



ICT Strategy

2021 - 2024



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

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FOREWORD

“We will continue to drive the change from paper-based processes to a digital first environment designed to be agile, user centric and future oriented.”



The Courts Service ICT Strategy aims to support the organisation realise its 2030 vision of making access to justice easier, quicker and more cost effective, and deliver upon the ambitions of the Modernisation Programme by mobilising technology to allow for digital ways of working.

Over the last 18 months, we adapted to the challenges of the pandemic by innovating and enabling more flexible options for the administration of justice. Many of the advancements during this time were already in planning, but their adoption was greatly accelerated, allowing us to implement new ways of operating and quickly learn what is and is not likely to work for the Courts and Courts Service. Building on the lessons learned, this strategy sets out how we will use technology to continue improving the services we provide Court users and the supports we provide to the judiciary and staff.

We will continue to drive the change from paper-based processes to a digital first environment designed to be agile, user-centric and future oriented. We are developing the foundations for a unified platform for case management that rationalises and enhances the efficiencies of Courts Service operations, the running of the Courts, and ultimately improving the experience for Court users. We aim to provide a consistent and enabled experience for users across the country, integrating physical, remote and hybrid court technology into a coherent user experience and standardising the technology available in different Courts.

We have recently seen the effect cyber-crime can have on organisations and its ability to disrupt operations. We will continue to prioritise ICT security and developing a culture of cyber-security awareness to improve resilience as an organisation. Using the latest in ICT technologies we will leverage further efficiencies in how we work, while keeping our operations secure and robust.

This strategy sets out a long-term journey for ICT and the other business units. Working together to co-create the future of business operations and adoption of new digital ways of working, the strategy will help the organisation achieve its vision of enabling a world class Courts system.

Angela Denning

Chief Executive Officer, The Courts Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology currently enables and is essential to the work done throughout the process of administering justice in Ireland. This can be seen in many ways from in-court presentation of digital evidence and recording of audio transcripts, the way staff, the judiciary, practitioners and other justice sector bodies communicate and share data, right through to the management of back-office systems. A core part of realising the Courts Service Modernisation Programme, this strategy is a driver for change within the organisation and a fundamental part of the operation of digitally enabled Justice.

This strategy aims to mobilise digital technology to help the organisation achieve the vision of the Modernisation Programme. To do this, 6 key themes and 42 actions, listed in Section 4, have been identified and developed to build technologies and structures that will help the organisation deliver upon its near and long-term objectives.

Targeting improvements across external facing areas of the business such as court technology and digital case management, this strategy aims to enhance the toolset provided to our staff, the judiciary and justice partners to help deliver a world class justice system.

Through internal areas of focus such as desktop and infrastructure management, we aim to rollout modern communication, collaboration and information management tools to help staff and the judiciary carry out their work in more flexible and efficient ways. We will also rationalise our backend infrastructure and move towards the adoption of cloud-based platforms to support the increasing demand for secure digital services.

Encompassing all areas of the business, the strategy sets out enhancements to ICT security and resilience designed to help mitigate risks associated with a large digital footprint and the ever-present threat from cyber security attacks. We will enhance organisational resilience through improved disaster recovery planning and enhanced security tooling and processes.

To help realise these developments, the strategy also focuses on the capacity, capabilities and governance of ICT, and the processes and support structures required to help realise the strategic objectives set out.

With enhancements targeting various areas of the business, this strategy aims to drive change in a positive way throughout the organisation to help support the fulfilment of the modernisation vision of the Courts Service.



1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Recent Progress with Digital

In June 2019, the Courts Service Board approved a ten-year strategy with the goal of making access to justice easier, quicker and more cost effective. That strategy aims to address challenges across the courts system by creating an organisation that uses modern technology and efficient ways of working to improve the services delivered to court users. On foot of this strategy, in 2020, the Courts Service developed a business case for the establishment of a Modernisation Programme setting out an implementation plan to deliver on its strategic objectives. This plan focuses on redesigning services around the user, leveraging digital technology to streamline services and processes, replace at risk ICT infrastructure, and ultimately deliver an internationally recognised modern Court system.

The Modernisation Programme commenced in Summer 2020 following approval by the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The plan spans to 2030 and is split into four phases. The first phase, “Mobilise”, focuses on setting up the requisite governance mechanisms, initial core-team assembly and awareness building. This phase is now complete. The second phase “Transition” seeks to build capability and capacity in areas of digital and change management to drive a sustained period of service review, redesign and digital transformation. This phase spans 2021 and 2022 and is advancing well, with many parallel activities of recruitment, establishment of modern technology foundations, user-centric services research and pilot projects in flight. The next two phases, “Transform” and “Optimise”, are to commence in 2023 and 2025 respectively and will focus on establishing and bedding down of modern ways of working across the Courts system, and their continual and iterative refinement.

Furthermore, in response to the pandemic, and in the context of the Modernisation Programme, the Courts Service has introduced a set of digital enablers over the last 18 months to support the ongoing operation of the court business providing for fully remote hearings, hybrid remote hearings, flexible Court venues and other digital processes in lieu of typically in-person interactions.

These enablers included:

- Introduction and expansion of a remote hearing platform.
- Significant increase in the number of technology-enabled courtrooms (supporting video link, digital evidence display and digital audio recording).
- Creation of technology-enabled ‘pop-up courts’ courtrooms. This allowed for the expansion of courtroom venues in new locations, increasing capacity for trials.

- The design of new digitally enabled jury empanelment solutions in nearby but remote settings, providing for social distancing measures.
- The introduction of digitally enabled overflow facilities catering for legal teams, members of the media and the public to monitor court proceedings in nearby but remote settings.
- Introduction of new digital systems to support information sharing by legal practitioners, to reduce manual paper-based distribution requirements.
- Rollout of supporting technologies, such as Wi-Fi, to facilitate greater flexibility in accessing remote courts and courtroom technology.

To support the organisation adapt to the rapid introduction of new ways of working, an elevated level of technical and operational support across many areas of Court business was introduced. This included additional support for digitally enabled courtrooms, both on and offsite, and also the rapid rollout of mobile devices giving the flexibility of working remotely where possible.

Significant engagement and collaboration with other public sector bodies, the judiciary and legal practitioners has enabled new digitally enabled processes, such as remote courtroom attendance. Working groups have been established to support and input to the design of these processes. This ICT Strategy will continue building on the momentum achieved while incorporating lessons learned.



Approach to Strategy Creation

The contents of this ICT Strategy were informed by a combination of internal and external consultations, organisational plans and strategies, and alignment with broader public sector strategies and guidance. In the section below we outline key activities and actions which were taken during the strategy creation.

Initial Consultation

Initial staff, judicial and practitioner consultation took place in the form of a broad-based Digital Journey Mapping exercise consisting of a series of interviews and a survey of staff, and a judicial and legal practitioner eCourts requirements gathering exercise.

Plan

Based on this consultation combined with a review of relevant strategies, plans and guidance, six key themes for the strategy were identified. These themes were expanded into clear objectives and associated actions specifically informed by the pain points identified during the initial consultation phase.

Further Consultation

Once clearly-defined actions and objectives were identified further consultation was completed to validate the direction of travel and identify gaps within the strategy that needed to be addressed. Feedback was sought from our partnering Public Service bodies, including the Department of Justice, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, An Garda Síochána, Irish

Prison Service, the Probation Service, the Legal Aid Board, the National Archives of Ireland and the Insolvency Service of Ireland, as well as the Bar of Ireland and the Law Society.

Analyse

The results of the further consultation phase were collected, analysed and incorporated.

Write Up

Finally, refinement of the objectives and actions for each key theme was completed.

The timeline of the ICT Strategy was chosen to be 3 years (Q4 2021 – Q3 2024), which allows for the prioritisation of actions and objectives which are relevant and in alignment with the governance structures within the Courts Service. While the strategy focuses on actions and objectives in this timeframe, longer-term future directions have been set out for each key theme in recognition of the 10-year timeline of the Courts Service strategic vision and the Modernisation Programme.

Courts Service and Public Service Strategic Input

The design of this strategy has been completed in alignment with other Courts Service, Justice and Public Service strategies, including the Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan (2021-2023), the Courts Service 10-year Long-Term Strategic Vision (2020-2030), the Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy, the Public Service ICT Strategy (2015), Public Service Data Strategy (2019-2023) and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) Cloud Computing Advice Note (October 2019).

This alignment is important to ensure the strategic objectives of this strategy meet the requirements of the Courts Service business, but also to ensure that the Courts Service is gaining synergies from and moving in the same direction as our justice partners and other public bodies.

The vision of the Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan is to “deliver excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others, to enable a world class Courts system”. To achieve this, six goals were identified to deliver upon this vision:

- Taking a user-centric approach
- Supporting the judiciary
- Adopting a digital first approach
- Better ways of working
- Providing a modern and improved estate and facilities
- Ensure effective accountability and leadership

The Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy is structured around three core themes:

- Evidence-informed policy & services
- Digital first and innovation
- Workforce, workplace and organisation of the future

Having a vision of providing “An innovative, professional and agile Civil Service that improves the lives of the people of Ireland through excellence in service delivery and strategic policy development”, the alignment between the Courts Service Corporate Plan and the Civil Service Renewal plan is evident.

The Courts Service shares this vision, and through the ICT Strategy, aims to continue to enhance its ability to provide excellence in service delivery to Courts Service IT users through technology. Acknowledging and targeting “re-imagined workplaces to enable better service delivery and collaboration” and augmenting the work of staff “through appropriate analytical, automation and other digital tools”, the Courts Service ICT Strategy addresses these areas to deliver a collaborative and efficient suite of digital tools for Court users.





2. VISION

VISION

Vision

As set out by the Courts Service Corporate Strategy, the Courts Service aims to design and deliver effective processes and systems to court users to enable a digital court experience.

