

A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland

Statement of Strategy

2021 - 2023



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

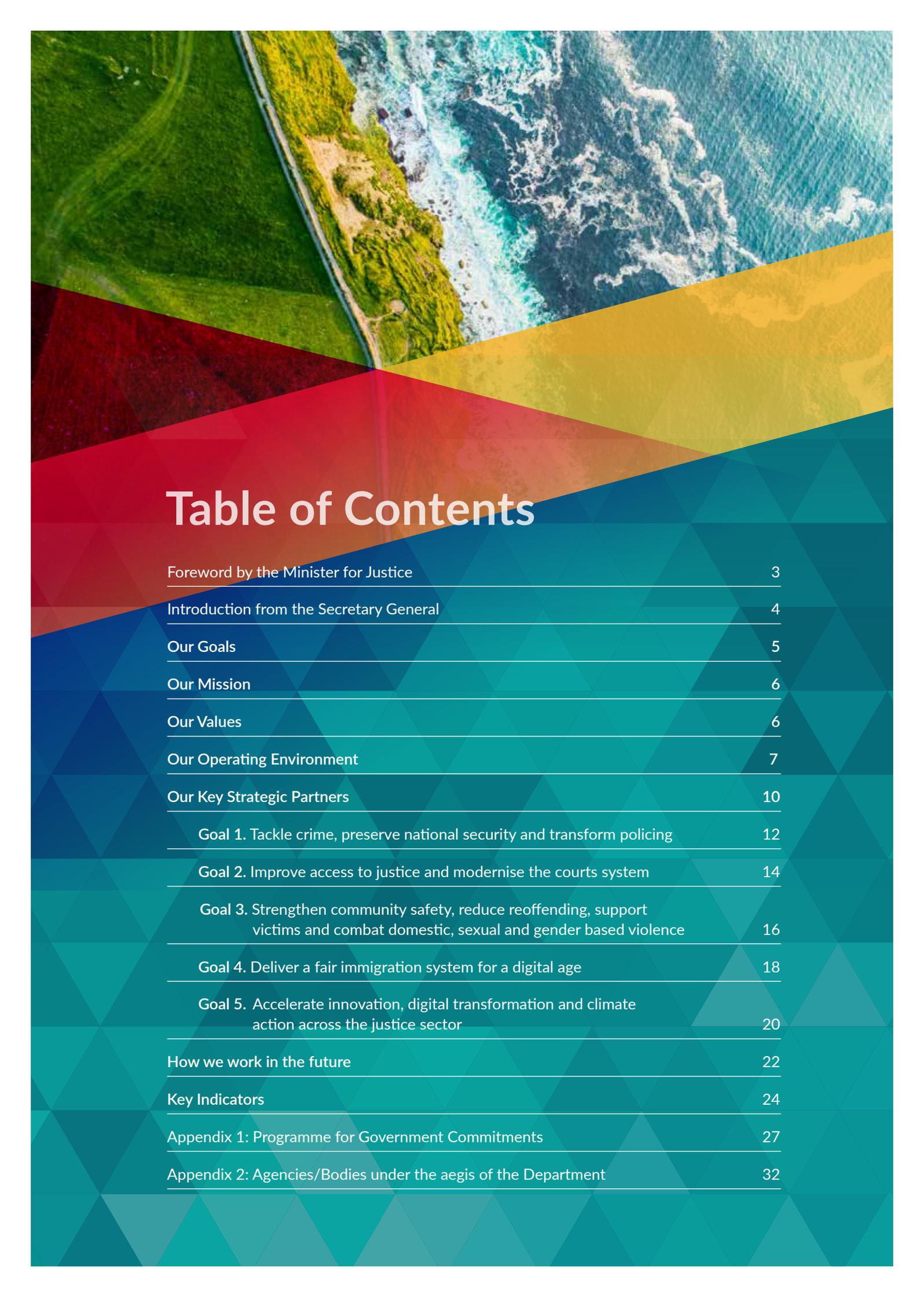


Table of Contents

Foreword by the Minister for Justice	3
Introduction from the Secretary General	4
Our Goals	5
Our Mission	6
Our Values	6
Our Operating Environment	7
Our Key Strategic Partners	10
Goal 1. Tackle crime, preserve national security and transform policing	12
Goal 2. Improve access to justice and modernise the courts system	14
Goal 3. Strengthen community safety, reduce reoffending, support victims and combat domestic, sexual and gender based violence	16
Goal 4. Deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age	18
Goal 5. Accelerate innovation, digital transformation and climate action across the justice sector	20
How we work in the future	22
Key Indicators	24
Appendix 1: Programme for Government Commitments	27
Appendix 2: Agencies/Bodies under the aegis of the Department	32



Foreword by the Minister for Justice

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.

