



An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí  
Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe  
Department of Public Expenditure  
NDP Delivery and Reform

# Data Governance Board

Annual Report 2023



Prepared by the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform  
[gov.ie](http://gov.ie)



The vision of the Data Governance Board is to ensure that Ireland is at the forefront of the drive for focused and transparent data sharing.

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# Forewords

# Foreword

## Minister for Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform Paschal Donohoe TD

I am very pleased to note the continued strengthening of data governance and data sharing across Government over the past year and to thank the Data Governance Board (“the Board”) for their commitment and input in driving improvements to all aspects of data governance, especially transparency, across the public sector.

The effective harnessing of data is one of the priority action areas for [Connecting Government 2030](#). The harnessing of data at a national level is a key input to digital transformation and can improve Public Services through better re-use of data, whilst respecting privacy and data protection. Effective data governance has the power to transform the way that digital services are designed and delivered.

This past year, the second full year of operation of the Board, saw full enactment of the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#) (“the Act”), which allowed public bodies to share data under the Act. The Board also provided valuable support to the Data Governance Unit (DGU) in the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) for the CSEIA<sup>1</sup> award for Insights-driven

Decision-making. The award was in recognition of the establishment of the DSGA Data Sharing Framework for the Public Service. The work carried out by the Board in promoting compliance with the Act has added a further layer of effective and transparent governance to the data sharing process, through the diligent review and publication of the Board’s recommendations on proposed new Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs). The execution of these DSAs has provided a transparent basis for sharing data across a range of sectors, including the justice, education, agricultural, local government, and enterprise sectors in Ireland, allowing for a more beneficial use of data.

This has greatly enhanced our Public Service’s reputation as a highly trusted custodian of public data, as is evidenced by the feedback we have received from public bodies, peer nations, and the OECD.

This concentrated work is enabling Ireland to be at the forefront of the drive for focused, ethical and transparent data sharing, and is helping government to extract the maximum value from the data holding within the Irish public service. I see these as being the firm foundations upon which we can further improve the use of data for the public benefit through supporting “Life Events”, the “Once-Only” principle, forthcoming EU Regulation and, most importantly, ensuring that ethics remains clearly at the centre of all data sharing.

We look forward to another busy year ahead as the Data Governance Board continues to provide focused direction and structure for data governance across the public sector.

### Paschal Donohoe TD

*Minister for Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform*

<sup>1</sup> Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards 2023



# Foreword

## Data Governance Board

The past year has seen the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019 (DSGA - “the Act”) move to full enactment with the Data Governance Board working intensively to promote compliance with the Act. This resulted in 13 Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) being submitted to the Board under the Data Sharing Framework in time for final commencement of the DSGA in December 2022.

The time and experience that has been invested into the review of DSAs for public bodies has led to a renewed focus on how and why data should be shared between such bodies. This leaves the Board well positioned to address long-term issues around the ethics of sharing data, and the contributions that can be made to data driven policy.

The Board is committed to ensuring that the work it carries out is aligned with the requirements of the legislation and the needs of the public and businesses. The past year has seen a strengthening of the Board’s ability to assess and meet this need. The formation of two new committees in the areas of Data Safeguarding and Transparency and Communications and Engagement, has further expanded the expertise and experience available to the Board, leaving it well placed to address these issues going forward.

The Board and its committees are working to develop a targeted range of supports for use by public bodies, building on the existing Data Sharing Framework, which provided public bodies with a clear legal path when they need to share data under the legislation.

We are now in a position to look at how Ireland’s governance of data can help us sustain public trust, whilst putting ethics and transparency at the centre of all data use across Government.

We will work to increase uptake in data sharing across the public sector, in the context of the wider data landscape including the [EU Data Strategy](#) and the [EU Data Governance Act](#). The Board is committed to increasing trust in data sharing and the use of data. We see increased communications and engagement as the way to build a shared sense of understanding and acceptance of public service data sharing activities for the public good. We look forward to the work ahead of us, including the publication of a new Public Service Data Strategy in 2024.

### Data Governance Board

**NOTE:** This report has been prepared in accordance with [Section 52](#) of the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019, which details the reporting requirements for the Data Governance Board.