The vision of the Courts Service ICT Strategy is **enabling coherent end-to-end user-centric digital journeys, designed and built in a co-creative, multidisciplinary and agile manner**, where ICT works in partnership with the business and the judiciary. ICT will continue to play its role in maintaining and ensuring the availability of services day-to-day and will use modern front and back-end systems and processes to support the Courts Service in meeting its obligations in providing resilient and reliable services.

Guiding Principles

The ICT Strategy is underpinned by a set of principles that will support the vision and guide implementation and priorities across the key themes:

- User-centric service design
- Enabling flexible and transparent administration of justice
- Security and privacy by design
- Integrated end-to-end digital journeys
- Rationalise, consolidation and consistency
- Consistent and effective approach to change
- Multidisciplinary agile ways of working



3.

STRATEGIC THEMES

STRATEGIC THEMES

Overview

The following six themes have been identified to structure the areas of focus and objectives within this strategy.

Court Technology

Technology has not only helped proceedings to continue during Covid-19, but with a greater accessibility and flexibility for a lot of court users. Given the importance and potential for the use of technology in the courtroom and virtual courtrooms, we set out our ambitions to lock in recent gains and expand on them.

Unified Case Management Platform

The introduction of a single unified platform for digital case management will bring together disparate solutions into a single, user friendly and efficient system. It will enable the production of high-quality digital end-to-end applications and provide faster scaling and time to value.

Desktop and Infrastructure Modernisation

Building on the feedback from our IT users to provide more modern tools to support them in carrying out their duties, we aim to significantly invest in introducing best-in-class modern collaboration and communications tooling. To complement this, and many other objectives set out in this strategy, we are to expand our network connectivity options and invest in modern back-end systems to respond to organisational demands for change in an agile and robust manner.

Security and Resilience

Our vision for cybersecurity is to continually enhance the protection of the data and systems of the Courts Service and its digital agenda with a risk-focused culture across the organisation, to raise awareness of the role internal staff play in protecting the organisation from cyber-attacks, and to have robust recovery responses in place to support the organisation's business continuity plans.

Capacity, Capability and Governance

To support the ambitious vision of the Courts Service, along with the strategic goal of adopting a Digital First approach, we will calibrate the capacity, capability and governance model under which we deliver change, in order to empower ICT to deliver on this ambition in partnership with our colleagues across the organisation.

Data as an Enabler

Providing accurate data to the right people at the right time is important to increasing transparency and access to justice, while reducing administration costs. We will support the improved management of data both for use within the Courts Service and other justice sector bodies that interact with us on a daily basis.

3.1 Court Technology

Background

The Courts Service provides a series of services to the judiciary and court users to allow for the administration of justice in Ireland. Court technology is key to enabling the function of the Courts Service offering. Physical courtrooms are the primary example of a Courts Service offering where a physical courtroom is made available with facilities to support judicial proceedings. During Covid-19, a new offering of “remote courts” was introduced to allow for the operation of judicial proceedings during the pandemic, where large gatherings of people were not permitted.

From consultation with the judiciary and other justice partners, it is acknowledged that remote hearings have brought many benefits to the Courts Service offering. Along with remote hearings and physical hearings, a hybrid model has been offered to the judiciary whereby the Courts Service operates both physical and remote hearings technologies within the same sitting. This three-layered offering – physical, remote and hybrid courts – allows for more flexibility to be made available to the judiciary, enabling a choice of how to conduct business for each particular type of hearing.

In 2020, there were 2,411 remote court sessions supported by the Courts Service. Prisons and prisoners availed of 13,326 remote appearances from prison locations linked to courts. Most recently, a pilot with 15 Garda stations commenced whereby those in custody within a Garda station can appear before a judge remotely, thus reducing the need for transportation and supervision for court appearance of those in custody.

Remote courts are a key component of the e-Court vision and are already supporting the adoption of new collaborative ways of working, taking a court-user-centred approach to provide improved and enhanced service delivery. The future of hybrid courts will continue to evolve and we will continue to seek to find the right balance and blend between physical courtrooms and digital courts experience.

Future Direction

The objective of court technology is to support the administration of justice in a digital environment, providing an integrated suite of evidence management and collaborative technologies to optimize the courtroom experience for judiciary, staff, practitioners and court users. In-person court hearings will continue to be a core pillar of the Courts Service operational activities and therefore the continued expansion of in-court technology remains essential, improving existing tools and introducing new features and functionalities to help support a modern, digital courtroom experience.

Along with upgrading existing solutions and infrastructure, we aim to rationalise the solutions provided in courtrooms. Over the three years of this strategy and beyond, we will incrementally improve the in-court digital experience by reducing the number of digital devices required and move towards a single workstation, providing access to a single, integrated and unified case management platform as a digital hub for in-court proceedings, as detailed further in the “Unified Case Management Platform” theme. We are committed to working with the judiciary to support appropriate advances in processing cases digitally, with improve digital facilities such as annotations, search and case information and document access.

Areas of Focus

The primary areas of focus included under this theme are:

- Moving towards standardised technology in courtrooms
- Expanding the number of technology-enabled courtrooms and their use
- Improving remote court experiences and management
- Enhancing Wi-Fi in courthouses and offices
- Refresh and enhance DAR
- Improved in-court digital case management experience
- Inclusiveness and accessibility



Moving towards standardised technology in courtrooms

The Courts Service is committed to improving and expanding technology support in courtrooms and making significant investments in this area. We will move towards a standardised set of in-court technology that provides consistent and predictable digital capabilities enabling the judiciary and court users to have the same experience regardless of the courtroom. This will also enable other Justice sector bodies to strategically plan their services to take advantage of courtroom capabilities countrywide.

As part of this standardisation work, each courtroom will have at a minimum:

- Connection to the court platform that supports remote hearings
- Ability to dial-in participants via Videolink, such as witnesses, Garda officers, and others
- Enable playback of all categories of digital evidence in a courtroom, such as audio, video, photography, screenshots, CCTV, and other records
- Digital Audio Recording (DAR) facilities
- Network connectivity / Wi-Fi

Over the next 3 years and beyond, this standardised minimum set of technologies will become present in all technology-enabled courtrooms across the country.



ACTION

1. Provide a standardised minimum set of technology in all technology-enabled courtrooms.



Expanding the number of technology-enabled courtrooms and their use

Work to date to integrate new video infrastructure into targeted courtrooms across the country has been successful and has changed the way the Courts Service does business. Technology installations in courtrooms are key enablers for capabilities such as remote courtroom attendance and playback of digital evidence.

We will continue to expand the number of video installations in courtrooms, based on available budget and demand, and help further align to the priority requirements of the judiciary, Justice sector bodies and court users.

Working with other Justice bodies, such as An Garda Síochána and the Irish Prison Service, we will seek to introduce further efficiencies through increased adoption and utility of courtroom technology.



ACTION

2. Expand video installations in courtrooms countrywide aligned with the forthcoming Estate Strategy and Venue Review, and work with the judiciary, registrars and Justice sector bodies to increase their utility.

Improving remote court experiences and management

In a modern and digitally enabled courtroom, the ability to support physical, remote and hybrid experiences to bring parties together is becoming the new normal. To enable this capability, the use of modern video conferencing tools is key. It needs to be easy to use, reliable and able to securely integrate into the wider Courts Service digital ecosystem.

The use of best-in-class video conferencing solutions will provide improved capability, capacity and security for remote and hybrid court hearings. We will improve upon our remote hearing service by evolving the current solutions to leverage the latest market-leading video conferencing solutions, improving in-court participant interaction and management. We will also aim to integrate with the upcoming modern desktop and digital case management tools to support pre-court remote hearing operations, such as notifications and schedule management, thus streamlining the management of remote hearings.



ACTION

3. Improve the remote court platform to leverage the latest available technology and innovation in video conferencing and integrate with digital case management tools.

Enhancing Wi-Fi in the courthouses and offices

Courtroom network infrastructure is a key component in supporting flexible work and enabling the expanded usage of technology and digital solutions in court. The current network capabilities of the Courts Service have been developed over time to accommodate the new demands of a digitally enabled Justice and are currently limited in coverage to specific areas and are reaching end-of-life.

We aim to focus on resolving issues such as inconsistent coverage by initially commissioning a full network connectivity and coverage assessment, including Wi-Fi heatmapping, to ensure that the network facilities provided to Courts Service IT users are fit for purpose and meet all business, functional and security requirements. This will enable enhancements to the solution to be identified, including Wi-Fi expansion to cover more physical areas, such as office and meeting spaces. Access to Wi-Fi will be further expanded to additional justice partners, such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and An Garda Síochána.

The Wi-Fi operating model will be reviewed to ensure they meet the modern demands of the Courts Service. In the long term, a convergence towards, and migration to, the OGCIO shared Wi-Fi service model will be considered.



ACTION

4. Assess and enhance connectivity, coverage, operating model of the Wi-Fi solution to ensure it is fit for purpose for the judiciary, staff, legal practitioners and justice partners.

Refresh and enhance Digital Audio Recording

Digital Audio Recording (DAR) technology is critical to the on-going operation of courts. Introduced in 2008 to meet the requirement for digitally recording services in criminal courts, the demand for DAR has steadily risen over time. The current DAR solution is reaching its end-of-life and within the lifetime of this strategy we will refresh the DAR technology estate. The use of an up-to-date solution is expected to reduce support and maintenance costs and ensure the provision of a consistently high-quality recording capability.

The DAR system currently works independently from the remote court platform and case management systems. As part of the solution refresh, we will investigate whether DAR can integrate into the remote court platform and the new upcoming case management platform to offer a more efficient and integrated operation.

Access to courtroom audio is closely managed by the Courts Service under the direction of the judiciary. We will investigate if improvements can be made to the

current process, such as evolving the internal access controls to enable role-based access. Providing restricted access in certain contexts is a desired strategic advancement, such as enabling third-party transcription services when required.

It is envisioned that increased automation will be introduced to reduce costs associated with courts transcripts. An area of interest is speech-to-text, as physical transcript production carries a substantial cost. We will review and investigate the potential for reducing cost and improving operational efficiency by leveraging robot-generated/AI-generated speech-to-text for transcripts and dictation.



