



Data Strategy

2021 - 2024



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

CONTENTS

- Glossary of terms** **4**
- Foreword** **5**
- Executive Summary** **6**
- 1. Data Strategy Vision** **7**
 - Strategic Objectives 8
 - Strategic Approach 9
 - Benefits 14
- 2. Data Strategy Themes** **15**
 - Overview 16
 - 2.1 Governance 16
 - Key Initiative 1: Data governance committee 16
 - Key Initiative 2: Data maturity assessments 17
 - Key Initiative 3: Data quality framework 18
 - Key Initiative 4: Business Intelligence Service 20
 - Key Initiative 5: Data architecture 21
 - 2.2 Use of Data 25
 - Key Initiative 6: Data cataloguing 25
 - Key Initiative 7: Trusted common identifiers 26
 - Key Initiative 8: Courts Service Open Data Portal 26
 - Key Initiative 9: Data access & search capability 27
 - 2.3 Improved Processes 29
 - Key Initiative 10: Change and capability programme 29
 - Key Initiative 11: Records management policy 30
 - Key Initiative 12: Data privacy and security 31
 - Key Initiative 13: Data sharing 32
 - 2.4 Technology 34
 - Key Initiative 14: Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) for case data 34
 - Key Initiative 15: Electronic Document and Records Management System for organisation data 35
 - Key Initiative 16: Access to business intelligence tooling to support interrogation of available data sets 36
- 3. Actions Summary** **38**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

API	(Application Programming Interface) is a software intermediary that allows two computers or applications to talk to each other.
API gateway	allows the use of APIs to be coordinated and orchestrated to provide a smooth experience to the user.
CMS	(Case Management System) is designed to support a complex process that requires both manual steps and electronic workflow.
Data lake	a central location that holds a large amount of data in its native, raw format and serves as a data analytics repository.
Data lineage	the pathway along which data moves from its point of origin to its point of usage.
DAMA	Data Management Association
ETL	(Extract Transform Load) is a data integration process that allows data to be gathered from multiple sources and consolidated into a single, centralised location.
FTP	(File Transfer Protocol) is a standard communication protocol used for the transfer of computer files from one system to another over the internet.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
Message broker	is a piece of software that acts as an intermediary and enables applications to communicate with each other using messages that are translated from the formal messaging protocol of the sender to that of the receiver.
Metadata	is data that describes other data (e.g. file size, author), but not the content of the data itself. It makes it easier to find and work with data.
Privacy by design	is a requirement of GDPR and holds that organisations must consider privacy at the earliest stage of design of new processes, services or products that involve processing personal data.
PSB	Public Service Bodies
Unified data model	brings together data from different sources (e.g. case management systems) in one place so that an organisation's data is available to support integrated business processes and for analyses and making decisions.

FOREWORD

“This Data Strategy, the first of its kind for the Courts Service, sets out a clear set of actions that will bring a coherent focus to our efforts to improve the organisation’s capacity to manage and appropriately use the data it processes.”



The Courts Service Data Strategy follows on from the recently published Courts Service ICT Strategy (2021-24) and is an important building block in supporting the delivery of those initiatives as well as the wider ambitions of our Modernisation Programme.

Reliance on data, whether in physical paper form or digital, has always played a central role in Courts Service operations. As we implement our Modernisation Programme our use of data in digital form will grow significantly, and if managed correctly will provide us with much improved data driven insights, and more opportunities to streamline our operational processes. We recognise the pivotal role data plays in enabling the Courts Service to support the administration of justice and contribute to increased levels of transparency across the justice sector. As for any organisation, improving our data management capability is an ongoing journey that requires sustained investment.

This Data Strategy, the first of its kind for the Courts Service, sets out a clear set of actions that will bring a coherent focus to our efforts to improve the organisation’s capacity to manage and appropriately use the data it processes. Completion of these actions will result in strengthened data governance and data security as well as make progress towards the building of a modern, joined-up data ecosystem incorporating technology solutions that meet the needs of a modern Court system. Continued collaboration between Courts Service ICT and business units will deliver improved data processes that support user centric services, make quality data more readily available for appropriate use internally, across our justice sector partners as well as the wider public.

Angela Denning

Chief Executive Officer, The Courts Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The availability of reliable, consistent high-quality data within the Courts Service is essential to facilitate efficient operational processes and strategic decision making in support of the administration of justice in Ireland. We are committed to delivering an ambitious Courts Service Modernisation Programme that will result in a significant overhaul of the existing ICT infrastructure and redesign of services around the needs of Court users. Data will be a critical enabler in facilitating the successful delivery of the Modernisation Programme.

The aim of this Courts Service Data Strategy is to outline a series of initiatives that will enhance the Courts Service's capacity to manage and appropriately use data generated from its activities. The initiatives are grouped under four data themes: governance, use of data, improved processes and technology. A total of 23 actions, listed in Section 3, were identified to support the necessary changes required to improve the data management maturity level across the Courts Service during the three-year term (Q4 2021 – Q3 2024) of the Data Strategy.

In advance of the development of this Data Strategy, we undertook a data maturity assessment across the Courts Service. The assessment established a baseline of the current state of data management capabilities and aided in the prioritisation of future improvement initiatives. Overall, the assessment found a relatively low level of data management maturity.

In summary, the initiatives will drive a series of improvements across all areas of the business. These include: strengthening of existing data governance and data security processes; promoting partnership across digital and business teams; expanding the range of policies supporting the management of data; improving access and promoting the use of high quality data to support the streamlining of processes; increase the availability of reliable data to support enhanced data analytics capabilities internally and externally via data sharing agreements as well as open data initiatives. The successful delivery of these data initiatives will provide a solid platform to support the realisation of the Modernisation Programme's vision.

1. DATA STRATEGY VISION

DATA STRATEGY VISION

Strategic Objectives

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. The 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, replacing at risk ICT infrastructure, and ultimately delivering an internationally recognised modern Court system.

The Courts Service is an organisation that processes significant data and relies on its correct management for process streamlining and decision making. The availability and use of high-quality data is a fundamental underpinning of many of the pillars addressed by the 2030 Vision. In recognition of the importance of data to the organisation we are publishing this Data Strategy, a first for the Courts Service.

This three-year Courts Service Data Strategy targets four major focus areas to enhance our management of data: governance, use of data, improved processes and technology.

The goals of this Data Strategy, outlined in greater detail below, include:

- Gaining a clear **understanding of our data** across its entire lifecycle, from collection through to disposal or archival.
- **Strengthening existing data governance and data security processes**, including the adoption of a data quality framework to support ongoing measurement and improvement initiatives.
- Expanding the range of **policies supporting the management of data** (e.g. records management, data quality and data retention).
- **Improving access and promoting the use of quality data** for operational and strategic purposes, including the use of personalised data dashboards.
- **Migrate the collection and processing of data from paper to digital channels**, such as through the development of a digital jury management system.
- Review and enhance processes, data availability and technologies to support appropriate **data sharing** with authorised bodies and other third parties.
- **Focus on improving data quality and process streamlining** via an increase in digital data sharing.

- Promote **partnering across digital and business teams** to ensure a robust and flexible data model is created within a joined-up data architecture that meets the requirements of business users. Governance practices will support the work required to bring the necessary organisational focus on data and architectural alignment.
- Supporting **open data** initiatives. This includes maintaining published data catalogues which will be of benefit to internal and external users.
- Provision of **enhanced data analytics capabilities** to support better analysis and decision-making capability.