# Data Sharing and Governance Legislation

# Background

Data lies at the heart of Government, informing decision-making and shaping public policy. The OECD’s Digital Government Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> notes that a mature digital Government is data-driven when it

*“values data as a strategic asset and establishes the governance to secure availability, access, sharing and re-use mechanisms for improved decision-making and services in the public sector”.*

In Ireland, data is a key driver for the delivery of better public services. We know that consumers of public services value what data can do for them in their private lives, and acknowledge the fact that the demand for more efficient use of data in the delivery of public policies and public services is constantly evolving. The Government is working to continuously improve the quality of data being used, and to build and maintain the high level of trust in how the data is used.

The Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) responded to this demand, putting in place a number of measures to improve public service data and its use. One of the key measures taken by Government was the

development of the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#)<sup>3</sup>, which allowed for establishment of the Data Governance Board.

The Act is a significant piece of legislation regulating the sharing of personal data between public bodies where there is no other legal basis for sharing to take place, setting out rules and exceptions for public bodies if they want to share personal data with each other. It covers a wide range of data-sharing events, providing a legal path for the sharing of information, including personal data, between public bodies and setting out a strong approach to data governance through the establishment of the Data Governance Board.

## Data Governance Board

### About the Board

The Board’s 2022 Annual Report provided a detailed overview of the establishment of the Data Governance Board. The Act clearly sets out the role of the Board and notes that the Board is independent in the performance of its functions. [Section 46](#) of the Act sets out the seven principal functions assigned to the Board. The work of the Board is underpinned by key principles that are aligned with the functions assigned to it under the Act.

<b>Open Engagement</b>	<b>Advocate for the Public Good</b>	<b>Ethical</b>	<b>Safe and Secure</b>	<b>Efficient</b>
Data sharing arrangements are developed in a fully transparent and accessible manner	Data sharing is conducted to ensure an enhanced service for members of the public	Data sharing is conducted in accordance with sound ethical principles	Data sharing is conducted in safe and secure manner, underpinned by robust IT systems	Data sharing is conducted to streamline public service activities and derive efficiencies for organisations and their customers

2 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/785cb67f-en.pdf?expires=1698745043&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=49D4EDABDD75CF33A372C3E057CE7AB4>

3 The Board’s [2022 Annual Report](#) set out the background to the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019, including details of earlier commencement tranches.





The expertise and experience of Board members has contributed to the level of governance that has been applied to data sharing across the public sector in the past year. The Board, in its advisory role to the Minister for Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform, has focused on best practice in the implementation of the Data Sharing Framework for sharing data under the Act, bringing an international focus to data governance in the Irish Public Service.

## Board Membership

As the Board comes to the end of its second full year of operation, there is currently a full complement of 12 Board members, including three members drawn from the Public Appointments Service State Boards process. There were a number of changes to Board membership in the past year.

- Seamus Carroll, Helen Martin and Mark Finlay joined the Board
- John Mc Daid left the Board.

The Board thanks Mr. McDaid for his important contributions to the early work of the Board.

*“Given the critical role of data and digital services in delivering public services efficiently, the Board’s work in improving how the general public perceives public sector use of their data is of particular interest to me and I look forward to continuing to work closely with Board and Committee colleagues on this important area.”*

*Helen Martin, Board Member*

Full details of Board Membership are available in Appendix A of this report and on the State [Boards Membership website](#).



*The Board’s mission is to establish robust and transparent methods for the sharing of personal data between public bodies to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness and therefore benefit all members of the public.*



**Angela Denning**



**Barbara Ubaldi**



**Barry Lowry (Chair)**



**Brendan Twomey**



**Colin Bray**



**Dr Aideen Hartney**



**Dr Clare Thornley**



**Helen Martin**



**Joanne Geary**



**Mark Finlay**



**Seamus Carroll**



**Padraig Dalton (Observer)**



## Board Activity

The Data Governance Board has met on 13 occasions since its establishment in July 2021. Seven of these meetings took place (since the last report of the Board) between June 2022 and June 2023, with the most recent one taking place in-person on the 1st June 2023 in Dublin.