ACTION

5. Refresh Digital Audio Recordings (DAR) technology estate, improving its integration with the remote court platform, case management platform, reviewing access control to courtroom audio and investigating improvements to the speech-to-text capability leveraging AI.



Improved In-Court digital case management experience

The demands and expectations for the Courts Service offering on digital case management have consistently increased over recent decades, and the current courtroom case management systems are aged, fragmented and no longer capable of meeting user expectations.

We will work with the judiciary and registrars, to improve how they interact with the cases while in Court, including accessing digital case files and reducing reliance on paper. Though covered in a separate theme in this strategy, the introduction of a unified case management platform will enable digital end-to-end case management. The improvements in pre-court and post-court digital case management capabilities introduced by the new platform will in turn enable improvements of in-court case management. We aim for case types that are migrated to the new case management platform, the enablement of case documentation access and handling in-court to be entirely digital.



ACTION

6. Evolve interaction with cases while in-court, reducing reliance on paper through an integrated and unified case management platform.

Inclusiveness and accessibility

The use of digital technology as an enabler within the justice system will be used to broaden options, reduce barriers and facilitate the widest set of user requirements. We will align with a key action set out in the eGovernment Strategy – “Inclusiveness and accessibility: we will design digital public services that are inclusive by default for the widest possible audience (universal design) and cater for a broad range of needs and abilities, including older people and people with disabilities”.

As part of the recent introduction of remote hearings, we have seen many advantages for court users – especially those with mobility difficulties or vulnerable parties, in being able to participate in hearings without having necessarily to attend a courthouse in person. We will build on this expansion of service options by bringing the principles of universal design and plain language to bear on the digitisation of further services, in line with the guidelines set out by the National Disability Authority.

We will continue working with operations to ensure the adoption of technology in courtroom is an inclusive experience.



ACTION

7. Ensure the use of court technology in an inclusive and accessible manner, following universal design principles.

3.2 Unified Case Management Platform

Background

To improve the operation of the Courts Service, the Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2023 outlines a strategic goal of adopting a digital first approach and reducing the reliance on paper-based processes and outdated technology. This is best achieved by moving towards a unified technology platform capable of efficiently and consistently digitising the varying process needs of the judicial system.

As the Courts Service moves further away from manual, paper-based processes, it is critical that the new digital systems that replace them are designed both to be intuitive and able to meet user demands and expectations. As the technological capability of the Service increases, it will enable the incremental integration and optimisation of modern solutions into a coherent end-to-end digital case management platform. This will reduce the workload and friction between tools and processes, aid administration of justice and support necessary standardisation and efficiencies.

The benefits gained from the roll out of e-Licensing is an example of transforming the filing, expediting and issuing of licenses moving from an intensive paper-based process to a service available online.

At present, there are in excess of 100 separate case management systems in use within the Courts Service posing a major challenge to coherently support, adopt and move from paper-based to digital processes.

Future Direction

The long-term future direction for digital case administration is via a unified platform that provides a standardised, consistent approach for the creation of case management solutions in an agile manner. Introducing a unified platform, will allow us to consolidate investment in consistent user friendly and intuitive digital solutions, which will also have the benefit of streamlining training requirements and help reduce barriers to mobility.

This investment will also reduce development, maintenance and testing time and allow for the re-use of a shared set of core components and modules across the platform to build consistent digital journeys, including online portals. We will move in the direction of a single familiar touch point for staff, which over time will be integrated into supporting systems, such as document management, finance systems and jury management allowing the streamlining of end-to-end journeys.

Areas of Focus

The primary areas of focus included under this theme are:

- Moving towards a single digital case management platform supporting digitally enabled end-to-end journeys
- Introducing an online case management portal
- Integrating case management with other systems, such as jury management, video conferencing, financial systems, DAR
- Introducing reusable digital modules, such as payments, stamping, signatures, filing, case tracking, appointments booking, scheduling, document scanning, document templating, printing, authentication (login) and notifications
- Modernising document management and annotations

Moving towards a single digital case management platform

The Courts Service depends on a set of legacy and highly disparate set of business application technologies and solutions. The current cost of delivering new business applications, using a 'waterfall' process and custom development from the ground up, is very high. Implementing changes using this approach, including for legislative changes, is also costly and time consuming. These outdated methods do not provide the agility or flexibility required, resulting in applications frequently not meeting the business need.

The existing case management systems offer disparate capabilities and experiences across different platforms. These hinder the ability to move forward with online services and are not capable of providing the modern solutions required. Many need to be replaced as they don't run on modern infrastructure having been built the 1990's or integrate with the business services required.

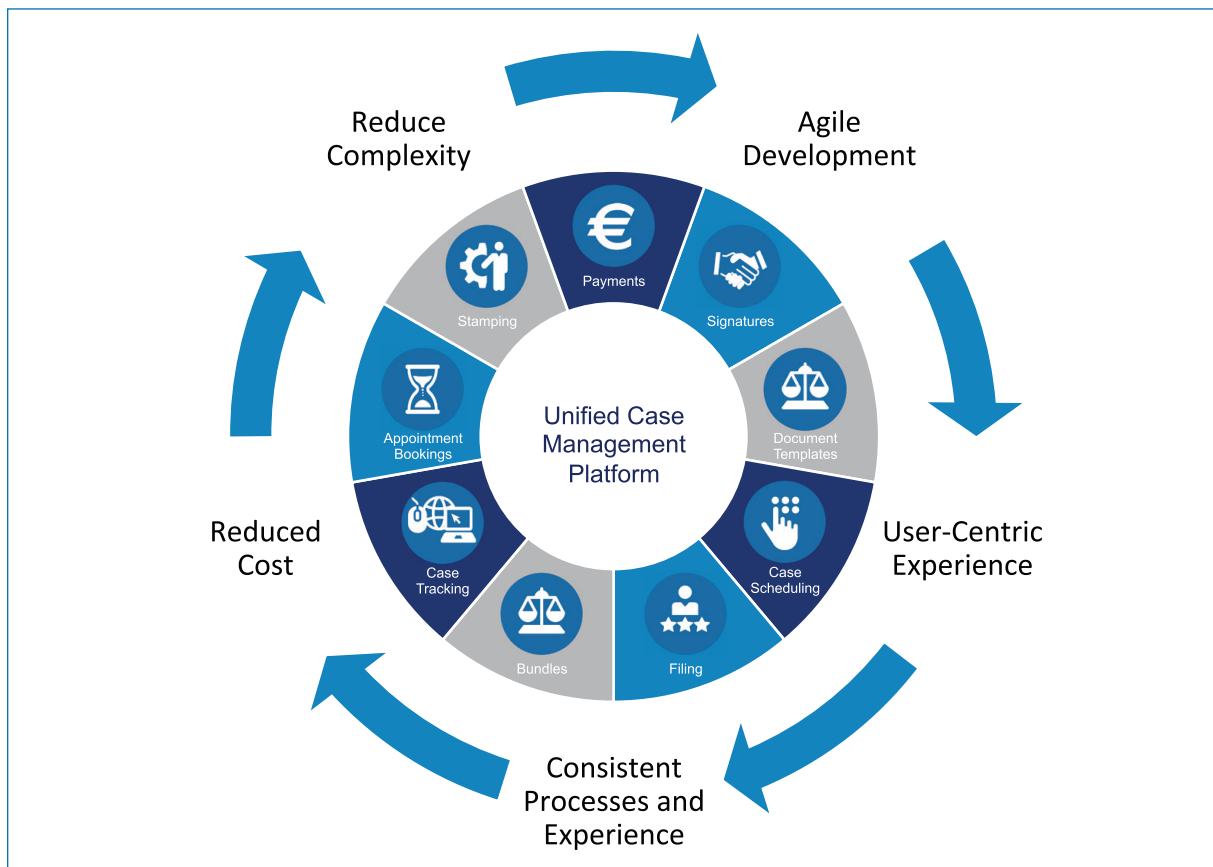
We will move towards a single application platform for case management that provides an agile and modern environment that evolves to the way the Courts Service does business, enabling ICT to work in partnership with the business as applications are developed. We will adopt a modern case management platform to enable the quicker production of high-quality applications and ability to start small and scale up.

This platform will assist progressively rationalising and replacing legacy systems in a coherent manner, reducing the complexity and cost of managing multiple technology portfolios. The unified case management platform will allow the modernisation of workflows and creation of a central platform for business processes.

A major motivation for the transition to a single digital case management platform is the ability to support digitally enabled end-to-end journeys with a common end

user experience. As part of the digital modernisation journey of the Courts Service, we aim to improve the experience when cases and courts users move between court jurisdictions, provide more services online, improve case scheduling and notifications and reduce the need for duplicate data entry – which this platform will enable. Leveraging case tracking, the case management system will also allow for increased visibility of cases for court users and staff alike, allowing for case status’ to be conveniently accessed.

The introduction of a single unified and modern platform for digital case management is also intended to standardise current interfaces into a single, user friendly, efficient system. This will enable the Courts Service to support the creation of a user centric and consistent experience for court users, judiciary and staff.



ACTIONS

8. Introduce a single digital case management system to create a consistent user-centred experience throughout case management and rationalise Courts Service processes and procedures.
9. Incrementally implement family, civil and criminal cases into the case management platform aligned with the prioritisation of the Modernisation Programme.

Introducing an online case management portal

Significant demands being put on Courts Service staff, legal practitioners and litigants are ever present, with the need to interact with a high volume of cases through the Courts Service. There is a requirement for online interaction by court users with their cases from the start of the process, through to the end.

Currently, the ingestion of case information is by and large not digitised, making it very resource intensive, with limited technology to provide support and over-reliance on traditional methods and paper. Often, the processes are duplicated in paper and digital and there is a high overhead in communication methods with case parties.

Rolling out new online services will enable the Courts Service to start the digital journey earlier in the processing of a case, enabling the capturing of contacts from the start, electronic communication with practitioners and litigants throughout and the ability to avoid duplication of data both physically and digitally. The ability for self-service will enable easier and more efficient access to information, with the ability to interrogate and manage the case in the digital world.