The development of this Data Strategy is aligned with the Modernisation Programme, ICT Strategy (2021-24) and strategic priorities of the Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy which includes an emphasis on the promotion of a digital first experience and evidence-informed policy and service.

The Data Strategy will support the Courts Service in our efforts to increase levels of maturity in the management and use of data across the Courts Service.

Strategic Approach

We recognise that the first step in improving the management of data is to establish an understanding of existing data management processes and procedures. A **data maturity framework** provides a structured approach for an organisation to assess their data management capability in a range of different data areas against pre-defined levels of maturity.

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) published the Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023 that included an action to define and publish a data maturity framework for Public Service Bodies (PSBs). Following an OGCIO evaluation, DAMA Data Management Book of Knowledge 2.0 (DAMA-DMBoK) is the recommended framework for use in conducting a data maturity self-assessment. The Courts Service utilised this framework to conduct an internal baseline data maturity assessment in early 2021 with colleagues from across all areas of the organisation to assess the capacity to manage and appropriately use data generated and collected through our activities. This included all forms of data - structured, unstructured, digital and paper.

As part of our DAMA-DMBoK maturity assessment, we evaluated the **11 knowledge areas** outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Knowledge Areas assessed as part of Maturity Assessment

Knowledge Area	Description
1. Data Governance	Guides all other data management functions. It takes a holistic view and ensures data is managed properly, according to the organisations' policies and best practices.
2. Document & Content Management	Planning, implementation, and control of activities used to manage the lifecycle of data and information found across the organisation outside of databases and other unstructured data locations.
3. Data Security	Ensures that data privacy and confidentiality are maintained, that data is not breached, and that data is accessed appropriately.
4. Data Quality	Planning and implementation of quality management techniques to measure, assess, and improve the fitness of data for use within the organisation.
5. Data Integration & Interoperability	Processes related to the availability, sharing, movement and consolidation of data between data stores, applications and organisations.
6. Data Storage & Operations	Design, implementation and support of stored data to maximise value. It considers the data lifecycle including how it is accessed, stored and disposed of.
7. Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Planning, implementation, and control processes to store data and provide analysis and reports to help drive actionable insights.
8. Data Architecture	Defines the blueprint for managing data assets in order to align with the organisation's strategy. It considers both business and technical requirements.
9. Reference & Master Data	Managing core critical shared data to reduce redundancy and ensure better data quality through standardised definition and use of data values.
10. Data Modelling & Design	An abstract model that organises elements of data and standardises relationships.
11. Metadata	Planning, implementation, and control activities to enable access to a short explanation or summary of what the data is (e.g. definitions, glossaries) and the systems through which it is created, maintained, and accessed.

DAMA-DMBoK defines 5 maturity levels against which an organisation can evaluate its data management capabilities, which are outlined in Table 2.

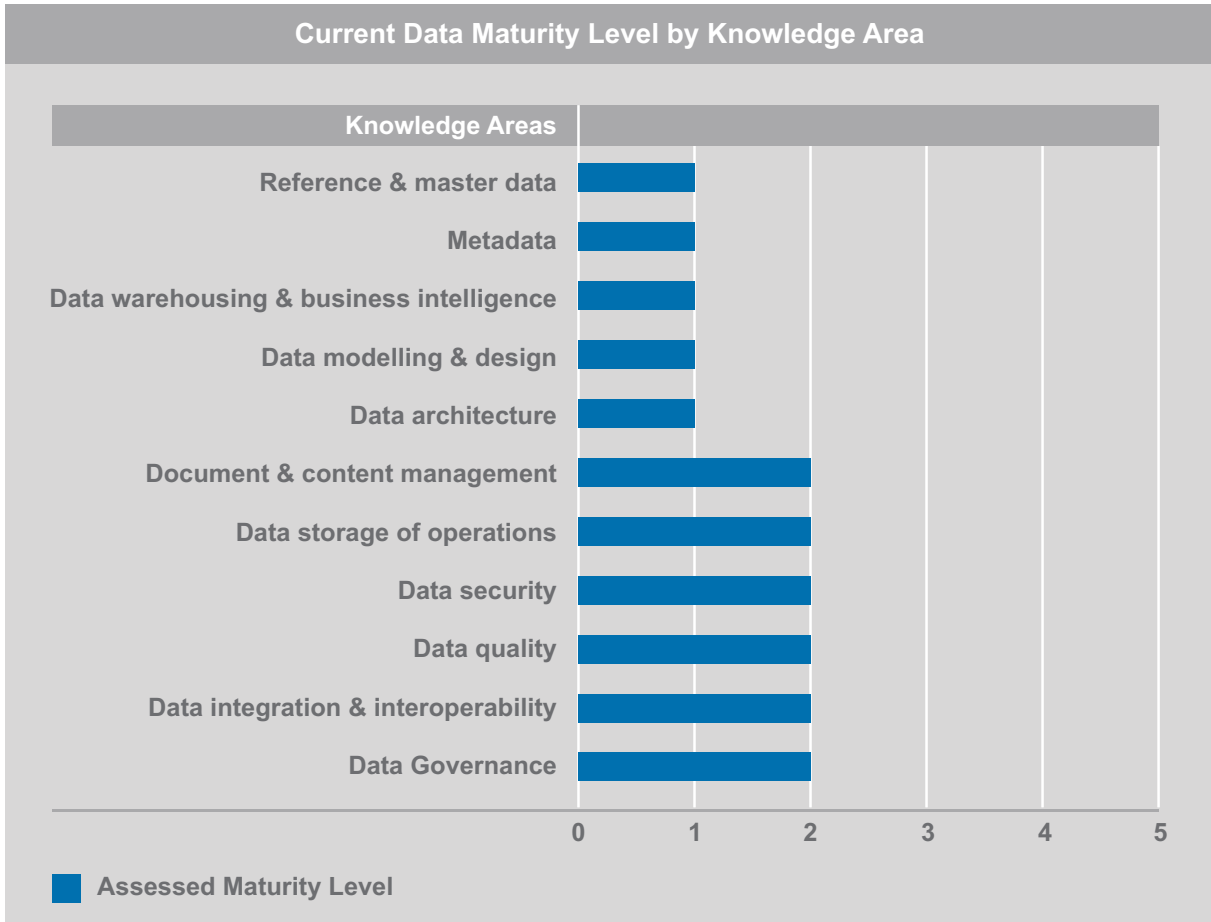
Table 2: Data Maturity Levels

Maturity Level	Description
1. Initial/ad-hoc	Processes are reactive with absence of data ownership or accountability
2. Repeatable	Some processes and roles are defined with the consistency starting to emerge in terms of tools and knowledge
3. Defined	Emerging data management capability with the centralised definition of processes and coordination of data policy
4. Managed	Recommended tools and processes are being used consistently. Processes are documented and controlled
5. Optimised	Focus is on continuous improvement as data processes are highly consistent and predictable

The findings of the data maturity assessment pointed to a relatively low level of data capability maturity, reflecting the reliance on paper-based data and inconsistent ways of working with data. Encouragingly, the assessment identified areas within the Courts Service where significant progress is being made in the elimination of paper-based data and improved levels of data use and systems training. Table 3 on the following page reflects the baseline maturity level of the Courts Service across the DAMA-DMBoK knowledge areas.



Table 3: Current Data Maturity Level by Knowledge Area



In addition to the data maturity assessment by knowledge area, the report findings highlighted a series of specific issues that needed to be addressed. The findings also informed the actions and strategic direction of this strategy.