This Statement of Strategy will be supported by our annual Justice Plans, setting out the actions we will implement to deliver our programme of reform. Working across the sector to receive feedback and to ensure we hold each other to our targets, we will update the Justice Plans annually with new actions and timelines.

This Strategy 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 Strategy, 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 tackle 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 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 insurance and legal costs to help businesses, consumers and communities. Legal costs in Ireland are prohibitive. They are a barrier to people seeking justice and are damaging to our economic competitiveness.

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. 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 annual Justice Plans, 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen McEntee".

Helen McEntee TD
Minister for Justice



Introduction from the Secretary General

I am pleased to present this Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 to the Minister. The five high level goals set out in this document reflect the breadth, complexity and importance of the Department's mission to work for a safe, fair, inclusive Ireland.

This plan is published as work to combat Covid-19 continues to dominate, and the longer term impact of this global event has yet to emerge. We know that it has changed forever the way we work: some of this change is positive and innovative, while other aspects require careful consideration and management. Despite this uncertainty, we have set out an ambitious programme for the next three years in line with the Programme for Government. It has been informed by a wide-ranging public consultation and builds on our recent organisational restructuring, and will see us continue to invest in and develop our people, systems and culture.

Justice is a people business. Our work has meaning and purpose because it directly impacts on the public, often at times of vulnerability or personal crisis. Increasingly, an important aspect of our organisational culture is creating opportunities to listen to the people most impacted by our work and problem

solve with them. Meaningful, authentic collaboration gives us valuable insight and leads to better informed and sustainable outcomes.

The strategy also supports this through a plan for significant investment in our ICT systems, and our capacity to deliver public services online. We are embedding a project mindset to help us deliver at pace and over this strategy's lifetime we will further strengthen our focus on metrics and indicators. This will also allow us to gather, interrogate and transparently exploit data and research, supporting external partnerships to explore policy options and evaluate outcomes. The strategy also outlines the organisational and individual actions required of all of us to contribute to our climate agenda.

Growing capability in all of these areas, supplemented with ongoing organisational design and a strategic approach to learning and development, especially to manage the blended workplace of the future, is critical to the strength and resilience of our organisation. A new HR strategy will also further strengthen our culture by supporting and developing our staff and planning for the future, fostering talents at all levels.

An annual Justice Plan will be published each year of the strategy which will set out our objectives and actions in greater detail. Progress on delivery will be monitored and reviewed throughout the life of the strategy and we will publish an implementation update twice yearly.

Finally, I want to thank my talented and dedicated colleagues across the Department and the sector who are juggling significant challenges while constantly stepping up to deliver on the Department's mission for the Government and the public we all serve.

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

Oonagh McPhillips
Secretary General



Our Goals

What we want to achieve

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

Our Mission

Working for a safe,
fair, inclusive Ireland

Our Values

The Principles that
Guide us

Values	Our Commitment	How
Collaborative	We will work together with others in trust and partnership	We will engage with people in a respectful, inclusive and meaningful way, valuing their perspectives and insights and finding shared solutions
Professional	We will be impartial, accountable and ethical	We will do our work with compassion, integrity and pride, focused on objective analysis and informed decision making for the public good
Open	We will be responsive and informative, communicating to make meaningful connections	We will exchange ideas and problem solve; communicating and sharing information proactively to build partnerships and to meet the needs and expectations of the public we serve.



Our Operating Environment

Introduction

The Department's vision of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland carries with it enormous responsibility, but also a great sense of purpose and pride in the contribution that our organisation makes to the delivery of a just and democratic society. We have lead responsibility for public policy in respect of the security of the State and public safety, including the prevention and detection of crime, the administration of justice, the management of inward migration and international protection processes, the provision of important regulatory services and ongoing reform of civil and criminal law.

