



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality

Data & Research Strategy 2018-2020

Supporting delivery of “A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland”



July 2018



“We have come to appreciate the vital importance of data and how we need to use it to inform our work. This new Data and Research Strategy will facilitate better collaboration and information sharing between the Department, our Agencies and stakeholders including the public we serve. Our objective is improving access to and use of data, information and research leading to more effective policy making.”

Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General (Acting).

Relevant High Level Goal and Strategic Objective, from the Department’s Strategic Plan, 2017-2019

High Level Goal:

- Develop our people, culture, systems and processes,
- to be a high-performing, trusted Department, with the capacity to deliver on our vision of a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

Strategic Objective:

To ensure better management, integration and use of knowledge, data and research.

Introduction

According to the Department's current (2016-2019) Strategy Statement:

Data is a key enabler for improved efficiency, policymaking and resource allocation.

The Data and Research Strategy is aimed at facilitating better collaboration and information sharing between the Department, its Agencies and stakeholders, and the provision of data, information, analysis, evaluation and research, to:

- 1) inform our stakeholders regarding our activity and outputs;
- 2) evaluate our effectiveness and efficiency;
- 3) assist management decisions regarding priorities and resource allocation;
- 4) improve outcomes; and
- 5) support the development of more evidence-informed policy.

In this regard, we will systematically quantify and publish information on *what* we do, analyse and evaluate its quality and effectiveness, and develop measures on our outcomes, to enable policy questions regarding *why* and *how* we should plan and deliver services in the future.

Data and Research Strategy: the intended outcome

The intended outcome of the present Strategy is particularly to support the achievement of our strategic goals and effective outcomes across the sector. We will have added a strong evaluation, analytic and numeracy capacity to our policy and operational skills. Policy makers will engage up front to develop indicators on the intended outcomes of interventions and there will be a well-understood and routine practice of post – implementation evaluation to examine actual outcomes (including unanticipated or unwelcome ones) to support a robust policy formulation framework.

We will have a common set of reporting tools, statistics and dashboards available on our core systems from central Government shared service systems and from external sources. We will participate in the Open Data initiative and CSO/OSI-led initiatives around the developing National Data Infrastructure. We will be cognisant to central Government data strategies. One example is the currently developing Criminal Justice Operational Hub, which will continue to provide the basis for the ongoing achievement of systemic connectedness and interoperability, aimed at

delivering more effective and efficient outcomes. Heads of Justice agencies, as well as the Department's Management Board, will have real ownership of, and input to, the way the Data and Research Strategy is delivered. This will be ensured through the Data Needs and Interoperability Group, and other structures, as appropriate.

We will have a well-developed research capacity comprising a mix of internal researchers, commissioned research, internships and engagement with third level institutions with the participation of a cross-sector Justice & Equality Research Advisory Council/Board to link the research programme to our evolving, and frequently overlapping strategic goals. Given this overlapping aspect of service delivery, as well as of research, across the sector, it will be essential to maximise collaboration and co-ordination of data analysis and research, as far as possible. This should include the alignment of agency/divisional research strategies and ensuring the best use and co-ordination of relevant resources in this.

Context

This Data and Research strategy document sets out the Department of Justice and Equality Data Strategy 2018 -2020 in the following contexts:

The Department's Strategy Statement 2016 – 2019: "A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland" has the following six Strategic goals:

The Data and Research Strategy is aimed at facilitating better collaboration and information sharing between the Department, its Agencies and stakeholders, and the provision of data, information, analysis, evaluation and research, to:

- Leadership in and oversight of Justice and Equality Policy and Delivery
- A Safe, Secure Ireland
- Access to Justice
- An Equal and Inclusive Society
- A Fair and Balanced Immigration and Protection Regime
- Develop our people, culture systems and processes.

In this regard, we will systematically quantify and publish information on *what* we do, analyse and evaluate its quality and effectiveness, and develop measures on our outcomes, to enable policy questions regarding *why* and *how* we should plan and deliver services in the future.