As part of the development of this Data Strategy we engaged in a consultation process that involved senior data stakeholders from across the Courts Service as well as representatives from the judiciary and other justice sector partners. These included the Bar of Ireland, Law Society of Ireland, Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Probation Service, Insolvency Service of Ireland, Irish Prison Service, Legal Aid Board and National Archives of Ireland. We are grateful for the submissions received.

This strategy is informed by a number of initiatives and inputs, including:

- Courts Service Long Term Strategic Vision 2030
- Courts Service Strategy Plan 2021 - 2023
- Courts Service ICT Strategy 2021 - 2024
- Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy – “Building on our Strengths”
- Public Service Data Strategy 2019 - 2023
- Public Service ICT Strategy 2015
- Open Data Strategy 2017- 2022
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019
- OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data*, OECD/LEGAL/0463
- Alignment with data governance and data policy activities carried out by the European Commission such as improving availability and quality of data assets.
- The data legislative landscape, such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act, Freedom Of Information (FOI) Act and the National Archives Act.

Benefits

Whether in physical or digital form, data permeates across all areas of Courts Service operations. The publication of this Courts Service Data Strategy recognises our desire to communicate the central role data continues to play in supporting both current operations and the strategic objectives of our Modernisation Programme. We have sought to provide a Data Strategy that is accessible to as wide a readership as possible.

The high-level objective of this Data Strategy is to give a coherence to how we incrementally and continuously improve the management of the data we process over the coming years. Improvements in data management however are a means to an end, and said end is to accrue benefits to the recipients and users of the Courts Service services, be they litigants, the judiciary, legal practitioners or other arms of the justice sector. Along with the incremental nature of increasing an organisation's data management maturity, these benefits will emerge over time and are expected to include:

- Increased coverage, accuracy and consistency of data available for producing timely and **quality business insights** in support of operational and strategic decision making.
- An increase in **transparency** by way of convenient and appropriate access to case information for case parties, and also an increase in broader organisational transparency through the systematic and periodic publication of operational data for public consumption.
- Improved **regulatory compliance** and protection of people's rights, such as data protection.
- A **faster and simpler justice system** through an increased ability to automate or partially automate routine processes – both internal processes, and processes that span across external stakeholders.
- Operational efficiencies gained from **process streamlining within our justice sector partners** as greater levels of quality digital data become available from the Courts Service.

2. DATA STRATEGY THEMES

DATA STRATEGY THEMES

Overview

The following four themes have been identified to structure the areas of focus within this data strategy: governance, use of data, improved processes and technology. Each theme is outlined in a sub-section below, along with the key initiatives and actions associated with it.

The **governance** theme recognises its importance in providing guidance, assurance and support in advancing data management capabilities across the Courts Service. The **use of data** theme concentrates on how we will advance the use of the data available to help further develop services. The **improved processes** theme outlines where new or improved data processes can support the delivery of user centric services, enable the Courts Service to produce greater insights and increase the overall level of operational efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, the **technology** theme outlines the data-related areas where technology will enable increased levels of data maturity across the Courts Service.

2.1 Governance

Data governance and data policies aim to provide guidance, assurance and support that will aid the Courts Service in its move to a more data-driven organisation. It defines clear roles and responsibilities and introduces common principles and working practices that support coordinated data management across the organisation. This will improve traceability, accessibility and preservation of data across the Courts Service and make the evidence underpinning our decision-making more transparent.

This section outlines how the Courts Service will advance its data governance capabilities to oversee the use of data to support the delivery of the Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023 and 2030 Vision.

Key Initiative 1: Data governance committee

The Courts Service will establish a Data Governance Committee (DGC) with a mandate to advise, monitor and provide oversight of the Courts Service's data management and information security matters. It will provide direction and assist in prioritisation of data and security related initiatives, including current remediation activities. The DGC will help guide the Courts Service as it seeks to incrementally develop a set of data policies, practices and systems that will support its aim to be a more data-driven and secure organisation.

The benefits of clarified organisation wide data governance include:

- Improved, shared understanding amongst our senior data stakeholders of how the Courts Service collects, processes, shares, deletes and retains data that is critical to delivering, reporting, and accounting for the Courts Service's activities.
- Identification of opportunities and initiatives that will lead to improved data management and information security capabilities in order to provide secure access to trusted, consistent and high-quality data that can be relied upon to streamline operations and make better informed decisions.
- Cross-organisation input into the implementation and prioritisation of key data and information security initiatives that will lead to improvements in our data maturity levels.



ACTION

1. Establish a Data Governance Committee with oversight of the Courts Service's data management and information security matters.

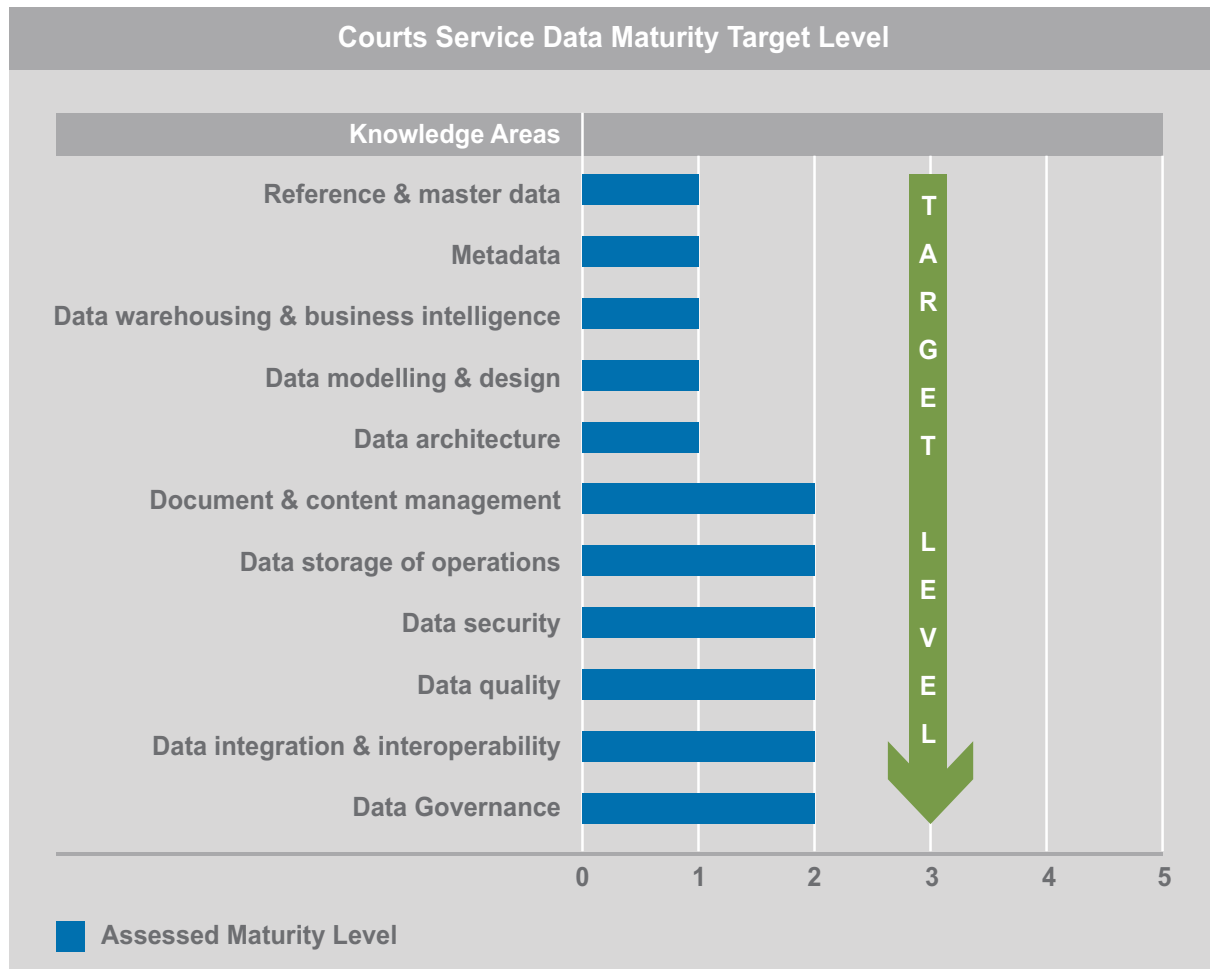
Key Initiative 2: Data maturity assessments