Moving in a phased approach, we will enhance a mobile-capable online case management portal for practitioners and litigants for the purposes of case application, filing, status tracking, and other functions. This portal will incrementally support new case types as they are implemented in the aforementioned unified case management platform and will in time subsume the case types currently hosted within CSOL (the current online platform).



ACTIONS

10. Implement a modern portal for practitioners and litigants to create and track case applications online, helping manage scheduling and deadlines, and communication between practitioners and litigants.
11. Expand number of case types that can be initiated via online portal.

Integrating case management with other systems

A key part of the development of a unified digital case management platform is the integration of existing systems into the unified platform to allow for easy and timely access to all materials and functionality stakeholders need to manage their cases, including all communications surrounding a case.

With a vision of a single touch point for staff for case management, we will streamline:

- the overhead of cases that cross court jurisdictions
- the interaction with partnering justice sector bodies
- the production of the legal diary
- the access and management of case documents
- and the interaction with other internal systems – the remote court platform (e.g. automatic creation and distribution of remote hearing invitations), DAR (e.g. in-case access to recordings), jury management (e.g. case adjournment automatically notifies jurors by digital means) and financial systems (e.g. the expansion of online payments).



ACTION

12. Incrementally streamline case management workload for case types within the new platform through a series of systems integration.

Introducing reusable digital modules

The creation of digital modules is key to the success of the new platform. These modules will lay the platform's foundation and act as reusable building blocks from which digital case processes will be built. The modules will standardise technical and user design conventions and approaches to developing in the platform, introducing best practice patterns and applying a common approach to interoperability, integration and data sharing, e.g. increasing the use of Application Programming Interfaces (machine to machine communication).

An ever-evolving library of reusable digital modules and components will be created and made available to the application developers, which will allow for easier creation of applications, increased flexibility and agility to meet business demands, and a consistency of approach as to how cases are processed across areas of law and jurisdictions. Candidate digital modules for development include authentication (e.g. MyGovID/ROS integration), payments, serving, signatures, document templates, document management, scheduling, bundles, scanning, filing, case tracking, appointment booking, printing and stamping. These modules will be explored, developed and published for reuse incrementally as the platform is developed and needs arise through the implementation of digital case processes.

Each module will solve a specific common challenge or concern, making the services available within the platform. This will enable application developers to focus more on the implementation of business requirements, and not have to reinvent the wheel. It will also ensure improvements that are made to any specific module are available across all processes that use the module.

Unified Case Management Platform

Modules



ACTION

13. Develop a series of reusable digital modules that can be leveraged as new case types are rolled out in the new platform.

Modernising document management and annotations

Document and file sharing is a core process within the Courts Service and functions such as easily sharing, storing and annotating documents are a large part of this workflow. The upcoming Data Strategy works in tandem and is aligned to this strategy to allow for modern document management within the Courts Service to streamline procedures and digitalise document handling.



ACTION

14. Modernise document management, aligning with the Data strategy, making it easy to access, share, store and annotate documents.

3.3 Desktop and Infrastructure Modernisation

Background

As part of the ten-year Courts Service Modernisation Programme, a digital desktop and infrastructure programme began delivery of user-centric collaboration and communication tools to Courts Service IT users. With the Courts Service desktop approach evolving over time, the current model includes a blend of current and legacy technologies and configurations. This approach has presented challenges when adopting and providing modern and reliable tools to effectively support staff and the judiciary.

To inform the Modernisation Programme, and similar to the 2019 Judicial Journey Mapping exercise, a customer journey mapping project for Courts Service staff was completed recently. This project will guide the selection of the appropriate blend of modern desktop equipment and tooling for deployment to support staff in their day-to-day activities. Six staff personas were identified: Circuit & District Registrar, Circuit & District Office Worker, Superior Court Registrar, Superior Court Office Worker, Judicial Assistant/Secretary and Support Directorates. 'Persona' and 'Day in Life' Customer Journey Maps were created for each of the six personas to describe their characteristics, behaviours and challenges. There are similarities as well as differences between personas in the way they carry out their work, their IT requirements and challenges, and their attitude towards technology. There are also some differences within members of the same persona (e.g., inside or outside Dublin).

The primary themes of dissatisfaction that surfaced through the customer journey mapping exercise were related to: remote access performance and reliability both in the office and working from home, lack of standardised and available collaboration platforms/staff communication tools, lack of ability for shared editing of documents, an outdated email platform, availability of Wi-Fi for joining audio and video conference calls from laptops, and insufficient access to equipment to support remote working.

Future Direction

The work completed to-date has enabled remote court operations throughout Covid-19 and allowed for the adoption of new hybrid ways of working for Courts Service staff. We aim to build on this foundational work, lock in the accrued benefits and enable further improvements in these areas.

Through a modern digital desktop, we aim to address the challenges faced within the existing desktop model and to provide staff and judiciary with the modern tools required to efficiently complete their day-to-day activities. We will continue

to work with corporate support units across the Courts Service to improve our internal processes and tools and will advance this agenda by leveraging shared ICT applications provided by OGCIO. We will rationalise the range of back-office technology systems supported by the Courts Service through a combination of infrastructure management modernisations, cloud technologies and the retirement of legacy operating systems. This will bring additional flexibility, capability and reliability to these toolsets, providing additional benefits to both IT users and ICT administrators.

“Organisations should no longer decide whether to move to cloud for new or existing systems. The decision to be made now is what, how and when to move to cloud.”

Cloud Computing Advice Note, OGCIO (October 2019)

Areas of Focus

The primary areas of focus included under this theme are:

- Consolidated modern collaboration, messaging and communications tools
- Enabling access to OGCIO Build to Share applications
- Enhancing laptop/desktop functionality for modern ways of working
- Improving desktop experience for the judiciary
- Retiring legacy operating systems
- Review and refresh organisational systems
- Expanding modern infrastructure management processes and tooling
- Improved use of Cloud technologies to increase agility

Consolidated modern collaboration, messaging and communications tools

Collaboration, messaging and communication tools are key to enabling the successful function of a geographically disparate, interconnected and co-dependent organisation. As a result, the importance of the use of flexible toolsets which align with ICT processes and procedures is key. The use of a set of modern unified communications tools across documents, mail, messaging, and video, which integrate with one another streamlining communication and collaboration tasks are essential.

We will introduce a series of improvements to communication and collaboration tools available to IT users by provisioning a coherent modern enterprise-ready

toolset. Staff members and the judiciary will be able to connect and collaborate from managed Courts Service devices, using Microsoft Teams for video conferencing, screen sharing, instant messaging and presence, independent of their location.

We will move to a modern messaging platform on Office 365 using Outlook for email, enabling improved integration with current solutions, document management, the remote court platform and, in the future, the unified case management platform.

These toolsets also integrate natively with the Microsoft Office productivity suite, enabling improvements to document collaboration such as 'co-authoring'.

In summary, we aim to enable modern communication and collaboration across the Courts Service using a single unified set of communication tools, which integrate and enable teams to work together independent of location.



ACTION

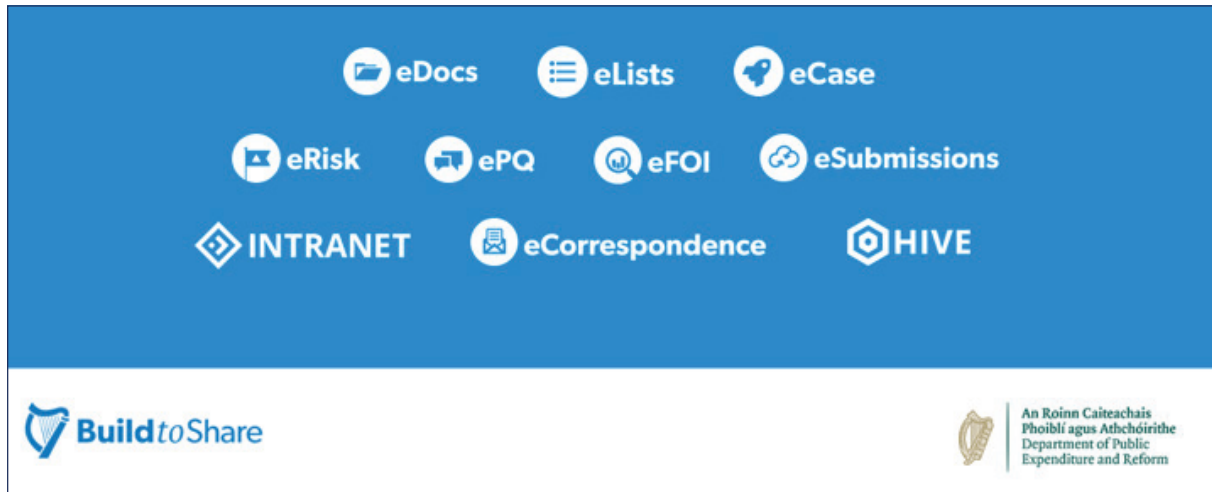
15. Introduce modern collaboration and communication tools, retiring legacy messaging tools to enable the use of more robust, modern, and secure document, mail and video conferencing solutions.

Enabling access to OGCIO Build to Share applications

With a range of applications and resources being made available through the OGCIO Build to Share programme, the Courts Service recognises and welcomes the opportunity to draw upon a standardised suite of productivity tools used by other Public Service bodies. The Courts Service will work to introduce OGCIO Build to Share applications into the service catalogue to bring improved features and capabilities to IT users and assist with the rationalisation of current toolsets.

The Built to Share suite of applications includes productivity applications such as eDocs, which will fulfil the required function of an organisational corporate Document Management System. The adoption of eDocs will enable teams to collaborate more efficiently on a common platform and enhance the co-authoring functionality, while also providing records management, full text search, Outlook integration, automated archiving and versioning of documents.

This integration work between the Courts Service and the OGCIO will also provide access to the wider family of Build to Share applications, such as eFOI, the Intranet and others. Delivering access to an enhanced, feature-rich and user-friendly business process applications, will enable better information flows and engagement within the workplace.