Our Department plays a central role in underpinning and sustaining a democratic society and the manner in which we do so reflects our deep commitment to human rights and equality as set out in the Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights. Notwithstanding the transfer of the integration and equality remit, we remain committed to our mission of a safe, fair, inclusive Ireland, all of which are vital to maintaining public trust in our work.

The Department directly employs over 2700 staff with 28 bodies operating under our aegis. The Department also has an international reach, with almost 40 officers posted in 11 Irish embassies and missions

across 4 continents, working on a broad range of European and international justice matters.

The Department's budget is €474 million with funding for the Justice Group of votes (Department, An Garda Síochána, Prison Service, Courts Service, Policing Authority and the Data Protection Commission) totalling over €3 billion in 2021.

Operating in a changing world

The challenges of our operating environment continue to grow increasingly complex. At the time of writing, the global crisis sparked by COVID-19, coupled with the UK's departure from the EU, reinforce the need for

us to continuously challenge our normative patterns of behaviour as an organisation and to increase our agility and responsiveness to the events that unfold around us.

Our ability to respond will be strengthened by increased digitisation in the Department and the sector and by more sophisticated and cohesive use of data and evidence to underpin our service delivery, policy development and understanding of our operating environment. Over the period of this Strategy we will develop more ways to consult and involve the public, particularly vulnerable communities, in our work in a meaningful way.

An ever increasing volume of our legislation is developed in partnership with other EU member states and our ambition is to strengthen our capacity to negotiate and influence this on behalf of Ireland at the early stages. Ireland must continue to work to derive maximum benefit from all areas of its external engagement, bilaterally with our UK neighbours and in the EU and UN context, maximising our influence across all aspects of the Justice cooperation agenda including security, immigration and the rule of law.

As a Department we will be at the forefront of responding to a number of global challenges over the next decade, including:

- Impact of Brexit on our relationship with the UK

- Our place in the EU and the opportunity that presents to influence and drive social change
- Ireland's membership of the UN Security Council 2021-22
- Demographic changes, including changes in population flows, and the EU-wide response to migration
- Changes in the nature of security threats to our country and society
- The challenges to public safety as well as the opportunities and obligations arising from technological change
- Contributing, especially through our wider sector, to Ireland's commitments to climate action

The Department is committed to supporting Ireland's whole of Government approach to implementing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We recognise the opportunity to contribute under the 12 targets of SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Ireland is, by global and EU standards, a very peaceful and safe country. The EU

SDGs indicators demonstrate that Ireland's death rate from homicide, the percentage of the Irish population reporting the occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area, the Irish Government's expenditure on law courts and the perceived independence of the justice system in Ireland are all better than the EU average, but our Strategy for the future is ambitious and we want to drive improvement and ultimately lead in these areas.

Working with colleagues across government we will be cognisant of how our work spans four key themes in Ireland's Sustainable Future framework: Gender equity, respect for cultural heritage and diversity, social equity and equity between countries and regions.

Critical to our future policy responses and efforts to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions will be our partners and stakeholders including other Government Departments and public bodies. Our Strategy places a strong emphasis on collaboration to address the challenges referenced above but also to tackle the 'wicked' problems of our day. A strong, effective and impartial civil service is a critical part of our democracy. The Department will work collaboratively on the development and implementation of cross departmental and public service initiatives which engage with and benefit the public we serve.

Human Rights and Equality Public Sector Duty 2020 -2023

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 establishes a positive duty on public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and the people to whom services are provided. It also requires “an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues”. This assessment is required to be accessible to the public.

This Public Sector Duty is consistent with the core functions and values of the Department. The Department continues to value and promote equality and human rights through our day to day work, whether in delivering key public service, developing policy and legislation in an inclusive human rights compliant manner or in doing our work in an efficient, fair manner with integrity and respect for human dignity.