As noted earlier, undertaking a **data maturity assessment** provides an opportunity for an organisation to understand its level of capability to manage and appropriately use data. In line with OGCIO advice¹, we used the DAMA-DMBoK framework to generate a baseline assessment for the Courts Service. Its findings helped identify priority areas to be addressed in this Data Strategy.

Over the duration of this Data Strategy, we will implement a series of initiatives to reach a maturity level of three across each of the DMBoK knowledge areas. To assess progress made in the implementation of the key initiatives over the lifetime of this three-year Data Strategy, we will conduct a further assessment during the term of this Data Strategy.

¹ <https://ogcio.gov.ie/publications/data-maturity-assessment/#>

Table 4: Data Maturity Target Level by Knowledge Area



ACTION

2. Assess progress made in improving data management processes to a target level of three by conducting a further data maturity assessment during the term of this Data Strategy.

Key Initiative 3: Data quality framework

A **data quality framework** will deliver a comprehensive set of components to support our ambition for the Courts Service to improve the level of data quality across the organisation and enable data driven decision making. The framework will consist of the following:

- Development of a **data quality management process** to ensure a consistent and repeatable end-to-end process is applied to improving data quality across critical business processes. The process will set out how the Courts Service will:
 - Define critical data elements of business processes
 - Assess the quality of critical data elements, including a current and desired data quality level assessment
 - Manage data defects
 - Monitor data quality

The output will provide a clear process flow that supports both data quality and data exchange initiatives.

- Identification of **data quality tools** that enables a comprehensive assessment of data sources across six dimensions of data quality – completeness, validity, accuracy, timeliness, uniqueness and consistency.
- Establishment of a **data and metric dictionary** to centrally capture business and/or technical terms and key organisational metrics to promote the use of a common language across the organisation (e.g. building a shared understanding of case waiting times). An agreed understanding of terms is particularly important when data is shared.
- A **gap assessment** of each entry in the data and metric dictionary will indicate the current level of data availability and quality, as well as identifying any required improvement initiatives. For the Courts Service, this will initially include an assessment of the ability to automate production of the Annual Report data and metrics.
- A suite of **reports** (including error threshold levels) will support the tracking and prioritisation of initiatives identified as part of the gap assessment and data quality metrics. The reports will provide summary dashboard views as well as an ability to drill-down to a detail level. Finally, the framework will establish an agreed **process to prioritise** a set of data quality initiatives highlighted by the gap assessment



ACTIONS

3. Develop and roll-out a data quality framework.
4. Conduct a gap assessment of the data and metric dictionary to identify the required improvement initiatives.

Key Initiative 4: Business Intelligence Service

Like many other PSBs, the Courts Service continues to see an increased demand for high quality data to support evidence-informed policy development and service delivery based on insight-driven decision making. Requests for data are received from a wide variety of stakeholders and can vary from routine to more complex in nature, with peaks of demand often difficult to anticipate.

To satisfy the increased data demand, we are adapting the structure of our ICT Directorate, which includes the appointment of a Head of Data, along with increased staffing and external support for the Data Unit. As part of this, we will establish a **business intelligence service** to centrally manage the data insights demand in an efficient and effective manner. The service will become the primary point of contact for business intelligence from outside the organisation, working with the relevant internal business areas to respond appropriately. In line with this, the service will be responsible for leading on the production of open data thereby satisfying by default requests for quality and reliable data both from public service bodies and the public alike.

This service will, over time, become the trusted and primary point of contact for requesting the definitive view on data generated insights. It will accumulate an understanding of the demand for data within the organisation and be able to build upon previous requests for data driven insights. The service will work to ensure a consistency of reporting and serve as a central source of corporate knowledge for historical insights produced over time. The Business Intelligence Service will also be responsible for conducting the gap assessment outlined as part of the data quality framework initiative



ACTION

5. Establish a Business Intelligence service to centrally manage data demand.



Key Initiative 5: Data architecture

Data architecture translates business needs into data and system requirements and seeks to manage data and its flow through the organisation. The Courts Service recognises its value in describing how data should be organised and managed.

The Courts Service's Modernisation Programme is far reaching and will radically overhaul our existing technology and operations landscape. Successfully migrating data from existing legacy systems to new applications and platforms will be a critical factor in the overall success of the programme. Underpinning this there is a need to develop a coherent data architecture that supports the needs of the criminal, civil and family Courts systems landscape. This will include a **unified data model** for case data, a **data exchange architecture** for data sharing, and a **data analytics repository** (data lake) to support business intelligence.

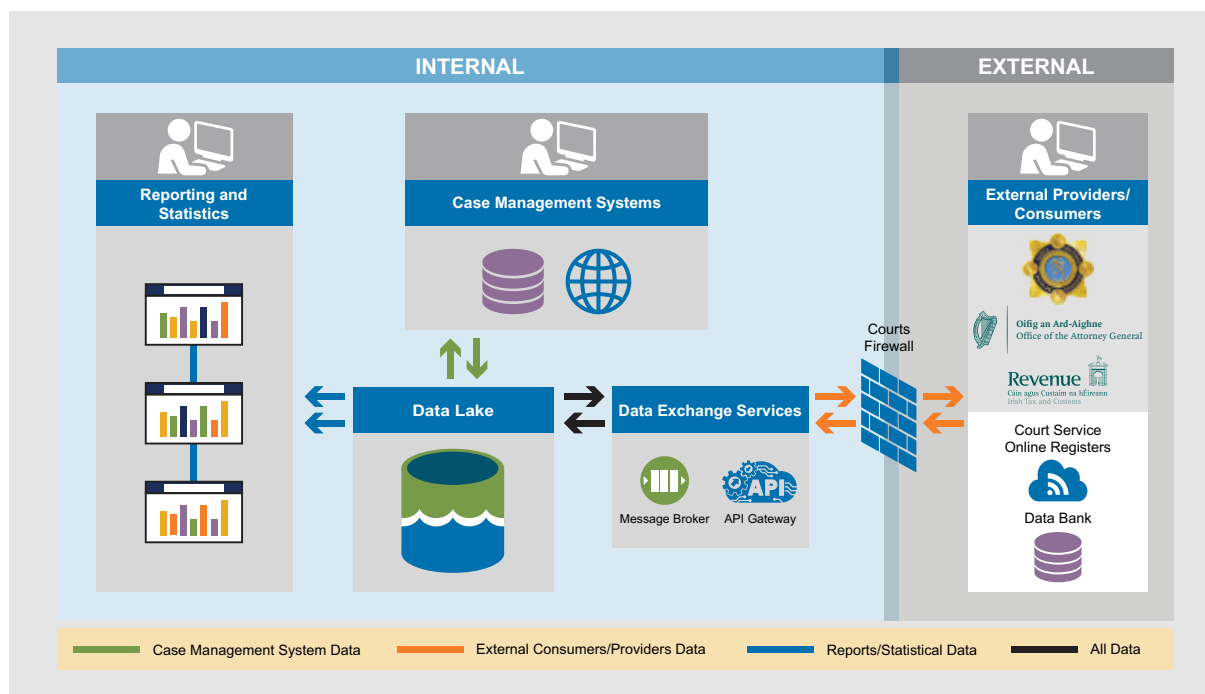
A primary benefit of a unified data model is the elimination of fragmented data sets, which makes it possible for deep process integration and efficiencies, and for decisions to be made based on analyses that considers all relevant data points across the organisation. It will also ease the complexity associated with data storage and help futureproof analysis and reporting needs.