ACTION

16. Adopt the OGCIO's Build to Share programme and work towards the integration of eDocs and other solutions to aid document collaboration and process streamlining within the Courts Service.

Enhancing laptop/desktop functionality for modern ways of working

Through communication with internal staff, it is apparent that the use of virtualisation software (Citrix) within the estate, which aimed to enable and mobilise IT users, is experiencing some difficulties. With reports that the current desktop solution is unstable when using Wi-Fi connections both in the office and at home, unreliable when completing heavy workloads, and sub-optimal for supporting videoconferencing, a change is required in this area to better support staff.

We will begin moving away from the use of Citrix, which requires connecting remotely to a server-based environment where applications are stored, to a more distributed PC/laptop approach that includes access to the components essential for collaborating and carrying out daily activities directly from the desktop itself. This means the use of Citrix to connect to the digital desktop will no longer be required. However, due to the nature of some of the existing business applications, which cannot run locally on the desktop, the retirement of Citrix for published applications, such as CCTS and HCTS, will be phased out over a longer period, as these applications are upgraded and replaced.

This change will allow for an improved user experience which is more resilient to low-bandwidth networks and more performant for users with heavy workloads. The move to a distributed desktop will also allow for enhanced performance, stability,

reliability and a wider range of features for video conferencing, available through the provisioning of Microsoft Teams.

As part of the movement away from Citrix and virtual desktops, it is recognised that a standardised set of ICT equipment will be required to enable staff to work efficiently. We will roll-out a tested desktop configuration within the lifetime of this strategy to ensure Courts Service staff have access to a laptop, a standardised set of peripherals including headset, webcam, secondary monitor, keyboard, mouse, and a guide on ICT Ergonomic best practices to help staff get the most out of their workstations. Accompanying this will be an objective to provide the same resources to network connected courtrooms, where an in-court desktop will be permanently available within each courtroom.

As the Courts Service continues supporting hybrid ways of working and relying on the use of traditional desktop and laptops for the reasons outlined previously, the way in which Courts Service ICT manages devices and supports users will evolve to meet this new model. Supporting, maintaining and updating these devices often currently requires the device to be connected to the corporate network or brought to support staff, which is not always feasible or practical in a timely manner. This can lead to a poor experience as well as devices that are out-of-date, which may be more vulnerable to security threats. The deployment of a modern Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution is required to allow for the remote support and management of devices. For this purpose, and leveraging cloud-based infrastructure and security enhancements, an MDM solution will be introduced to allow for the remote support, upgrade, administration, remediation and securing of devices, greatly reducing the requirement to bring devices to the office for maintenance.



ACTIONS

17. Replace Citrix Virtualisation software and thin client workstations with PCs/laptops.
18. Roll-out a tested desktop configuration to ensure Courts Service staff have access to equipment and ergonomic best practices.
19. Introduce an enterprise ready Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution to ensure the ability to remotely manage and wipe devices, and support ICT users.

Improving desktop experience for the Judiciary

The Judicial Digital Workplace was built and deployed in 2019 following a consultative process to better understand and support the judiciary in a digital first workplace. Through the introduction of a digital desktop, this solution brought

significant improvements over the existing workplace environment and allowed for judicial staff to work through increased digital workloads with more modern tools. However, this model continues to operate the same outdated email platform with limited provisioning of collaboration and communication tools. In alignment with enhancing the staff desktop as described above, judicial desktop applications will be upgraded to help improve productivity and communication. Bringing performance improvements and an integrated suite of user-friendly collaboration tools, this aims to resolve previously experienced pain-points.

From the aforementioned judicial consultative process, the Courts Service acknowledges the unique working environment that the judiciary operate in and the intensive work patterns which they operate under. As a result, within this strategy timeframe an extra focus will be applied to judicial ICT training, support and enhanced technical aftercare to facilitate and support the judiciary maximising the benefit of digitally enabled tools.



ACTIONS

20. Introduce improvements to the judicial desktop including modern email and collaboration tooling.
21. Establish a judicial ICT training programme to support judicial staff and establish an ICT support channel for aftercare of issues experienced.

Retiring legacy operating systems

The running of supportable and maintainable Operating Systems (OS) by ICT is a core element of ensuring efficient operation and security of the technology estate. We will review the current OS estate and work to retire legacy OS versions in line with vendor lifecycle management policies and best practices. Through a process of identifying, upgrading and retiring OSs which do not meet vendor best practices, this will both help improve the security posture of the organisation and help to rationalise the OSs supported by the Courts Service. In the shorter term, certain OSs may still be required to support legacy applications. These will be kept isolated until such applications can be retired or upgraded.



ACTION

22. Complete an assessment of the current operating system and application-level software versions and upgrade or retire unsupported versions where possible.



Review and refresh organisational systems

We will work with business areas to streamline and enable the Courts Service corporate support functions, such as HR, Communications, Estates and Finance.

As part of organisational reform initiatives, we will work with corporate services business areas to evolve the current technology supports used for organisational purposes, such as HR systems, the corporate intranet and financial systems. In line with organisational priorities, while noting that many organisational support systems are provided externally (e.g. via the National Shared Services Office), we aim to refresh internal systems to ensure they remain fit for purpose and allow for the efficient function of the Courts Service.



ACTION

23. Review and refresh our corporate support systems in line with demand and organisational priorities.

Expanding modern infrastructure management processes and tooling

Server and infrastructure management is critical to the running of a digitally enabled organisation. Ensuring that systems and configurations are up-to-date and reproduceable across environments is of critical importance to ensuring scalable and supportable services. Modern infrastructure management processes and tooling allows for consistency, the ability to recreate server configurations from templates and the reduction of manual configuration which allows for system administrators to automate tasks and manage resources more effectively. Under this theme we aim to modernise infrastructure provisioning and management and reduce the requirement for manual tasks. To do this, we will implement and enable a model called “Infrastructure as Code” within the Courts Service.

Infrastructure as Code (IaC) is an approach where the management of infrastructure is made in a descriptive way. This contrasts with the traditional way of managing infrastructure, where each environment is managed manually, and configurations are applied individually within each environment which can lead to inconsistencies and difficulties in efficiently troubleshooting issues. IaC allows for the management of configurations to provide smooth, consistent and reproducible behaviour through automated deployment methods. Working in parallel with the introduction of a modern application framework, IaC aims to reduce time to deploy and enable the rationalisation of technologies that will allow for modern agile development approaches to be used within the Courts Service.



ACTION

24. Implement and enable “Infrastructure as Code” to modernise infrastructure provisioning and management, and reduce the requirement for manual tasks.

Improved use of Cloud technologies to increase agility

Approaches towards the provisioning of software and infrastructure have evolved greatly over the last 10 years. With vendor offerings in areas such as Software as a Service (SaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) bringing significant cost, security and agility improvements, many organisations are changing their approach to building and maintaining ICT solutions by adopting the use of cloud-based capabilities. The use of cloud technologies allows for the rapid scaling of services due to the templated nature of its design. This means that organisations utilising cloud technologies have greater expansion and scaling options available to help meet business needs.

Through significant investments made by vendors to host, secure and provision cloud offerings, cloud technologies are often the most secure solution available for organisations in the current climate. With increasingly sophisticated methods utilised by cyber criminals to gain access to systems and data with malicious intent, cloud vendors are constantly improving and advancing offerings to ensure that services and data stored in the cloud are secured to the highest level. The Courts Service will continue to identify areas where the use of cloud will enhance the breadth and security of the service offering to ICT users.



ACTION

25. Review the current service catalogue and assess where the use of cloud technologies could be used to increase the security and agility of the organisation.

3.4 Security and Resilience

Background

As the Courts Service introduces new digital solutions and platforms to modernise its service offering and adapt to new ways of working, the reliance on digital for the operation and efficiency of staff increases. With this increase in digital footprint, comes increased exposure to cyber-attacks that has the potential to disrupt the operations of the Courts Service. With cyber-criminals developing new methods of attacking, damaging and stealing digital systems and data, the importance of organisations using advanced security controls and tools to protect from unplanned outages and breaches is of critical importance.

Future Direction

Our overall objective for cybersecurity is to protect the data and systems of the Courts Service and its operation. We aim to do this by implementing a number of sophisticated cyber-defence tools, mechanisms and procedures, along with establishing a risk-focused culture across the organisation. We will align with the business continuity programme by completing a full ICT disaster recovery review and will set out a programme of work to be implemented during the lifetime of this strategy that will increase our operational resilience, our ability to respond to service disruption and our understanding of our effectiveness in this domain.

We will raise awareness of the role internal staff play in protecting the organisation against cyber-attacks. Recently, both in Ireland and globally, there has been a significant increase in the number of “social engineering” attacks targeting users. Through a series of user security awareness programmes aimed at highlighting technology best practices, as well as the introduction of anti-phishing campaigns to help staff practice identifying and reporting suspicious mails, we aim to improve the security posture of the organisation to help reduce the risk of cyber-threats.

Areas of Focus

The primary areas of focus included under this theme are:

- Develop a mature and resilient security posture
- Improve governance and business processes to incorporate security into all elements of work
- Adopt modern security tooling and align to security best practices
- Raise awareness of the role internal staff play in protecting the organisation
- Improve disaster recovery posture and processes supporting business continuity

Develop a mature and resilient security posture

To achieve the objective of securing the data and systems of the Courts Service, the requirement to develop and maintain a mature security posture is essential. Having the correct processes and procedures in-place is key to enable resilience against cyber-attacks, mitigation of known vulnerabilities, and the ability to respond effectively against security threats. The four layers of Identify, Detect, Protect, and Respond will be used to help achieve the objective of securing the data and systems of the Courts Service, enabling a resilient security posture.

Identify

The ability to identify who and what is on our network is key to being able to protect users, systems and data. For the Courts Service, this will provide the ability to identify the normal vs. the abnormal and help ICT staff determine what behaviours need to be investigated further. Advanced security tooling, which aids the identification of users and cyber threats, will be leveraged to raise the resilience of the Courts Service to cyber-attack.