Each goal has associated data and related needs. This Data and Research Strategy aims to address those needs. In summary, taking account of relevant previous analysis and experience, it is proposed to:

- Establish a Data Evaluation Research and Analytics Unit working in the Corporate area with partnerships around the Justice and Equality Sector, the Central Statistics Office and other stakeholders, e.g. Open Data, National Data Infrastructure (NDI).
- Develop Data Governance structures, with Data Needs and Interoperability Group to

act as oversight/governance for this strategy.

- Continue to deliver existing National and International statistical obligations.
- Conform to Statistical Code of Conduct.
- Comply with obligations under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), proposed Data Sharing legislation, Government decisions on Open Data, and other relevant legislation and regulation¹.
- Oversee and continue to develop existing approaches to data extraction and presentation to provide a range of new data services to support robust evidence based policy making and resource allocation including dashboards, linking dispersed data sets, developing capacity to respond to focussed policy questions, support for modelling and scenario planning, enhanced support for existing procedures such as Regulatory Impact Analysis.
- Support (via Workforce Planning) the development of the analytic capacity of the organisation.
- Management Board to fill Data and Research Principal Officer post and to work with divisions and agencies to interact and facilitate work of PO/Unit as appropriate.
- With a view to improving informed policy development, support the cross-sectoral analysis of data collated by the Justice Sector bodies.

¹ Including, for example, Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or

prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 89-131. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016L0680&from=en>

- The Report of the Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014) concluded that, without adequate data and information, "...penal policymaking cannot be effective" and that "in the absence of good systems for collecting and analysing data, policymakers cannot plan adequately for the future, or understand the consequences of changes in policy." On the other hand, the Report stated: "Proper and effective data management will ensure that an appropriate evidence informed approach to policy formulation can be implemented."

Research – Specific Requirements

The research element of this strategy is located as one element of the strategy as a whole, which gives direction to the systematic conduct of research to produce quality results and detailed reporting.

There are several key reasons why the Department of Justice and Equality should undertake as comprehensive a programme of research, evaluation and analysis as possible. However, the core reason is to support the strategic aims and objectives of the Department, and the agencies under its remit.

This would be achieved in a number of ways:

- Using research and analysis to identify emerging threats: what are the key policy issues that will impact on the Departments area of reasonability in the short, medium and long term? Knowing this can help inform the development of the operational and strategic policy agenda.
- Helping inform the current policy agenda: using research to understand how issues have been dealt within in the past and currently, both here and in other jurisdictions. This contextual research can help develop thinking on policy solutions.
- Assessing impact: as and when policy is operationalised, evaluations are undertaken in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention. This can inform decisions on whether to continue, adapt or cease the intervention.
- Monitoring and managing targets: whilst data analysis can support the monitoring of targets, research and analysis can support the management of targets. In particular, understanding why targets are on/off track and what contingency action needs to be undertaken (informed by research and analysis).
- Contributing to the breadth of knowledge and understanding.

Critical to the success of a research, evaluation and analysis programme within the Department will be the following:

- Access to data to support analysis. Additionally, we need to recognise that there are times when we have to generate data to fill gaps in our knowledge, for example through the collation of data from the Department's agencies and/or through social surveys.
- The appropriate technical infrastructure: the work of researchers and analysts does not fit in with the standard ICT deployment rolled out across most government departments. As such, there needs to be the appropriate technical support in place. This includes the software (for example, for the processing of large data sets or unstructured data) and hardware to support processing of large volumes of data or the transmission or exchange of data collated by the various ICT systems utilised by the different Justice Sector bodies.
- Skilled resources: both to undertake research and direct it. The latter is extremely important. There does need to be a senior role within the Department who is able to 'translate' strategic objectives into a clear set of research questions. This, in turn, would also need to be translated into a research plan including identifying key projects, resources, and timelines.
- Decision making processes: one has to ensure that research and analysis is folded into the key decision making points within the organisation. If this is not done, then research and analysis is always in danger of becoming marginal to the business of the Department.