As the Modernisation Programme progresses, we will adopt an agile approach to run a series of iterative proof of concepts to validate, assess and address the likely challenges involved in developing a coherent data model. The findings will also inform the planning of the data migration strategy.

A core component of the architecture is a data lake that provides a centralised repository that allows the storage of structured and unstructured data at any scale. Data is stored as-is, without having to first structure the data, and can be used for tasks such as self-service reporting, visualisation and advanced analytics, and potentially machine learning. Furthermore, the data lake will act as the staging area for the standardised data exchange route and validation point for case related external data sharing, both from and to the organisation.

The diagram below outlines the Court Service's high level target state vision for data architecture that will be progressively developed in-line with the Modernisation Programme priorities and timelines.

Figure 1: Courts Service target state data architecture



The target state architecture will, over time, capture all data from the Case Management System(s) in the data lake. The data lake will perform multiple roles:

a) Store the data for operational reports and aggregate data for statistical reporting and Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards

Data from the Case Management Systems (CMS) will be loaded into the data lake using an Extract Transform Load (ETL) tool. The raw data from CMS will be the source for the operational reports, with additional transformations run on the data to prepare it to produce statistics and dashboards.

b) Support the exchange of data with external parties

The Courts Service has an operational need to both send and receive a variety of data with our justice sector parties and other third parties. The data exchange architecture supports the merging of external data into our data model and/or sharing with external parties as required. As part of the processes supporting the data exchange architecture, the Courts Service’s technical teams will work with the relevant business areas to verify that data is of the requisite quality prior to its use within the data exchange architecture.

The data exchange architecture will support the following processes:

i. **Store, validate and prepare data received from external sources to be consumed by the CMS.**

All digital data received will be first inserted into the data lake and will include processes to validate the data prior to its transmission to the CMS via an Application Programming Interfaces (API) or ETL process. The validation will cover the data format, integrity, as well as checking for anomalies in the data transfer process itself. For example, threshold levels will be set for the expected amount of incoming records and alerts will issue where this threshold is not met. The data lake will act like a “staging area” for the CMS which will remove the need for any processing load on the live system required to validate and transform any data received.

ii. **Aggregate and prepare the data to be consumed by third parties**

Multiple external agencies such as An Garda Síochána, Irish Prison Service and Probation Services require data from the Courts Service. Each agency requires a different data set in a different format. The processes required to select the right data and make it available for external agencies will run on the data lake.

iii. **Aggregate and prepare data for Open Data initiatives and online Court registers**


One of the initiatives of this Data Strategy is to publish data that is of interest to the likes of the Central Statistics Office and broader civil society. The data lake will be used to aggregate and prepare data for publishing via a Courts Service open data portal and, as demand and resources permit, will also be made available for ingesting via public facing APIs.

c) **Online Court registers**

The data lake offers more reliable and responsive performance compared to that of individual CMS databases and will support online search services, e.g. family law and High Court searches. It also provides a more responsive business performance for CMS operational users.

The data architecture will be supported by a revised organisation governance structure that includes the establishment of a **Technical Architecture Design Authority (TADA)** responsible for reviewing key data architectural choices to ensure the adoption of a coherent, consistent and fit-for-purpose IT application and technical infrastructure environment. A dedicated data specialist will be assigned to ensure full consideration is given to the data implications required to take advantage of business and technical opportunities addressed by the Modernisation Programme.










It is also planned to further develop **data architecture artefacts** that include design specifications that describe the current state, define data requirements as well as guiding data integration and data sharing initiatives.



ACTIONS

6. Develop and mature a coherent data architecture including a unified data model, a data exchange architecture and a data lake.
7. Establish a Technical Architecture Design Authority (TADA) to review key architectural choices to ensure proposed developments adopt a coherent, consistent and joined up data architecture.

DAMA knowledge areas addressed by the *governance* strategic theme:

Strategic Themes	Knowledge Areas								
	Data Governance	Document & Content Management	Data Security	Data Quality	Data Integration & Interoperability	Data Storage & Operations	Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Data Architecture	Data Modelling & Design, Metadata, Reference & Master Data
Governance									



2.2 Use of Data

This section considers how the Courts Service advances its use of the data available to help further develop services.

Key Initiative 6: Data cataloguing

Achieving an increased and improved use of data across the Courts Service requires data that is available to the right people at the right time and place. An important foundation layer to enable this is the availability of a comprehensive **data catalogue** which is an organised inventory of data assets in the organisation. It sets out the metadata of the data stores across the organisation, be they in physical or digital form. The Courts Service recently commenced the development of a data catalogue that will be fully operationalised during the early term of this Data Strategy.

A comprehensive data catalogue ensures not only a central location to identify data assets but also provides some information on data lineage. This increases data governance and compliance with the myriad of regulations and information requests that the Court Service is subject to. It also supports data owners in their efforts to monitor the data, enable cross-department collaboration and sharing, as well as increase visibility and usability. Additionally, a data catalogue allows for physical and digital data to be reviewed. This overarching view of the data landscape will help identify pain points and prioritise reform and remedial actions.

The data catalogue will incorporate existing GDPR records of processing activities to provide a single source of truth for personal data holdings. To extract maximum value from this activity, we will continue to **promote and embed the use of the data catalogue** into operational processes so that there is both awareness of its existence and it is kept up to date.

We are fully supportive of the Public Sector Data Strategy principle that seeks to make data more easily discoverable by citizens, businesses and the Public Service. This is supported by the Public Service Data Catalogue² which is designed to help people find and understand what data the public service holds, why it holds that data and what it is used for. The Courts Service will continue to actively contribute to the catalogue and maintain metadata describing our key data holdings.



ACTIONS

8. Develop and operationalise a data catalogue for Courts Service data holdings.
9. Actively maintain the Court Service data holdings on the Public Service Data Catalogue.

² <https://datacatalogue.gov.ie>

Key Initiative 7: Trusted common identifiers

The **use of trusted common identifiers** presents a potential opportunity to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Courts Service’s operational processes.

We will examine opportunities including identifying any associated legislative constraints, in the use of trusted common identifiers to improve services offered to our customers. For example, MyGovID verifies an individual’s ‘real world’ identity and provides a single secure online identity which can be used to access a range of government services. MyGovID potentially offers a means for individuals without legal representation to have their identity efficiently authenticated in order to engage with an online portal that supports the management of their legal proceedings.

The Courts Service believes significant benefits may also result from the implementation of common identifiers across the wider justice sector. Courts data is a vital component in building up a whole of sector picture and understanding of user journeys. We will actively support and contribute to initiatives that policy makers and other justice sector partners bring forward to advance this agenda.



ACTION

10. Examine opportunities where trusted common identifiers may be used to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes, and the level of data insights available.