Detect

In a constantly evolving cyber security environment, the ability to detect known vulnerabilities and attempts from attackers to penetrate your environment is fundamental to enabling timely protection and response within the environment. Helping reduce risk within the environment and maintain a strong, resilient security posture, a series of modern security tooling will be adopted to enable the detection of known vulnerabilities and attack attempts on the Courts Service.

Protect

Strongly coupled with the ability to detect, is the proactive ability to protect an ICT environment. Focusing on the implementation of “SecuritybyDesign”, “PrivacybyDesign” and “DevSecOps” practices and principles when designing systems, we aim to ensure that applications and systems are built and managed in a way that is resilient to attacks and fault tolerant when attacks are experienced.


Respond

The final area to establish a resilient security posture is how the organisation responds to cyber-attacks or unplanned service interruptions. Having a strong cybersecurity incident response capability is imperative for the Courts Service to respond to security incidents and events. A Cyber Security Incident Response Plan (CSIRP) ensures that, in the event of a security breach, the right personnel and procedures are in place to effectively deal with a threat. We will continue building this capability to ensure the Courts Service have a structured process to contain

and remediate threats. This will be tackled under two key streams: build and test the CSIRP and establish a Cyber Incident Forensic Response (CIFR) capability for the Courts Service to utilise in the event of a breach. The CSIRP and CIFR capabilities will be developed in alignment with NCSC and public service best practices, which will allow for a holistic cyber response plan to be developed and allow for the Courts Service to leverage NCSC specialist response teams in the event of a breach.



Through work in the four areas of: Identify, Detect, Protect and Respond, an overall mature and resilient security posture will be realised, which will help protect the data and systems of the Courts Service.



ACTION

26. Continued development of a Cyber Security Incident Response Plan (CSIRP) in line with public sector best practices to ensure issues are detected and responded to in the event of a breach.

Improve governance and business processes to incorporate security into all elements of work

It is critically important for a digitally enabled organisation to regularly enhance its cybersecurity governance model to keep pace with advancements of cybersecurity threats and ensure security awareness is at the core of work being done within the organisation. The adoption of an enhanced cybersecurity governance model will embed a cybersecurity awareness and risk management culture within the Courts Service. Building on existing structures, the goal of the cybersecurity governance model is to provide strategic direction and ensure that objectives are achieved, and risks are managed appropriately. This provides a top-down approach to cybersecurity

and adopts a risk-conscious culture into decision making. To achieve this, the role of Head of Information Security will be established, with the executive responsibility for developing and implementing an information security programme, which includes policies and standards.

ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, is an independent, non-governmental organisation responsible for creating international standards that are adopted within different industries across the world. Within the area of Information Security, the ISO has developed the ISO27001 standard, which is a set of widely adopted Information Security standards to help keep information assets secure. As part of the implementation of informed governance policies, we will align with ISO27001 by completing a fit-gap analysis against the standard in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current practices in-place. The fit-gap analysis will help inform and shape governance and policy to help integrate IT Security into all digital areas of the organisation. To supplement findings within the ISO27001 fit-gap analysis, the establishment of a programme of cyber-attack simulation exercises will be completed, to help identify areas where risk of cyber-attack can be reduced, and information security governance improved.



ACTIONS

27. Implement a cybersecurity governance model which incorporates risk-focussed decision making to provide strategic direction of security initiatives.
28. Complete an ISO27001 fit-gap analysis and Cyber Security Simulation to identify and inform governance and technical improvements.

Adopt modern security tooling and align to security best practices

The adoption of modern security tooling to help identify, protect, detect, and respond to cybersecurity threats is key to achieving a modern and resilient security posture. In this section we will expand upon objectives which were identified in the previous sections and focus on the security toolsets which will support the enhancements of the Courts Service security maturity and resilience.

Identify

A foundational element of being able to identify what is on the network is the implementation of a single Identity and Access Management (IAM) system. An IAM is responsible for authentication of credentials and providing the ability to manage users on the network – create, delete, lock and reset user accounts and passwords. The implementation of a single unified IAM allows for a central view and management

of authentication activity within the network providing greater observability of the network, and allowing for a streamlined handling of joiners, movers and leavers. Benefitting IT users, a unified IAM supports self-service password management and a single password to log in to (IAM supporting) applications. IAM also enables a number of different capabilities, such as granular, role-based access controls, which can be implemented to help both secure and enable IT users.

Credential theft is the most common way for attackers to gain access to IT systems. This is achieved, for example, by interception of username and password credentials using methods such as the creation of fake login screens. Reducing the number of instances where IT users need to enter their credentials, helps both improve the user experience and reduce the risk of credential theft.

Knowing who is on the network is the first element of the identification phase, but it is tightly coupled to knowing what is on the network. Therefore, a strong asset management capability will be essential for the Courts Service to know what devices are on the network. Through the use of a modern Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution on devices, the organisation will be able to identify, on a continuous, real-time basis, the IT assets on our network and identify potential security risks or gaps that affect each one.

Protection and Detection

Detecting threats and vulnerabilities and taking action to protect the organisation's systems is an essential component to achieving resilience and a mature security posture. Understanding both what is happening outside and inside of the environment and taking action to prevent attacks is critical to ensuring a timely response and avoiding service interruption. To achieve this, advancements in security tooling in areas such as Security Information and Event Management (SIEM), Threat Intelligence (TI), and Vulnerability Management (VM) will be investigated under this strategy to help detect threats and vulnerabilities and take action in a timely manner.

Collecting security and event information within an organisation allows for the ability to detect abnormalities within an environment and identify potential bad actors with malicious intent. Allowing the Courts Service to collect real-time security information and make decisions in a time efficient manner, a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) platform allows for incident alerting, monitoring, detection, and response to come into effect to reduce exposure to cyber threats.

With threats and attack techniques constant evolving in the IT Security industry, vendors and government agencies have combined forces and created communities to inform and publish cyber-attack information to other organisations to help stop cyber criminals gaining access to systems and data. Through the sharing

of information about new attacks, known as zero-day vulnerabilities, defence mechanisms can be bolstered to mitigate against known attacks to help reduce the risk of future attacks. Through the ingestion of modern Threat Intelligence feeds from Irish Government agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and linking of data found from these intelligence feeds with information collected from within the Courts Service environment, we aim to reduce time to respond to threats and increase the overall security posture of the organisation.

It is impossible to protect the organisation from threats without knowing its weaknesses, therefore a vulnerability management programme will help the Courts Service detect, evaluate, treat, and report on security vulnerabilities in our systems and across all our software. This programme will be vital to help prioritise investment and mitigating organisation risk.



ACTIONS

29. Rationalisation and implementation of single Identity and Access Management (IAM).
30. Investigate advancements in security tooling in areas such as Threat Intelligence (TI) and Vulnerability Management (VM).
31. Implementation of vulnerability detection and threat detection capabilities to help identify and neutralise a vulnerability before systems are exposed to bad actors.
32. Adoption of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) platform.

Improve disaster recovery posture and processes supporting business continuity

The combination of a Business Continuity Plan and a complementary Disaster Recovery plan allows for contingencies for business processes, assets, human resources and business partners, as well a technical disaster recovery processes and procedures to be prepared to reduce operational risk, which are essential to support business and technical objectives.

The importance of disaster recovery and business continuity planning have been demonstrated numerous times globally, allowing organisations to restore service following a security breach or an unplanned disruption. ICT will carry out a full disaster recovery assessment across its estate, identifying weaknesses and put in place a programme of work to bolster its disaster recovery posture over the timeframe of this strategy. This work will align with and support the Business Continuity Programme that has been established in the Courts Service.



ACTION

33. Aligning with the Business Continuity Programme, carry out a Disaster Recovery assessment and put in place an appropriate remedial programme of work to improve our BCP and DR posture.

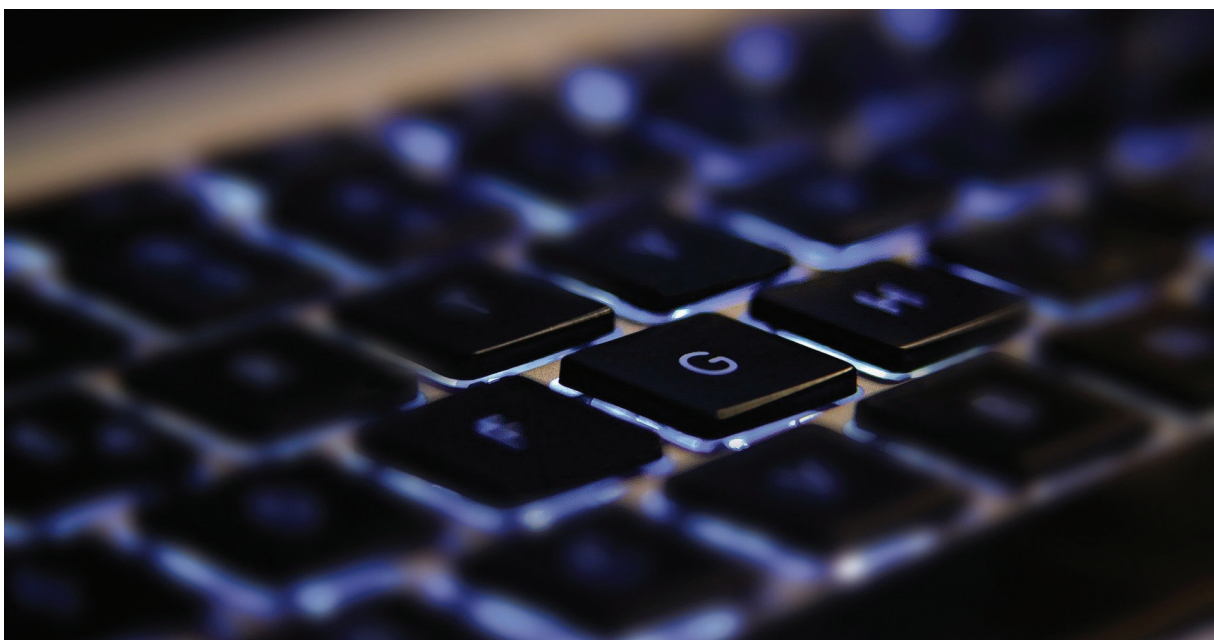
Raise awareness of the role internal staff play in protecting the organisation

A cyber-security user communication and information programme will be essential to raise awareness of the responsibility IT users play around securing their networks, devices, and information. As a modern digital organisation, it is critical to increase the level of skills and awareness around basic cyber-hygiene practices and to support them through a series of communications and training. The establishment of a strong security culture can result in a workforce that will be more engaged with the cyber-security agenda and can lead to increased compliance, while helping to maintain or improve our risk posture. Paired with initiatives to help staff practice the skills for identifying and reporting suspicious phishing emails, this will be a key initiative to help reducing the risk to cyber threats.