With the active support of other public service leaders, the Secretary General and the Garda Commissioner are co-sponsoring the equality, diversity and inclusion action under the current public service reform plan. Key outputs from this work include a Vision Statement,

which the heads of Public Service bodies will endorse, and a Maturity Model tool, designed to assist organisations to reflect on their progress across a number of important areas. These are practical resources to support organisations in their equality, diversity and inclusion commitments, while accommodating the distinct challenges faced by public service organisations of differing size, functions and capacity.

The Public Sector Duty is equally relevant to the experience of our staff. In line with our values we are committed to creating an environment where we promote positive engagement, critical analysis, open and honest communication, embracing diverse perspectives while striving to be inclusive in all that we do.

We will continue to embed these values in all aspects of our work. In support of this, we will:

- Carry out a fresh assessment of the human rights and equality issues relevant to the functions and purpose of the Department and the policies, plans and actions to be taken to address those issues. We will publish this assessment on our website;
- Promote and foster our human rights and equality duty as part of the training cycle;
- Drive change and continuous improvement in key areas

by continuing to implement international human rights norms;

- Report on progress in our Annual Report and, where appropriate, require bodies under the aegis of the Department to measure progress in their own annual reports.

How we developed this Strategy

A working group was established to coordinate and drive the development of the Strategy Statement. Our strategy consultation approach involved wide ranging engagement with bodies and partners across the wider justice sector; other government Departments; the Oireachtas Committee on Justice; and through a public submission process publicised on the Department’s website and social medial platforms. In excess of 200 submissions were received which have served to inform and strengthen the development of our strategy statement.

How implementation will be monitored

The strategy statement is complemented by an annual action plan, which is published at the beginning of each year. The plan provides more detail on each of our strategic goals and objectives, along with setting out our Programme of work each year. The Plan, which is available on our website, is reviewed and updated regularly, with updates published twice yearly.

Our Key Strategic Partners

We will work closely and co-operate fully with our partners across Government on issues of common interest and fully support the strategic objectives of other Government Departments. We appreciate, as others do, that the complexity of our working environment and the ‘wicked problems’ of our day cannot be resolved alone and that collaborative working across civil and public service is key to delivering successful outcomes for society.

The Department understands the importance of continuing to work closely with our EU partners but will also be ambitious to extend and build relationships with countries who we may not have had close ties with in the past but would welcome the opportunity to develop further social and economic links to these countries. Following Brexit, we will continue to foster our relationship with the UK and devolved Governments.

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

Data is a key enabler for improved efficiency, policy making and resource allocation. We will continue to work with the Central



• Justice Sector •



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Statistics Office to develop our data and analytical capabilities and standards and to maximise the use of administrative data to generate official statistics and strengthen policy development.

We continue to partner with the Office of Government Chief

Information Officer (OGCIO) in relation to the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy including projects on Build to Share, Digital First and Data as Enabler. In particular, we will develop our Criminal Justice Operational Hub to facilitate real-

time exchanges in the Criminal Justice and Immigration areas, strengthening our evidence base, and delivering greater operational efficiencies in our agencies.



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.

Objectives

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





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

Objectives

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
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





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.

Objectives

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





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.

Objectives

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





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 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.

Objectives

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





How we work in the future

The ambition of this Strategy cannot be fulfilled without the drive, commitment and support of the people who work in our Department.

In 2019 the Department took a hugely significant step in adapting itself to meet the challenges of the future. It reorganised how it works, introducing a functional model, a sea-change in how an Irish Government Department is structured and operates.

Teams now have a focused remit, with the aim of reducing the need to prioritise immediate issues over strategically important, longer-term ones. This enables the Department to bring more focus

to policy-making, governance, and legislation. The re-organisation provided an opportunity to be innovative, none more so than in the Transparency Function designed to be more effective in responding to the Minister, the Oireachtas and the public in dealing with parliamentary business and in communicating with and consulting the public. The Department also took the opportunity to set up a dedicated Service Design team to put the public and customers at the centre of future service delivery.

While we continue to review and refine our internal structures, we are acutely aware that our culture remains central to driving and embedding all change across

our sector. The Department has recently refreshed and consolidated its organisational values identifying three core values, Collaborative, Professional and Open, which will shape and guide our work over the next three years. By building capability through the implementation of strategic organisational initiatives, we will continue to work with others, sharing information and ideas to deliver to a high standard, for the public good.