Key Initiative 8: Courts Service Open Data Portal

The Courts Service supports a diverse set of data and reporting requests from the judiciary, Court users, staff and partners across the justice system as well as wider government, European and international agencies. To address this ongoing need, we will establish a **data bank** that will provide access to pre-validated high priority Courts Service datasets and reports. We will establish a Courts Service open data portal. This will allow any users, including members of the public, to access the data on a self-service basis via a secure online portal. The range of datasets made available via the data bank will be incrementally increased over time, with the data refreshed periodically to ensure it remains current. Subject to demand and available resourcing, the Courts Service open data portal will support the availability of data via API and .CSV formats.

In the spirit of openness and transparency promoted by **open data** initiatives, we will utilise our data catalogue and improved governance processes to identify potential datasets to be linked to the government’s Open Data Portal³. This will be done in

³ <https://data.gov.ie/>

accordance with the relevant legislation while adhering to data privacy, security policies and standards.

The Courts Service commits to publishing open data that is aligned with the Open Data Portal recommended licensing standard (currently the Creative Commons Attribution CC-BY licence). This licence permits others to distribute and build upon data, provided they credit the originator for the original creation. In addition, we will publish data in a format that is readily useable (e.g. CSV, XML) and meets at least a three-star standard as set out by the Open Data Initiative.



ACTIONS

11. Establish a Courts Service Open Data Portal that provides access to a data bank of pre-validated high priority datasets.
12. Identify potential datasets that can be published on the Courts Service Open Data Portal.

Key Initiative 9: Data access & search capability

The Courts Service recently adopted a data lake strategy (as outlined in key initiative 5 - data architecture), to support data extraction and migration activities from our legacy applications. The process involves the importing of disparate application data into the data lake instance. This simplifies the process for authorised users to readily **access and conduct analysis and produce reports** based on data from disparate applications. This in turn will help reduce bottlenecks in analysis and ensures that insights from data are shareable across the Courts Service.

We will continue to expand the number of application datasets and standardised reports available from the data lake. Additionally, as part of our planned data sharing activity (key initiative 13), we will also encourage machine-to-machine interoperability by providing API access to validated data sets.



ACTIONS

13. Expand the number of application datasets and standardised reports available from the data lake.
14. Develop and execute a communications strategy to raise awareness of the data lake and support its adoption.

DAMA knowledge areas addressed by the use of data strategic theme:

Strategic Themes	Knowledge Areas								
	Use of Data	Data Governance	Document & Content Management	Data Security	Data Quality	Data Integration & Interoperability	Data Storage & Operations	Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Data Architecture



2.3 Improved Processes

This section outlines where new or improved data processes can support the delivery of user centric services, enable the Courts Service to produce greater insights and increase the overall level of operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Initiative 10: Change and capability programme

A highly skilled and engaged staff is critical to unlocking business value from data. The roll-out of the Modernisation Programme will result in a move towards operations that are increasingly digitally enabled. In partnership with our Change Programme Office (CPO) and Learning & Development Unit, we will continue to invest in the development of our peoples' capability to take advantage of data related opportunities.

We will leverage the findings from the planned organisational capability assessment to establish initiatives that support staff with any required changes to ensure they are appropriately skilled to take advantage of the opportunities offered by data and related technology to aid them in their roles. The following activities, led by the ICT Directorate, will support this initiative:

- Work with the planned people and organisation strategy initiative to conduct a **technology and training needs assessment** for Courts Service staff
- Develop **communications and training plans** tailored to the needs of the different business and technical users through the workforce of the future pillar of the people and organisation strategy.
- Identify **knowledge sharing events** to showcase successful initiatives from across the Courts Service and periodically using external speakers at appropriate fora e.g. regional events, Senior Management Team meetings, business user groups, TADA.



ACTION

15. ICT Directorate to work in partnership with CPO and Learning & Development Unit to identify and deliver data related training initiatives.

Key Initiative 11: Records management policy

Good data management practices require that careful consideration is given to each stage of the data lifecycle. The diagram below illustrates the seven stages of the end-to-end data lifecycle, with data protection and security considered across all stages.

Figure 2: Data Lifecycle



To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of current data processes, we will implement an organisation wide **records management policy**, including a data retention schedule. This will bring consistency as to how we deal with our physical and digital records, as well as support business continuity requirements. It also gives added assurance in relation to our ability to respond to FOI, Data Protection and other legal obligations.

As part of its ongoing operations, the Courts Service produces a substantial amount of paper and digital records. At the end of their data lifecycle, the archiving or destruction processes for all data should be defined and implemented consistently across the organisation. We will work with the judiciary and the National Archives of Ireland to agree and operationalise an organisation wide data retention process for Courts Service data.



ACTIONS

16. Define and implement an organisation wide records management policy, including a data retention schedule.
17. Continued engagement with the National Archives of Ireland to operationalise a robust archival system for appropriate records.

Key Initiative 12: Data privacy and security

High profile data breaches both in Ireland and internationally demonstrate the continuing critical need for a robust data security ecosystem to be in place to protect and restrict data access to authorised users only.

The Modernisation Programme currently underway will result in a replacement of core legacy systems and a fundamental redesign of our existing processes. A **privacy-by-design mindset** informs the work of the programme. It will also feed into the planned records management policy. We will continue to review and develop our set of policies, standards and processes that support data privacy and security.

As outlined in the Courts Service ICT strategy, considerable investment continues to be made in data security solutions and processes to protect physical and digital data assets. These include network, threat detection and protection system upgrades, all complemented by an enhanced Security Information and Event Management capability that will monitor our networks' and systems' data automatically and continuously for signs of cyber-attack activities, thus improving our ability to keep our data secure.

As part of these welcome initiatives, it is essential that awareness of data security remains a top priority. We will partner with our Learning & Development Unit in the roll-out a series of user **security awareness programmes** to ensure data security and prevention of any data loss remains at the core of our operations.



ACTION

18. Continue to review, develop and raise awareness of policies, standards and processes that support data privacy and security.



Key Initiative 13: Data sharing

The Courts Service handles many requests for the regular exchange of data sets with external parties as well as relying on receiving data for our own operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The current configuration of systems and operational processes result in data exchange queries being satisfied and delivered through a variety of means, including via FTP and email. As outlined earlier in the data architecture section (key initiative 5), the target architecture will deliver a standardised data exchange architecture. The Courts Service will move to a default position where requests for the **regular exchange of data with PSBs and approved third parties is via APIs and message broker infrastructure** that enables applications and systems to communicate with each other and exchange information. The main benefit of an API is that it allows the sharing of information between applications in a structured and documented way. The use of APIs to share data also results in improved controls, access permissions and accountability in relation to data sharing. As the number of APIs in use grows, we will begin the use of an API gateway which will allow us to coordinate and orchestrate the use of APIs in order to offer a smooth experience to the user.

To support a consistent data sharing process, a standard set of data sharing artefacts will be maintained. This will include a central register of all APIs in use, as well as details of the business rationale, parties involved, the data sharing agreement and data protection impact assessment. This will also support our obligations under the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019.

The Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH), a build to share initiative led by the Department of Justice, is a good example of this approach in action. Agencies from across the justice sector use the CJOH to exchange data (subject to data sharing agreements). The Courts Service recognises the contribution this makes to delivering more effective and efficient outcomes across the justice sector. We will continue to actively contribute to the range of justice sector data made available via the CJOH (e.g. provision of Court outcomes and warrants).