ACTION

34. Develop and issue a user security awareness programme to raise awareness of the responsibilities around securing networks, devices, and information.



3.5 Capacity, Capability and Governance

Background

The Courts Service has an ambitious vision which “aims to fundamentally transform how the Courts Service delivers services by deploying a greatly increased use of IT.”

This vision, along with the strategic goal of adopting a Digital First approach, creates an imperative to review and re-calibrate the capacity, capability and the governance model under which we deliver change, in order to empower ICT to play its role in partnership with colleagues across the organisation to deliver our envisioned digital transformation.

Future Direction

Delivering on the ambition of the Courts Service requires ICT to re-organise while addressing capacity, capability and governance challenges.

We will strategically re-structure the ICT Directorate to align with business needs, uplifting capacity and capability of ICT and the wider organisation to support the increase in digitisation across Courts. We also aim to refine the vendor management strategy to support internal capability and delivery, through blended teams and introducing modern agile ways of working that will help transform ICT into a first-class citizen of the business. By maturing business integration processes to better serve the needs of the organisation, we aim to define, implement and roll out a standard governance framework along with maturing our change, support and learning services, in partnership with the Change Programme Office (CPO) and Learning and Development (L&D).

Areas of Focus

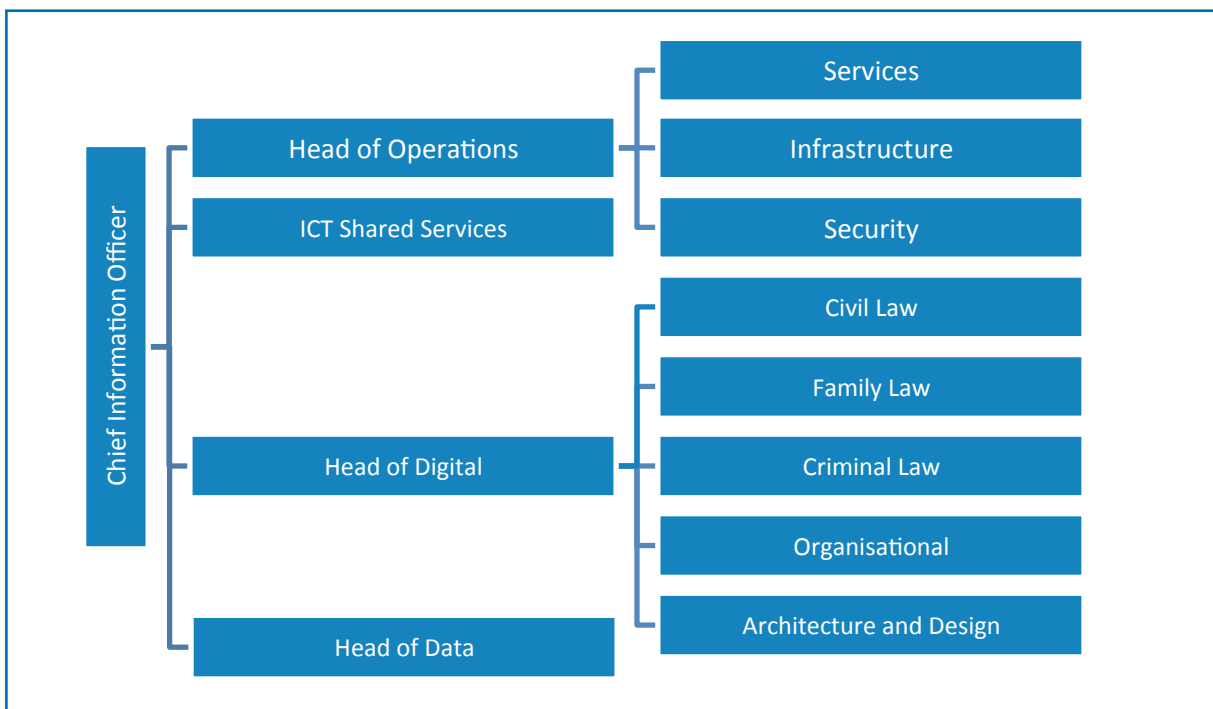
To achieve the strategic goal of adopting a Digital First approach, we will focus on the following areas under this theme:

- Digital Operating Model
- ICT Capacity and Capability
- Organisation Capability
- Vendor Management
- Governance
- Digital Adoption

Digital Operating Model

The Courts Service Corporate Strategic plan articulates a clear statement of intent to deliver “...excellent services to court users ...to enable a world class Courts system.”. It also states that “Our vision is to put the court user at the centre of everything we do by improving access to justice, reducing delay and cost within the justice system and maximising the use of technology to improve our services”.

A strategic re-structure of ICT is required to deliver on this level of ambition, by adopting a digitally driven operating model, which integrates with the business and aligns with the corporate strategic objectives, while in parallel improving the overall data maturity of the organisation. To this end, ICT are introducing a new Digital unit with a dedicated lead, where dedicated digital teams align with the main areas of business concern.



Three digital teams have been created, one for each area of law – civil, family and criminal, with an additional one for organisational applications to be created. Each digital team will work closely with a corresponding modernisation programme team and with the business users within their area of concern. They will be responsible for the design, build, deployment and running of the solutions that deliver to their business area. Along with the business colleagues, the digital teams are expected to identify and drive digital transformation opportunities within their business domain.

In addition, there will be two cross-cutting teams:

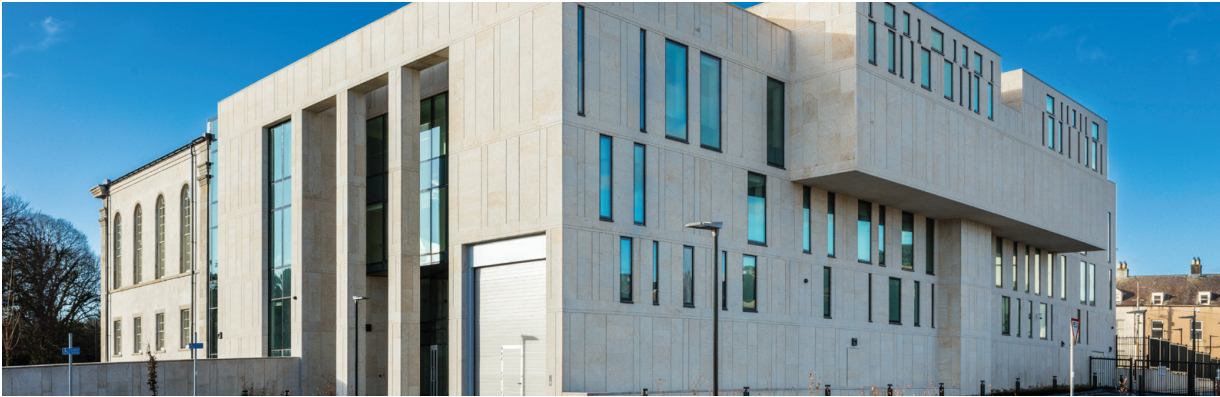
- The Architecture and Design team provide an internal architecture capability, own the underlying application platform, establish and manage the Application Lifecycle Management policies and tooling, and ensure a consistency of UI/UX across the business application estate.
- The Data team is responsible for leading data governance and improving the overall data maturity of the organisation. This team will set the data requirements across all applications, will work with the organisation at large to foster data analysis demand and establish a trusted set of operational reports, and will be responsible for the appropriate exchange of data with external organisations.

As part of the Operations team, and as described in the “Security and Resilience” theme, the role of Head of Information Security will be established, with the executive responsibility for developing and implementing an information security programme, which includes policies and standards. The Operations team will also include teams responsible for service delivery, management, and quality assurance; and also a team responsible for technical infrastructure supporting our desktop and IT applications.

This Digital Operating model will be based on agile methodology where both ICT and business collaborate closely to design, develop and deliver digital solutions in short release cycles. This approach is designed to deliberately integrate the business into the product delivery lifecycle, so that both ICT and the business can co-create fit-for-purpose user-centric solutions.

 **ACTIONS**

- 35. Structure the ICT Directorate to align with business needs.
- 36. Introduce modern agile ways of working to transform ICT into a first-class citizen of the business.



ICT Capacity and Capability

Resourcing levels present challenges to sustained delivery of the scope outlined in the Courts Service ambitious digital vision, and also present challenges filling the additional roles and responsibilities outlined in the new Digital Operating Model.

ICT capacity needs are to be delivered through blended in-house and out-sourced, multi-disciplinary teams that collaborate with the business to support the increasing digitisation of the justice sector. However, an increase in capacity on its own will not deliver the level of change required, it must be accompanied by an uplift in capability leading to a strong layer of retained IT knowledge and expertise. This capability uplift will derive from knowledge sharing within in-house and external expertise within blended teams, on the job opportunities for growth and structure learning and development opportunities.



ACTION

37. Meet capacity needs through blended, multi-disciplinary teams, and uplift capability of ICT staff through a series of learning initiatives.