The committees of the Board have met on more than 20 occasions with the Data Architecture and the Data Sharing committees reporting to the Board at the in-person meeting on the 1st June.



Each committee reports to the Board on a regular basis, and the work of the committees is included in the Agenda for each Board meeting.

## Improving the Data Ecosystem

The Board is now in a position to consider the longer-term requirements for ensuring that data is shared transparently for the benefit of the public, that it is maintained to ensure data integrity, and that it will only be used with the highest standards of data ethics applied. Work in these areas has been progressed by the Data Safeguarding and Transparency Committee and the Communications and Engagement Committee.

The Board has also worked with the Data Architecture and Technical Committee as they develop a Framework for Data Sharing Standards and continue to scope the implementation of Virtual Data Rooms for use by the public service. They are also supporting exploratory work on the designation of Base Registries, and on the development of additional supports for public bodies in the areas of Data Sharing Ethics and Data Quality.

The Board will also work to measure benefits realisation, in particular, the value to the public of sharing data, to ensure that data sharing is measured against any improvements to data-driven and evidence-based decision-making. This in turn will lead to better planning and delivery of public services, allowing public bodies to design and deliver necessary services in a timely manner to the people who need them most.





# The Data Sharing and Governance Act

# Background

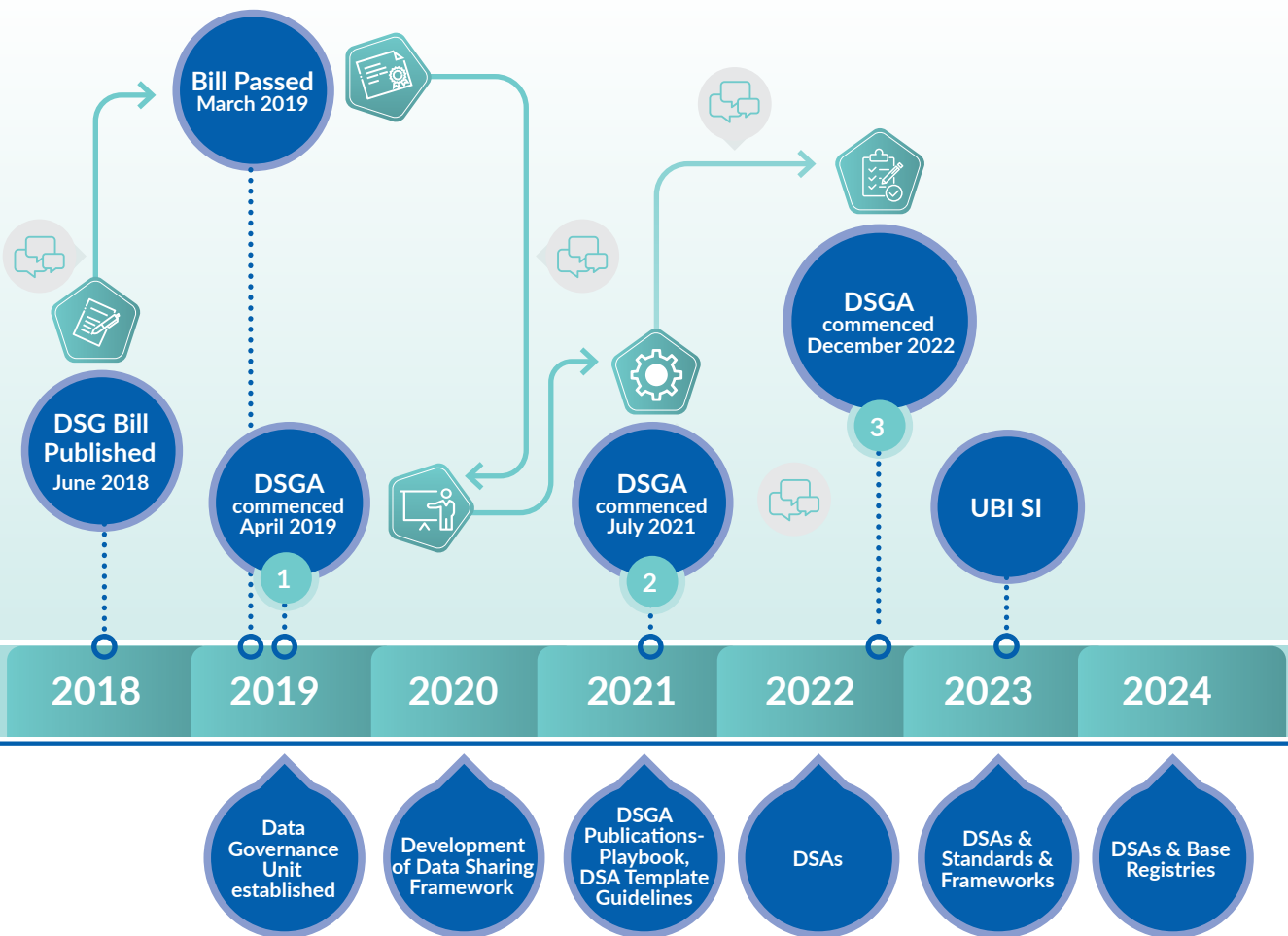
The Act was fully commenced in December 2022 after a comprehensive survey across public service bodies, which identified the scale of data sharing relying on Section 38 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