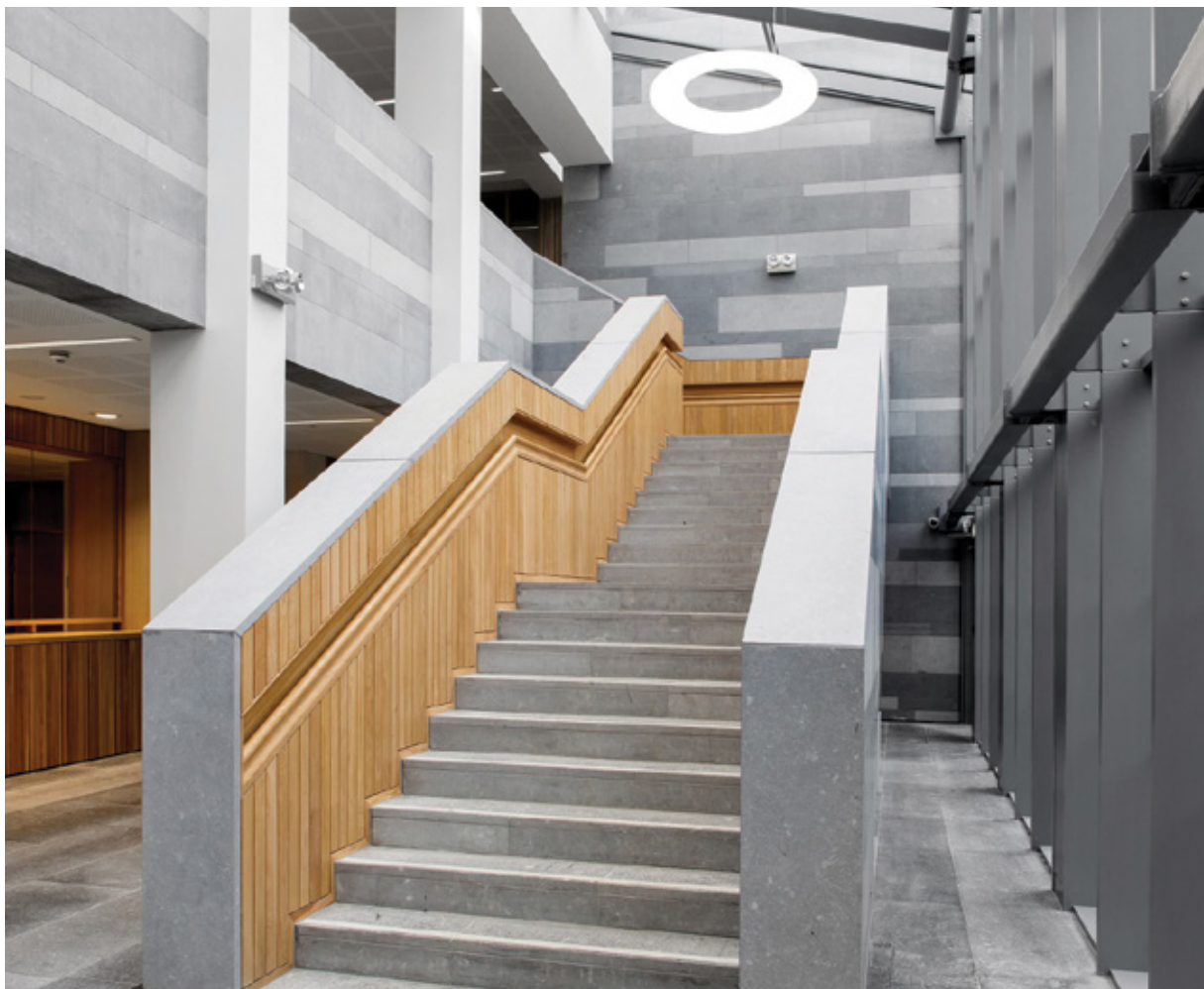


ACTIONS

19. Move to a default position where regular data sharing with PSBs and approved third parties is via APIs and message broker infrastructure.
20. Maintain a set of data sharing artefacts, including a central register of all APIs in use, data sharing agreements, etc.

DAMA knowledge areas addressed using *improved processes* strategic theme:

Strategic Themes	Knowledge Areas								
	Data Governance	Document & Content Management	Data Security	Data Quality	Data Integration & Interoperability	Data Storage & Operations	Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Data Architecture	Data Modelling & Design, Metadata, Reference & Master Data
Improved Processes									



2.4 Technology

This section outlines the data-related technology areas of focus to enable increased levels of data management maturity across the Courts Service.

Key Initiative 14: Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) for case data

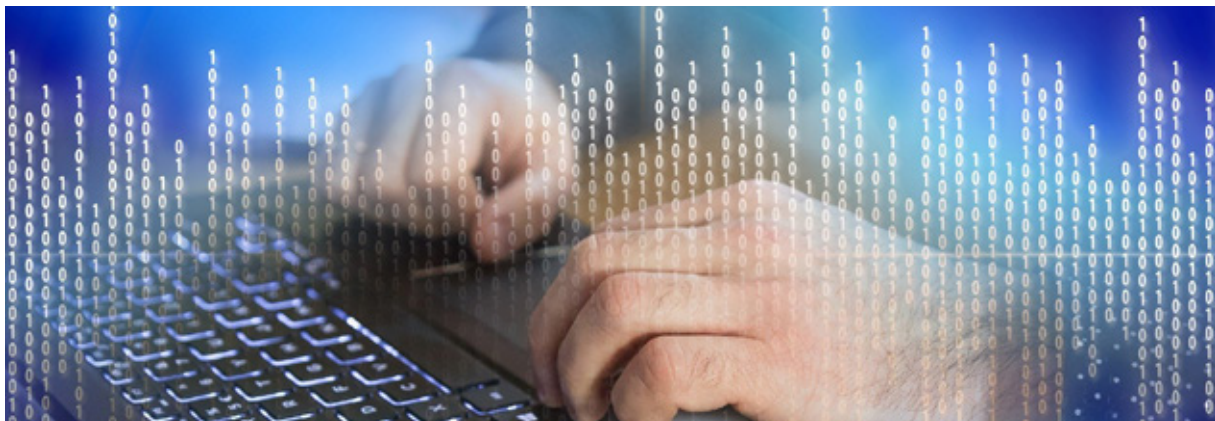
Within the Courts Service, there are over one hundred instances of digital case management systems used to support civil, family and criminal law. The historical deployment of these technology solutions has led to a highly fragmented number of case management systems that has made it increasingly difficult to respond to evolving business needs such as the need to integrate document management and case management. At present there is little or no document management capability in place to support the case management systems employed across the organisation, effectively resulting in a digital case tracking ecosystem as opposed to digital case management.

As part of our Modernisation Programme, we will implement an EDRMS that combines the technologies of document and records management within an integrated case management system. The solution will offer a user-friendly solution to support the handling of case documents alongside other case data, supporting the streamlining of digital case management for both the judiciary and staff. It will also facilitate a consistent operational process that is aligned with agreed governance policies and standards.