We recognise and value the skills, expertise and commitment of our staff. A key aim of this Strategy will be to continue to invest in our staff, building and developing their skills and capability by ensuring that learning and

development opportunities are aligned with organisation and individual needs.

How we do our work and how we are organised will change over the next three years as we adapt different ways of working including using mobile technologies to allow us to work from the office or from home. We will develop our people to be more adaptable, agile and work with greater autonomy, responding to our changing environment and the challenges of the future. We will work with our people to ensure they

have the skills, knowledge and capabilities to do their work effectively. We will plan for the future, grow our leaders, make horizon scanning a priority and use strategic foresight analysis to anticipate upcoming shifts in the environment.

The ability to lead in an increasingly more complex environment requires managers and leaders who understand their operating environment, who engage and manage their colleagues as individuals and teams, whilst also giving people the autonomy to innovate

and develop solutions. The development of management and leadership skills in our people will be an important underpinning of the future success of the Department. This commitment will be replicated across the Justice Sector.

The Department will develop a new Human Resource Strategy and Learning and Development Strategy to underpin our people objectives and support new ways of working, including remote working where appropriate.





Key Indicators

The Department publishes a range of reports which provide an overview of the different sectors of the justice sector. We also publish progress reports on strategies and initiatives that are being implemented.

The Department publishes an annual action plan providing detailed information and timelines relating to each of the strategic actions outlined in the strategy. The Department's activity and actions are tracked against the goals outlined above. A report on the action plan will be published twice yearly and the indicators will be further developed over the course of this Strategy.

Additional monitoring:

- KPIs agreed with Agencies and bodies as part of their Justice Vote process
- Monitoring and reviewing the Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreements for our relevant bodies
- Cross cutting work with other strategies
- Regular engagement with external stakeholders
- Monitoring Core outputs from the policy and legislative functions
- Transparency Data published on our website
- SDG 16 Target Indicators



Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme for Government Commitments

Goal 1

Tackle crime, enhance national security and transform policing

- Seek to increase coordination and cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the insurance industry. Seek to expand the Garda Economic Crime Bureau, which deals with fraud. Under new structures, it will train and support Gardaí in every division, to ensure that expertise and skill are diffused across the State.
- Continue to train new Garda recruits annually.
- Prioritise visible policing in both rural and urban communities.
- Remove Gardaí from administrative, technical, and other non-core duties, to allow them to focus on policing matters.
- Increase the diversity within An Garda Síochána, prioritising the identification and removal of barriers to recruiting and retaining people from diverse and minority backgrounds.
- Work with NGOs and services to develop the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, which will place a priority on prevention and reduction and will include a National Preventative Strategy.
- Implement the findings of the O'Malley Review of supports for vulnerable witnesses in sexual violence cases to support victims.
- Adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking of women and girls.
- Conduct an immediate audit, to be concluded within nine months of the formation of the Government, of how responsibility for domestic sexual and gender-based violence is segmented across different government agencies, and develop proposals on what infrastructure is needed to ensure that the issue is dealt with in the most effective manner possible. This audit will be undertaken in conjunction with NGOs and service providers.
- Learn from the UK model, where the crime of coercive control has been successfully prosecuted since 2015. Invest in a comprehensive training programme for professionals who may have contact with a victim of coercive control, including An Garda Síochána, legal professionals, and courts services personnel, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the nature of this relatively new offence.
- Legislate to introduce Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- Update the Sex Offenders Act 2001, to ensure that convicted sex offenders are effectively managed and monitored.
- Enact the Harassment & Harmful Communications Bill (as amended), in order to outlaw image-based sexual abuse and to prevent the abusive sharing of intimate images online.
- Legislate against the coercion and use of minors in the sale and supply of drugs.
- Continue to support the work of An Garda Síochána in tackling and interrupting organised crime.

