIS2 (Network and Information Systems Directive 2) directives.	Technology Enabled Delivery
3	Establish enterprise data governance for AI enablement and improve data quality, while strengthening GDPR compliance and secure data-sharing.	Technology Enabled Delivery
4	Use user-centred design thinking and a business value focus in all initiatives.	Technology Enabled Delivery

## Legal Services

We will support each office to exercise their functions and deliver their objectives successfully, within the rule of law. We will provide efficient, high-quality legal services to each office and achieve value for money when procuring external legal services. We will work collaboratively with staff to understand their objectives and support their decision-making, so that they can deliver sound decisions that are impartial, fair and supported by the law.

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Provide a high quality and solution-focused legal service to each office, to support them to achieve their objectives lawfully and to achieve good value for money in the provision of legal services.	Better public services
2	Build and maintain trusting relationships with staff in each office, and with external stakeholders where appropriate, to encourage effective use of our services and of the public services of each office.	Awareness and engagement
3	Foster a culture of creativity and continuous development, so that we can support staff to deliver high quality professional services.	Supported and innovative staff
4	Identify and embrace ICT solutions to improve the efficiency of our legal services and to build the resilience of the team.	Excellent ICT



## Engagement and Communications

We will seek to ensure that all sectors of society can easily interact with our Office. We will ensure our websites continue to be user-focused, easy to understand, and provide relevant and up to date information.

We will support strong internal communication which encourages staff engagement and promotes good information flow throughout the organisation. We will seek to further enhance the Office's reputation as an independent, fair and influential organisation, and ensure high-quality and customer-focussed delivery of our services. We will have the following core objectives:

	Objective	Strategic theme
1	Continue to monitor awareness of, and engagement with, the Ombudsman service by different societal groups. Engage with representatives of underrepresented marginalised groups.	Awareness and engagement
2	Support all six statutory bodies with their communication and engagement needs including designing and publicising annual, investigation and other reports and organising activities and events.	Awareness and engagement
3	Continue to improve and enhance the web presence for each statutory body.	Awareness and engagement
4	Maintain a resilient and collegiate team by ensuring that staff have the support and training which they require and are empowered to suggest innovative ways of working.	Supported and innovative staff
5	Contribute to positive staff engagement and promote good information flow throughout the organisation by creating awareness among all staff of the organisation's goals and relevant developments and by developing and implementing a shared information resource.	Better public services
6	In line with our 'People Focus' Value, help to embed a customer-centric focus across the Office of the Ombudsman, designing and implementing high-quality, inclusive and responsive customer service practices that meet the needs of customers.	Better public services

## Equality and Human Rights

All public service providers are required to promote equality and protect human rights, in line with the Public Sector Duty (PSD). We see this not just as a legal obligation, but as a moral imperative, and one that is central to our mission to promote fairness, transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services and across wider society.

Our key action in our last Strategy was to develop a human rights model to use in the Ombudsman's complaints handling system. The guide to this model is available on our website, and all of the Ombudsman staff have received training on this approach. We also made concerted efforts to extend our outreach, engaging with representatives of a number of protected and vulnerable groups. We improved the accessibility of our websites and we improved the reach of our Transition Year programme into DEIS schools by partnering with Trinity Access Programme.

We conducted our re-assessment of our PSD on equality and human rights in tandem with the Strategy consultation, engaging with staff and external stakeholders through surveys and workshops. We have identified six key objectives for our new Equality and Human Rights work plan, around an accessible workplace; accessible communications; accessible outreach; decisions which respect human rights and equality; a workplace which respects human rights and equality; and workplace wellness. Our PSD re-assessment and workplan is available [here](#).

## Climate Action

Our organisation recognises that achieving Ireland's legally binding target of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and net zero by 2050, requires collective leadership across the public sector. In line with the ambitions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the Government's Climate Action Plan, we are embedding sustainability into all aspects of our work.

We are prioritising measures that reduce our carbon footprint, enhance resource efficiency, and promote sustainable practices in our operations. This includes reducing energy consumption across our premises, minimising waste, supporting staff to make more sustainable choices in how they work and travel, and adopting greener procurement standards. As we develop our standards for the use of AI in our work, we will strive to ensure that sustainability is taken into consideration.

Central to this effort is the work of our Staff Green Team, which plays a vital role in championing sustainability initiatives across the organisation. The Green Team engages colleagues through awareness campaigns, practical actions and innovative ideas that help embed sustainability into daily operations. Their work strengthens our culture of collective responsibility and ensures that every member of staff has an opportunity to contribute to positive climate action. As part of the Strategy consultation, members of the Green Team engaged with staff in breakout groups on sustainability action, and their suggestions and input will be fed back to the Green Team.



# How we developed this plan

Hannah Grene and Eva Early of Barncat Consulting were commissioned to help us develop our plan, working closely with the Director General, the Head of Strategic Planning, and the Management Advisory Committee. Hannah and Eva carried out:

- An internal staff survey
- An internal survey for each statutory body
- An external stakeholder survey for each statutory body
- A series of workshops, open to all staff
- Meetings with each statutory body or section of the organisation
- A small number of key stakeholder interviews

[A report of the external consultation is available on our website.](#)

A number of policy frameworks were also key in developing this plan. The Government's [Climate Action Plan](#) informs our sustainability efforts, as outlined above, and the [Public Sector Duty](#) frames our efforts to promote equality and protect human rights.

Our strategy also aligns to the Government's [Digital Public Services Plan 2030](#) both in terms of our own digital plans and in how we interact with other public service bodies.

While the [Venice Principles on the protection and promotion of the Institution of the Ombudsman](#) are concerned with the establishment of Ombudsman institutions worldwide, we believe that their principles of independence and impartiality apply equally to all of our Offices, and are reflected in our values.

Finally, we also take into account the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), which provide a shared global blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and planet. Ireland has adopted a whole-of-government approach to achieving these goals, and our Office has a particular role to play in achieving Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. Given the mandates of our individual bodies, and our focus on remedying injustice and mediating between people who live in Ireland and public bodies under our remit, we have a key role to play in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.





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