ACTION

21. Implement an Electronic Document and Records Management System for case data.



Key Initiative 15: Electronic Document and Records Management System for organisation data

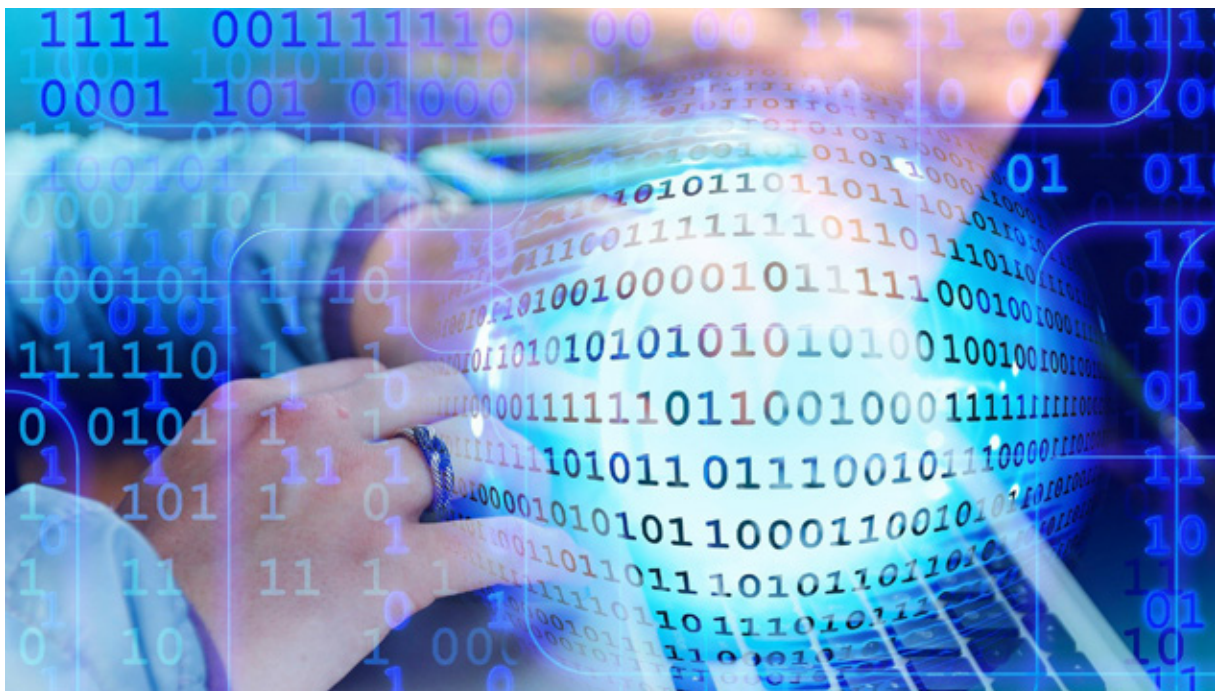
As outlined in the ICT strategy, an Electronic Document and Records Management System application will be implemented to enhance the management of documents related to the Courts Service’s organisation data. The EDRMS will support the Courts Service in how it receives, tracks, manages and stores organisational documents along with efforts to reduce the reliance on paper.

Through the Build to Share programme, the OGCIO delivers a range of successful collaboration tools, platforms and services for PSBs. The Courts Service recognises the benefits that this integrated and shared infrastructure approach offers. eDocs, an application available under the programme, will be implemented as it meets the needs of the Courts Service for an EDRMS. The use of an EDRMS for the storage of unstructured data will enable teams to collaborate more efficiently on a common platform and provide co-authoring functionality, free-text search, email integration, automated archiving, and versioning of documents. It also provides flexible access permission settings to ensure the right people see the data.



ACTIONS

22. Implement an Electronic Document and Records Management System for the Courts Service’s organisation data.



Key Initiative 16: Access to business intelligence tooling to support interrogation of available data sets

The availability of quality data is essential to support evidence-based decision making. The Public Service Data Strategy also recognises that “data is the foundation of decision making and the basis for accountability”. For the Courts Service, it is important that staff are provided with the necessary analytical tooling and training to allow data to be readily interrogated and interpreted to generate reliable and actionable insights. The data lake will serve as the primary source of data to support the creation of these data insights.

Data dashboards are a useful information management and business intelligence tool that organise, store, and display important information from multiple data sources into one easy-to-access place. Data visualisation is used to communicate important metrics in a readily digestible format.

The Courts Service will continue to invest in BI tooling that provides our users with access to dashboards that provide actionable data insights, including the integration of data dashboards into the new unified case management platform (as outlined in the ICT strategy). The goal is to provide authorised staff with a self-service and near real-time data analytics capability.

We recognise that the nature of the role an individual is performing will dictate their business needs from a data dashboard. In line with the maturing of our data management capability, the Courts Service will develop adaptable dashboards tailored to the business needs of staff that require data to support operational and strategic decision making. We will promote and provide access to data dashboards to a growing number of staff to enable improved levels of data driven decision making. As more data sources become available within the data lake, we will further refine and enhance the data dashboard capability offered.



ACTION

23. Promote and provide access to BI tooling and data dashboards that provide insights relevant to the role of users.

DAMA knowledge areas addressed by the *technology* strategic theme:

Strategic Themes	Knowledge Areas								
	Technology	Data Governance	Document & Content Management	Data Security	Data Quality	Data Integration & Interoperability	Data Storage & Operations	Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Data Architecture



3. ACTIONS SUMMARY

ACTIONS SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of DAMA knowledge areas addressed by the four strategic themes:

Strategic Themes	Knowledge Areas								
	Data Governance	Document & Content Management	Data Security	Data Quality	Data Integration & Interoperability	Data Storage & Operations	Data Warehousing & Business Intelligence	Data Architecture	Data Modelling & Design, Metadata, Reference & Master Data
Governance									
Use of Data									
Improved Processes									
Technology									



A summary of actions for each strategic theme is detailed in the following section.

3.1 Governance

1. Establish a Data Governance Committee with oversight of the Courts Service's data management and information security matters.
2. Assess progress made in improving data management processes to a target level of three by conducting a further data maturity assessment during the term of this Data Strategy.
3. Develop and roll-out a data quality framework.
4. Conduct a gap assessment of the data and metric dictionary to identify the required improvement initiatives.
5. Establish a Business Intelligence service to centrally manage data demand.
6. Develop and mature a coherent data architecture including a unified data model, a data exchange architecture and a data lake.
7. Establish a Technical Architecture Design Authority (TADA) to review key architectural choices to ensure proposed developments adopt a coherent, consistent and joined up data architecture.

3.2 Use of Data

8. Develop and operationalise a data catalogue for Courts Service data holdings.
9. Actively maintain the Court Service data holdings on the Public Service Data Catalogue.
10. Examine opportunities where trusted common identifiers may be used to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes, and the level of data insights available.
11. Establish a Courts Service Open Data Portal that provides access to a data bank of pre-validated high priority datasets.
12. Identify potential datasets that can be published on the Courts Service Open Data Portal.
13. Expand the number of application datasets and standardised reports available from the data lake.
14. Develop and execute a communications strategy to raise awareness of the data lake and support its adoption.

3.3 Improved Processes

15. ICT Directorate to work in partnership with CPO and Learning & Development Unit to identify and deliver data related training initiatives.
16. Define and implement an organisation wide records management policy, including a data retention schedule.
17. Continued engagement with the National Archives of Ireland to operationalise a robust archival system for appropriate records.
18. Continue to review, develop and raise awareness of policies, standards and processes that support data privacy and security.
19. Move to a default position where regular data sharing with PSBs and approved third parties is via APIs and message broker infrastructure.
20. Maintain a set of data sharing artefacts, including a central register of all APIs in use, data sharing agreements, etc.

3.4 Technology

21. Implement an Electronic Document and Records Management System for case data
22. Implement an Electronic Document and Records Management System for the Courts Service's organisation data.
23. Promote and provide access to BI tooling and data dashboards that provide insights relevant to the role of users.