- Annually renew the provisions of the Offences Against the State Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 2009.
- Introduce and implement new anti-corruption and antifraud structures, informed by the forthcoming Hamilton Review.
- Legislate to provide for preliminary trial hearings to expedite the administration of justice in white-collar crime cases.
- Amend the Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Act 2018 to make the prosecution of white-collar crime more manageable and efficient
- Fully implement the revised Victims' Charter and establish a system to monitor its implementation.
- Fully implement the EU Victims of Crime Directive, including the full provision of victim liaison officers.
- Ensure full implementation of the Parole Act 2019, including the establishment of an independent statutory Parole Board as early as possible.
- Extend the powers governing Garda use of CCTV and Automated Number Plate Recognition to help prevent crime and prosecute those involved in criminal activity.
- Enact legislation that encompasses relevant

EU measures and the UN Protocol against the smuggling and trafficking of migrants.

- Work with the Executive and the UK Government to deepen multi-agency cross-border cooperation on crime, including information-sharing between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána.
- Codify the Garda powers for search, arrest, and detention.

Goal 2

Improve access to justice and modernise the courts system

- Enact a Family Court Bill to create a new dedicated Family Court within the existing court structure and provide for court procedures that support a less-adversarial resolution of disputes.
- Build a new Family Law Court building in Dublin and ensure that court facilities across the country are suitable for family law hearings, so that these hearings can be held separately from other cases.
- Implement reforms to the administration of civil justice in the State covering matters such as the more efficient and effective deployment of court and judicial resources. This will be guided by the report of the group chaired by the former President of the High Court, Mr. Justice Peter Kelly.
- Modernise the law on the administration of oaths in judicial and other proceedings.
- Establish a working group to consider the number of and type of judges required to ensure the efficient administration of justice over the next five years.
- Enact the Judicial Appointments Commission Bill within the first six months of Government. Engage with stakeholders to make appropriate amendments to the current Bill, to ensure that it enjoys broad support. These would include ensuring that the Chief Justice is the ex-officio chairperson of the body.
- Publish and begin to implement a reform programme to reduce the costs associated with access to the legal system in Ireland.
- Independently examine the option of a dedicated system of public defenders.
- 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.
- Introduce the necessary reforms to our personal insolvency legislation and ensure that sufficient

supports are in place for mortgage holders with repayment difficulties.

- Further tackle insurance costs by considering changes to the Occupiers Liability Act and the Civil Liability Act (duty of care) to strengthen waivers and notices to increase protections for consumers, businesses, sporting clubs and community groups.
- Further tackle insurance costs by strengthening the Solicitors (Advertising) Regulations of 2002.
- Seek to increase coordination and cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the insurance industry. Seek to expand the Garda Economic Crime Bureau, which deals with fraud. Under new structures, it will train and support Gardaí in every division, to ensure that expertise and skill are diffused across the State.
- Review and increase the penalties for fraudulent claims.
- Ensure that fraudulent claims are forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).
- Explore the feasibility of obliging fraudulent claimants to pay the legal expenses for defendants.
- Place perjury on a statutory footing, making the offence easier to prosecute. Broaden

the scope of the Perjury and Related Offences Bill, ensuring that the maximum penalty for indictment should be harmonised with the equivalent maximum penalties for largely similar offences in the Civil Liability and Courts Act 2004.

- Establish a gambling regulator focused on public safety and wellbeing, covering gambling online and in person, and the powers to regulate advertising, gambling websites and apps.
- Publish the Private Security Services (Amendment) Bill 2020 with a view to its enactment as early as possible in 2021.
- Introduce a scheme for the expunging of criminal records for gay men convicted of historical offences.
- Recognise the domestic and international importance of data protection in Ireland. We will support the Data Protection Commission, to ensure that Ireland delivers on its responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Clarify and strengthen contempt of court sanctions for violations on social media.
- Legislate to introduce a statutory offence of perjury, to make this crime easier to prosecute.

Goal 3

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

- Externally review the legal and organisational framework governing community CCTV.
- Work with all criminal justice agencies to build capacity to deliver restorative justice, safely and effectively.
- Extend the pilot schemes of the Joint Agency Response to Crime to more areas to target prolific repeat and vulnerable offenders aged 16 -21.
- Legislate against the coercion and use of minors in the sale and supply of drugs.
- Expand the Dublin North-East Inner City model to other comparative areas experiencing disadvantage.
- Set up a special expert forum on antisocial behaviour, to consider the effectiveness of existing legislation and propose new ways forward, including new powers for An Garda Síochána and additional interventions to support parenting of offenders.