Organisational Capability

In line with the Organisation and People strategy, we will work with Learning and Development (L&D) to uplift IT capability across the entire organisation to meet the increased digital focus and newer agile ways of working. We will make additional investments in L&D to increase the base level of IT capability across the Courts Service, for staff members and the judiciary using modern online training facilities and approaches.

An example of this is a targeted cyber-security user awareness programme that we plan to roll out, to increase the level of IT skills, awareness and resilience around basic cyber hygiene practices. A further example is where we have recently embarked upon devising a learning programme to support the rollout of the new modern desktop programme with L&D. This learning programme will be an exemplar of how an holistic approach to change management will ensure that not only do staff and the judiciary get the tools they need to do their jobs, but also the supports in order to get the most out of the tools.



ACTION

38. Work with Learning and Development to uplift the capability of the organisation to get the most out of current and new technology.

Vendor Management

Delivering digital change requires specialist skills that need to be nurtured, embraced and embedded in Courts Service personnel over time. We recognise the positive role that vendors can play in this regard, partnering with the Courts Service on the journey to utilise and share their digital delivery experience while collaboratively working towards the end goal.

To encourage more inclusive and collaborative partnerships, we will rationalise the number of external vendors through a refined vendor management approach, supporting internal capability and targeted delivery through blended teams. Multi-disciplinary delivery teams will include a blend of staff, alongside contractors and resources from vendors, to foster an environment where all resources work within the same governance structures, reducing team borders, to deliver on the digital promise for the Courts Service.

Rationalising external vendors will also result in a reduction of procurement overheads, by reducing the level of administration required to manage the volume of vendors being contracted.



ACTION

39. Refine the vendor management strategy to support internal capability and delivery through blended teams.

Governance

The competing priorities and resource challenges associated with large digital transformation programmes requires change to be managed through well-defined, consistent governance processes. To that end, the Courts Service has implemented a Single Approach to Change across the organisation to manage the end-to-end project demand and delivery lifecycle.

At its heart, the Single Approach to Change includes a new Enterprise Change Board (ECB). This is a single operational board with broad-based membership, responsible for filtering project demand requests, ordering the priority of work, and supporting in-flight project delivery.

As the ambitious scope of delivery accelerates across the Courts Service and demand outstrips supply, we will continue to adopt, review and mature the Single Approach to Change.

**ACTION**

40. Define, implement and roll out a unified governance framework to support transformation.

Digital Adoption

Transitioning to more digitally focused solutions is typically measured in years not months and requires significant ongoing collaboration between ICT and the business, as well as an appreciation of the cultural and change impact on staff, users and service delivery personnel alike. To help smooth this transition we will mature our change, support and learning services, in partnership with the Change Programme Office (CPO) and L&D, in line with the growing digital needs of the organisation so that the new technologies are used to their full potential. This will include working with the judiciary and support staff to ensure the judiciary receive the necessary training and supports.

We will also ensure that the principles of accessibility and inclusivity are incorporated into the design, development, and adoption of technology so that solutions deliver consistent, usable services for all. Central to this approach will be an adherence to accessibility regulations and guidelines, including alignment with guidance published by the National Disability Authority.

ICT appreciate that digital transformation is never “once and done” and we view product rollout as the beginning of the crucial adoption phase, rather than the end of the delivery lifecycle. We will work to encourage digital adoption by implementing a hyper-care support model that provides an elevated level of support at the most critical times in the product lifecycle, as well as enhancing the longer-term support throughout the duration of this multi-year journey.

We are mindful of the risk of change fatigue in ambitious digital transformations like this and will work closely with the CPO to ensure that change is managed at a sustainable cadence, through the Single Approach to Change, both for those who deliver the change as well as all court users, judiciary and staff alike.

**ACTION**

41. Mature change, support and learning services, in partnership with Change Programme Office (CPO) and Learning & Development (L&D).

3.6 Data as an enabler

Background

Providing accurate data to the right people at the right time is important to increasing transparency and access to justice, while reducing administration costs. Courts Service operations and future planning considerations are dependent on the availability of high-quality data to make knowledge-based decisions. We will support the improved management of data both for use within the Courts Service and for other justice sector bodies that interact with us daily.

The Courts Service conducted a baseline data maturity assessment in early 2021 across all jurisdictions to assess the capacity to manage and appropriately use data generated from our activities. This referred to all forms of data (structured, unstructured, digital and paper). The findings from the assessment, alongside a consultation process conducted with internal and external stakeholders, will inform the data management priorities for the Courts Service over the coming years.

Future Direction

In recognition of the central importance of data management to the successful delivery of our Corporate and ICT strategies, the Courts Service will publish its first Data Strategy towards the end of 2021. This 3-year strategy targets four major focus areas to enhance our use of data – governance, data management, improved processes and technology.

Areas of Focus

The Data Strategy will outline activities planned to strengthen existing data governance and data security structures. This will include the adoption of a data quality framework to support ongoing measurement and improvement initiatives. We will expand the range of policies supporting the management of data (e.g. records management) as well as concluding more collective data sharing agreements with authorised bodies. The strategy will also help promote improved access to data via digital channels and a reduced reliance on paper. To support a self-service capability for our data users, we will target the roll-out of solutions that provide, more reliable access to data, as well as an enhanced data analytics capability to support better analysis and decision-making capability.



ACTION
42. Publish a 3-year Data Strategy.



4. ACTIONS SUMMARY

ACTIONS SUMMARY

4.1 Court Technology

1. Provide a standardised minimum set of technology in all technology-enabled courtrooms.
2. Expand video installations in courtrooms countrywide aligned with the forthcoming Estate Strategy and Venue Review, and work with the judiciary, registrars and Justice sector bodies to increase their utility.
3. Improve the remote court platform to leverage the latest available technology and innovation in video conferencing and integrate with digital case management tools.
4. Assess and enhance connectivity, coverage, operating model of the Wi-Fi solution to ensure it is fit for purpose for the judiciary, staff, legal practitioners and justice partners.
5. Refresh Digital Audio Recordings (DAR) technology estate, improving its integration with the remote court platform, case management platform, reviewing access control to courtroom audio and investigating improvements to the speech-to-text capability leveraging AI.
6. Evolve interaction with cases while in-court, reducing reliance on paper through an integrated and unified case management platform.
7. Ensure the use of court technology in an inclusive and accessible manner, following universal design principles.

4.2 Unified Case Management Platform

- 8. Introduce a single digital case management system to create a consistent user-centred experience throughout case management and rationalise Courts Service processes and procedures.
- 9. Incrementally implement family, civil and criminal cases into the case management platform aligned with the prioritisation of the Modernisation Programme.
- 10. Implement a modern portal for practitioners and litigants to create and track case applications online, helping manage scheduling and deadlines, and communication between practitioners and litigants.
- 11. Expand number of case types that can be initiated via online portal.
- 12. Incrementally streamline case management workload for case types within the new platform through a series of systems integration.
- 13. Develop a series of reusable digital modules that can be leveraged as new case types are rolled out in the new platform.
- 14. Modernise document management, aligning with the Data strategy, making it easy to share, store and annotate documents.

4.3 Desktop and Infrastructure Modernisation

15. Introduce modern collaboration and communication tools, retiring legacy messaging tools to enable the use of more robust, modern, and secure document, mail and video conferencing solutions.
16. Adopt the OGCIO's Build to Share programme and work towards the integration of eDocs and other solutions to aid document collaboration and process streamlining within the Courts Service.
17. Replace Citrix Virtualisation software and thin client workstations with PCs/laptops.
18. Roll-out a tested desktop configuration to ensure Courts Service staff have access to equipment and ergonomic best practices.
19. Introduce an enterprise ready Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution to ensure the ability to remotely manage and wipe devices, and support ICT users.
20. Introduce improvements to the judicial desktop including modern email and collaboration tooling.
21. Establish a judicial ICT training programme to support judicial staff and establish an ICT support channel for aftercare of issues experienced.
22. Complete an assessment of the current operating system and application-level software versions and upgrade or retire unsupported versions where possible.
23. Review and refresh our corporate support systems in line with demand and organisational priorities.
24. Implement and enable "Infrastructure as Code" to modernise infrastructure provisioning and management, and reduce the requirement for manual tasks.
25. Review the current service catalogue and assess where the use of cloud technologies could be used to increase the security and agility of the organisation.

4.4 Security and Resilience

26. Continued development of a Cyber Security Incident Response Plan (CSIRP) in line with public sector best practices to ensure issues are detected and responded to in the event of a breach.
27. Implement a cybersecurity governance model which incorporates risk-focussed decision making to provide strategic direction of security initiatives.
28. Complete an ISO27001 fit-gap analysis and Cyber Security Simulation to identify and inform governance and technical improvements.
29. Rationalisation and implementation of single Identity and Access Management (IAM).
30. Investigate advancements in security tooling in areas such as Threat Intelligence (TI) and Vulnerability Management (VM).
31. Implementation of vulnerability detection and threat detection capabilities to help identify and neutralise a vulnerability before systems are exposed to bad actors.
32. Adoption of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) platform.
33. Aligning with the Business Continuity Programme, carry out a Disaster Recovery assessment and put in place an appropriate remedial programme of work to improve our BCP and DR posture.
34. Develop and issue a user security awareness programme to raise awareness of the responsibilities around securing networks, devices, and information.

4.5 Capacity, Capability and Governance

- 35. Structure the ICT Directorate to align with business needs.
- 36. Introduce modern agile ways of working to transform ICT into a first-class citizen of the business.
- 37. Meet capacity needs through blended, multi-disciplinary teams, and uplift capability of ICT staff through a series of learning initiatives.
- 38. Work with Learning and Development to uplift the capability of the organisation to get the most out of current and new technology.
- 39. Refine the vendor management strategy to support internal capability and delivery through blended teams.
- 40. Define, implement and roll out a unified governance framework to support transformation.
- 41. Mature change, support and learning services, in partnership with Change Programme Office (CPO) and Learning & Development (L&D).

4.6 Data as an Enabler

- 42. Publish a 3-year Data Strategy.



