Compliance and Anti-Fraud Strategy

2024 - 2028

Objective of this strategy

To pay the right people the right amount, through the right scheme/programme, at the right time.

The Department is committed to ensuring that only those people who are eligible receive welfare and other payments.

An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Introduction

The Department of Social Protection's mission is to promote the active participation and inclusion of all in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services. We administer more than 90 schemes and services, which affect the lives of almost every person in the State. Overall, expenditure by the department in 2023 was €24.9 billion.
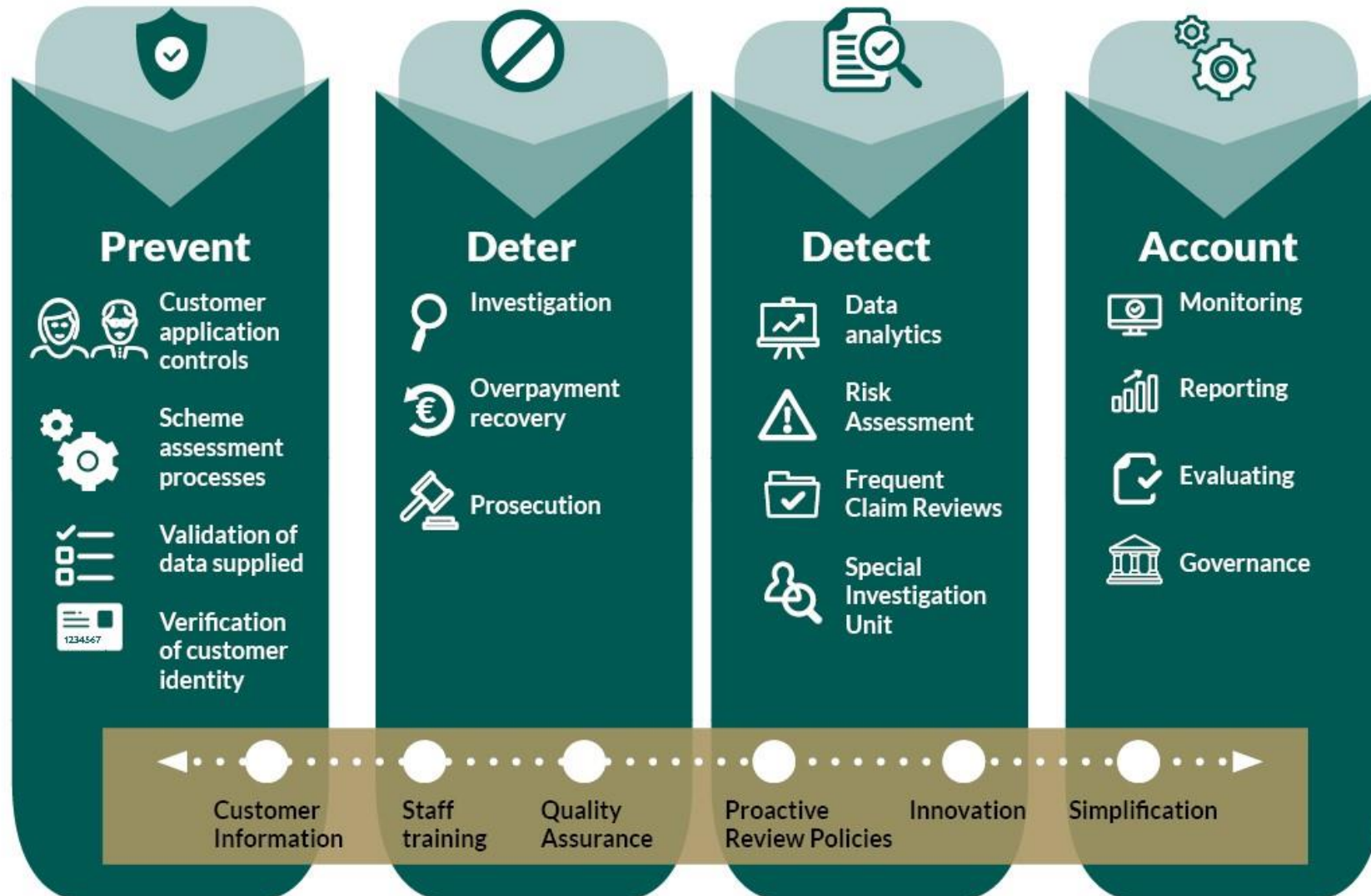
The Department is committed to ensuring that only those people who are eligible, receive welfare and other payments. Our overriding objective is to ensure that we pay the right people, the right amount, through the right scheme/programme, at the right time.

The Department continues to work in an ever-changing environment and is constantly required to meet new challenges and update its processes. Increasingly, customers access services via digital channels such as MyWelfare. While this enables improved customer service and greater operational efficiency, it also requires that we remain alert to new and emerging forms of fraud and non-compliance.

This Compliance and Anti-fraud Strategy covers the five years from 2024 to 2028. In line with the previous strategy, it comprises four pillars: "**Prevent**", "**Deter**", "**Detect**" and "**Account**", which will be leveraged to ensure that suspected fraud and non-compliance in our welfare system is kept to a minimum during the lifetime of the Strategy.

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The four pillars of our Compliance and Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2028

Prevent
- Customer application controls
- Scheme assessment processes
- Validation of data supplied
- Verification of customer identity

Deter
- Investigation
- Overpayment recovery
- Prosecution

Detect
- Data analytics
- Risk Assessment
- Frequent Claim Reviews
- Special Investigation Unit

Account
- Monitoring
- Reporting
- Evaluating
- Governance

Customer Information — Staff training — Quality Assurance — Proactive Review Policies — Innovation — Simplification

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The strategic priorities of our Compliance and Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2028

Prevent

Goal – To prevent fraud and error entering the Social Welfare System

Approach

- Verify identity through the Safe Registration Process.
- Validate information supplied by customers in support of an application for payment.
- Provide clear and understandable information to help customers to minimise error.
- Minimise official error through on-going training, mentoring, IT enhancements etc.
- Ensure that control is to the forefront when developing and enhancing systems.
- Undertake control surveys of various schemes.
- Work collaboratively with other Departments and agencies and with cross-border and international organisations.

Deter

Goal – To discourage non-compliance with the Social Welfare system.

Approach

- Ensure that claim investigations processes are robust and continue to act as a deterrent to fraudulent behaviour.
- Ensure that a comprehensive programme of employer inspections and initiatives are in place.
- Work to have overpayment assessment and recovery as an integral component of the work of scheme areas and of the decision-making process.
- Work to secure repayment of debts as quickly as possible.
- Consider cases for prosecution where there is evidence of fraud.

Detect

Goal – To detect instances of fraud and error as quickly as possible.

Approach

- Review claims, using a risk-based approach, across all social welfare schemes and programmes.
- Examine ways of expanding our data matching capabilities in line with GDPR and explore new possible data matches to enhance our control activities.
- Ensure appropriate use of Revenue Real Time Payroll Data.
- Continue to target more serious fraud and non-compliance through the work of the Special Investigation Unit (SIU).

Account

Goal – To have appropriate governance and oversight arrangements in place.

Approach

- Ensure that control-related work across the Department is overseen and monitored by the Control Programme Board.
- Provide quarterly updates on control-related activities to the Department's Management Board
- Publish an Annual Target Statement.
- Publish an Annual Report on control activities each year.
- Support and assist our staff to ensure that they follow the correct control processes and procedures and that they remain alert to new and emerging forms of fraud and non-compliance.

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