- Criminalise adults who groom children to commit crimes.
- Enhance powers available to An Garda Síochána to limit the use of scramblers and quads by those engaged in antisocial behaviour and enact legislation to add to those powers, if needed.
- Conduct a full review of the regulations and policy framework governing our night-time culture at national and local level, including the staggering of trading hours for pubs, late bars, clubs, and restaurants.
- Modernise our licensing laws and application processes.
- Examine increasing the age limit for the application of the Garda Youth Diversion Programme to 24 years old.
- Implement a new Youth Justice Strategy, drawing on learnings for the Icelandic model and emphasising prevention, early intervention, and inter-agency collaboration.
- Establish a high-level cross-departmental and cross agency taskforce to consider the mental health and addiction challenges of those imprisoned, and primary care support on release.
- Ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture within 18 months of the formation of the Government.
- Take a comprehensive approach to the development of the next Irish Prison Service's Capital Strategy, ensuring the availability of modern detention facilities with adequate capacity.
- Review the existing functions, powers, appointment procedures and reporting processes for prison-visiting committees.
- Establish a Penal Policy Consultative Council to advise on penal policy.
- Ensure that there remains a strong and independent public external accountability mechanism for the Garda Commissioner and Garda Leadership Team.
- Introduce a new Policing and Community Safety Bill to redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána.
- Introduce Hate Crime legislation within 12 months of the formation of the Government. This legislation will create specific offences, to ensure that those who target victims because of their association with a particular identity characteristic are identified as perpetrators of hate crime. This legislation will be on the basis of an aggravated offences model. It will be supported by training across the criminal justice system, as well as victim supports.
- In order to ensure that those who seek to encourage and incite others to hate minority groups can be prosecuted, we will revise and update Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, taking account of the public consultation conducted in 2019.

Goal 4

Deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age

- Create new pathways for long-term undocumented people and their dependents, meeting specified criteria to regularise their status within 18 months of the formation of the Government, bearing in mind EU and Common Travel Area commitments.
- Implement the measures identified by the Expert Group, to ensure that international protection

applications are dealt with and brought to finality as quickly as possible, while always ensuring fair procedure and a human rights-based approach.

- Enact legislation that encompasses relevant EU measures and the UN Protocol against the smuggling and trafficking of migrants

Goal 5

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

- Extend the powers governing Garda use of CCTV and Automated Number Plate Recognition to help prevent crime and prosecute those involved in criminal activity.

Appendix 2: Agencies/Bodies under the aegis of the Department

We will work in partnership with all Agencies/Bodies under the aegis of the Department – a comprehensive list including all of the Boards/Tribunals under the aegis of the Department and their functions can be found on the Department’s website.