- Developing a culture of research: this would be a longer term goal, but it involves ensuring that research and analysis becomes part of the 'DNA' of the policy and decision making process of the organisation. This does need a research champion within the organisation to lead it out. Another role of the champion would be to build a culture of criminological research beyond the Department, working in conjunction with further education institutes and research centres.

The following are the Data and Research Strategic Goals and Actions, in the context of the above.

Department of Justice & Equality Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

Strategic Actions

No.	Action	Strategic Outcomes
1	Put in place an appropriate structure within the Department to manage and develop solutions to the current and emerging business requirements in the areas of data and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Chief Information Officer appointed. • Clear structure, with appropriate division of roles and responsibilities in place. • Appropriate resources identified and agreed. • Funding and Human Resources in place, to deliver the Strategy.
2	Develop a Justice and Equality Data Hub to enable the efficient and secure exchange of appropriate and accurate data and information within the Justice and Equality Sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub established and functioning. • Duplication reduced/eliminated and improved business processes. • Data quality improved • Data gaps identified and plans in place to address them
3	Establish appropriate governance of data collection, management and analysis in the Department, its Agencies and offices, including regular publication of appropriate data sets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance arrangements in place. • Efficiencies achieved through improved systems governance and management. • Cross-sector analysis of data under way. • Data published in Open Data format.
4	Analyse and evaluate existing and planned policy consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing policies prioritized and evaluated for impact.
5	Establish appropriate and effective operational links across the Department, its Agencies and offices, to improve data collection and analysis, as well as its contribution to operational effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational links established. • Improvements in operational effectiveness and efficiency.
6	Develop and build the research capacity, culture and output within the Department, across the Sector, and in partnership with external bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater quantity and quality of research produced. • Publication of research findings as the 'default.' • Proactive research culture developed in the Sector. • Improved planning and co-ordination of research and evaluation. • Strong research partnerships developed with the external research and evaluation community, including academic institutions.

Strategic Action 1:

Put in place an appropriate structure within the Department to manage and develop solutions to the current and emerging business requirements in the areas of data and research.

1	Actions	Responsibility
1.1	The CIO with a team of three Principal Officers, with clear lines of responsibility in the areas of ICT and Data, in place.	Corporate A/Sec, HR.
1.2	Establish a Data, Evaluation, Research and Statistics Unit, headed by a Principal Officer, under the CIO.	Corporate A/Sec and HR
1.3	A Principal Officer to head this Unit, and have specific responsibility for data management and analytics, management information, evaluation, research and statistics, publications and relevant external data.	CIO and PO Data
1.4	Clarify and put in place funding and other resources required to deliver the data and research strategy.	Corporate A/Sec
1.5	Develop annual work plans for the Unit, and for its interface with the Data Needs and Interoperability Group.	CIO and PO Data
1.6	Develop effective cross-sectoral and external (e.g. with the Central Statistics Office) links and data-sharing protocols, as and where required.	CIO and PO Data
1.7	Establish clear principles and operating procedures for how the relevant personnel and units in the Department's agencies (and seconded CSO staff) engage with the central Data, Evaluation, Research and Statistics Unit.	CIO and PO Data and HR
1.8	Identify necessary technology supports and engage with ICT Unit to deliver appropriate infrastructure.	CIO and PO Data and PO ICT Operations

Strategic Action 2:

Develop a Justice and Equality Data Hub to enable the efficient and secure exchange of appropriate data and information within the Justice and Equality Sector.

2	Actions	Responsibility
2.1	Assess the current state of play, identify gaps, and generate and draft a plan of action.	Corporate A/Sec, HR.
2.2	Identify and develop our range of data and information sources to inform policy development.	Corporate A/Sec and HR
2.3	Facilitate the secure exchange and cross-sectoral analysis of data and information between Departmental units, and Sectoral agencies and offices and others, in line with the key objective of 'Data as an Enabler' in Public Service ICT Strategy.	CIO and PO Data
2.4	Scope and plan actions to strengthen our evidence base, and facilitate real-time data exchange in the Criminal Justice, as well as Immigration and Asylum areas.	Corporate A/Sec
2.5	Ensure provision of a platform for secure online collaboration.	CIO and PO Data

Strategic Action 3:

Establish appropriate governance of data collection, management and analysis in the Department and its Agencies.

3	Actions	Responsibility
3.1	Develop data governance, collection and analysis structures, to ensure data security, data privacy and data protection.	CIO and PO Data
3.2	Continue the work of the Data Needs and Interoperability Group.	Chair Data Needs Group
3.3	Provide regular activity, output and outcome reports to the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee and Management Board, as required.	CIO and PO Data
3.4	Ensure ongoing compliance with established national standards on data collection and management, as well as research (e.g. Open Data, GDPR, NDI).	CIO and PO Data and Data Protection Officer and Agency Heads
3.5	Ensure continued departmental compliance with national and international data and statistics requirements.	CIO
3.6	Explore and, where possible, establish and agree individual item (e.g. person, case etc.) identifiers and counting rules, where necessary, and in conjunction with NDI.	CIO and PO Data
3.7	Establish coordinating structure and system for publishing appropriate data sets.	CIO and PO Data

Strategic Action 4:

Analyse and evaluate existing and planned policy consequences.

4	Actions	Responsibility
4.1	Promote a whole of Government approach to crime prevention, Justice and Penal Policy, and immigration and international protection policy implementation, using data analysis and evaluation to inform policy and practice development.	CIO and PO Data and Chair Data Needs Group
4.2	Continue and develop collaborative working relationships with the Central Statistics Office, and relevant Justice agencies to assess outcomes, for example recidivism rates and their implications.	CIO and PO Data
4.3	Develop a rolling programme of evaluation, data analysis and research in relation to priority programmes, policies and operational initiatives across the Justice and Equality Sector.	CIO and PO Data
4.4	Work with other departments and organisations to develop our data and evaluation capacity.	CIO and PO Data
4.5	Develop our internal data and analytics capability and standards, working closely with the CSO and IGEES group to maximise the use of administrative data to generate official statistics and strengthen policy development.	CIO and PO Data

Strategic Action 5:

Analyse and evaluate existing and planned policy consequences.

5	Actions	Responsibility
5.1	Develop and manage an appropriate Management Information System 'dashboard' of key data, KPIs and other relevant indices, for use by the Department's Management Board and Heads of relevant Justice agencies and offices, to deliver operational efficiencies.	CIO and PO Data
5.2	Develop and manage a system of key data sets and analytics, for regular dissemination to key stakeholder groups and the wider community.	CIO and PO Data
5.3	Ensure co-ordination of the work of the Data Needs and Interoperability Group, and its interface with the Criminal Justice Operational Hub Project Board and also with the relevant Policy Divisions.	CIO and PO Data

Strategic Action 6:

Develop and build the research capacity, culture and output within the Department, across the Sector, and in partnership with external bodies.

6	Actions	Responsibility
6.1	Clarify roles – within the Department, and across the Agencies, as well as with external stakeholders – regarding research.	CIO and PO Data
6.2	Establish and maintain the ring-fenced research budget within the Department, for use on priority projects by the Department and its agencies.	CIO and PO Data and A/Sec Corporate
6.3	Justice Sector Research Advisory Group/Committee – located in and co-ordinated by the Department - established.	CIO and PO Data
6.4	Generate, agree and prioritise a research programme for 2018 and 2019 (and succeeding years).	Chair of the Research Advisory Group and CIO and PO Data
6.5	Put in place a clear process for proposing and approving research projects for funding by the Department and its agencies.	Chair of the Research Advisory Group and A/Sec Corporate and CIO and PO Data
6.6	Ensure completion of the research actions in the Report of the Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014).	CIO and PO Data
6.7	Draft and publish a Departmental ‘position paper’ on research, to guide future direction in this area, as well as engagement with external research bodies.	CIO and PO Data

A Safe, Fair and Inclusive Ireland

Department of Justice and Equality
51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2,
D02 HK52, Ireland.

Tel: + 353 (0)1 602 8202
Lo-Call: 1890 221 227
Email: info@justice.ie

www.justice.ie