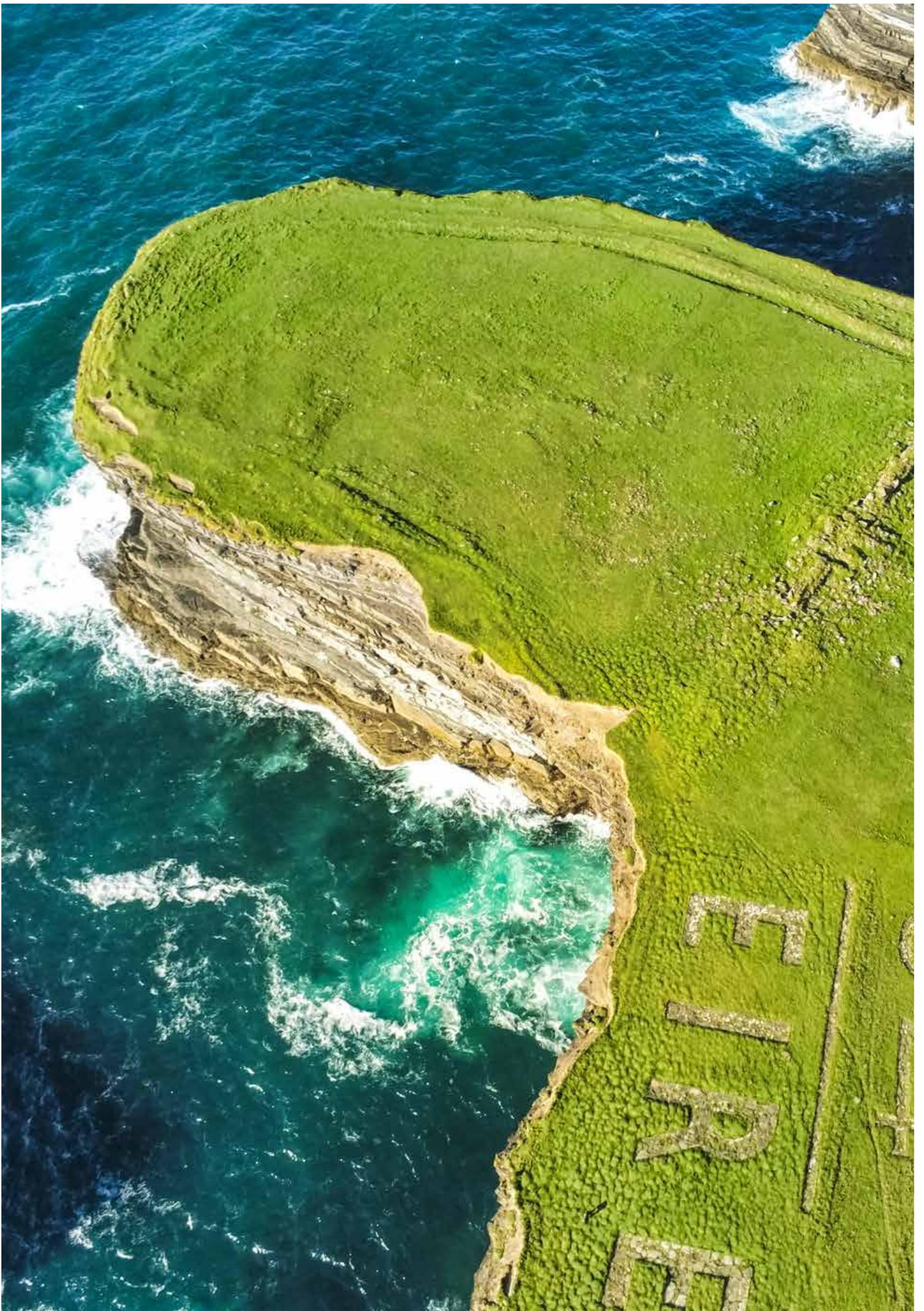
Criminal Justice

 <p>An Garda Síochána</p>	 <p>Criminal Assets Bureau</p>	 <p>Garda Síochána Inspectorate</p>	 <p>Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission</p>
 <p>AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA POLICING AUTHORITY</p> <p>Policing Authority</p>	 <p>Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board</p>	 <p>THE PROBATION SERVICE An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh</p> <p>Probation Service</p>	 <p>The Parole Board An Bord Árúil</p> <p>Parole Board</p>
 <p>Oifig An Chigire Príosún Office of the Inspector of Prisons</p> <p>Office of the Inspector of Prisons</p>	 <p>Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal</p>	 <p>fsi forensic science Ireland</p> <p>Forensic Science Ireland</p>	 <p>Office of the State Pathologist</p>
 <p>Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann Irish Prison Service</p> <p>Irish Prison Service</p>	 <p>Licensed by The Private Security Authority PSA Licence Number 00555</p> <p>Private Security Authority</p>	 <p>Private Security Appeals Board</p>	

Civil Justice

 <p>Censorship of Publications Board</p>	 <p>Censorship of Publications Appeal Board</p>	 <p>An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna Courts Service</p> <p>Courts Service</p>
 <p>Dublin Coroner Court</p>	 <p>Insolvency Service of Ireland</p>	 <p>International Protection Appeals Tribunal</p>
 <p>Judicial Council</p>	 <p>Legal Aid Board</p>	 <p>Legal Services Regulatory Authority</p>
 <p>Data Protection Commission</p>	 <p>Irish Film Classification Office</p>	 <p>Property Services Appeal Board</p>
 <p>Judicial Appointments Advisory Board</p>	 <p>Property Services Regulatory Authority</p>	







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Department of Justice