The final commencement gave effect to [Section 6 of the Act](#), and removed the legal basis for disclosure of information by one public body to another public body as defined in [Section 38 of the DPA](#). To ensure compliance with the DSGA, any data shared under Section 38 of the DPA needed to be re-provisioned under the new legislation.

In advance of the final commencement of the Act in December 2022, the Board (working with the OGCIO Data Governance Unit), provided guidance to public bodies in reviewing their existing

data sharing arrangements to understand if they needed to migrate to the DSGA as their legal basis for the disclosure of information from one public body to another. The Board also ensured that all new DSAs which were created in alignment with the procedures of the Act, completed public consultation and review by the Data Sharing committee and the Board before the December commencement.

20 DSAs were submitted to the Board under the Data Sharing Governance Framework ensuring successful compliance with the legislation, 13 of which had been completed during the period to end-June 2023. A full list of these DSAs including recommendations made by the Board is available on [gov.ie](http://gov.ie).



## What does the DSGA allow for?

Under the Act, data is shared in a consistent manner using the Data Sharing Governance Framework, with an emphasis on ensuring transparency in how data sharing takes place, and how peoples' data will be used or processed. The Board has driven the key role of transparency, ensuring that public consultation informs the development of DSAs and that DSAs are published online for their lifetime.

Data sharing is only possible under the Act when public bodies can demonstrate that it is both necessary for the fulfilment of their public task, and for at least one of a set of purposes as set out in [Part 3 of the Act](#). [Section 13\(2\)\(ii\)](#) provides public bodies and the public with clarity about the legitimate purposes of data sharing and ensures that data sharing will only take place under the Act where disclosure is firmly rooted in these purposes which will ultimately lead to the delivery of enhanced data-driven public services.

**Data Sharing between public bodies is permissible where it is necessary and proportionate to do so for the purpose of performing a function of either public body, and for at least one of the following purposes:**



To verify the identity of a person, in connection with the provision of services to that person



To identify and correct erroneous information held by either public body



To avoid a financial or administrative burden that would otherwise be imposed on a person in connection with the provision of services to that person



To establish a person's entitlement to the provision of a service



To facilitate the administration, supervision and control of a service, programme or policy being delivered by or on behalf of either public body



To facilitate the improvement or targeting of such a service, programme or policy



To enable to evaluation, oversight or review of such a service, programme or policy



To facilitate analysis of the structure, functions, resources and service delivery methods of either public body

## Data Sharing Agreements Approval

Since publication of the first Annual Report in June 2022, the Board has focused on ensuring that any proposed DSAs were reviewed in advance of the final commencement of the Act in December 2022.

The Board, and its Data Sharing Committee, have reviewed proposed data sharing arrangements across a wide range of sectors including; justice, revenue, foreign affairs, agriculture, heritage, social protection, educational and business sectors.

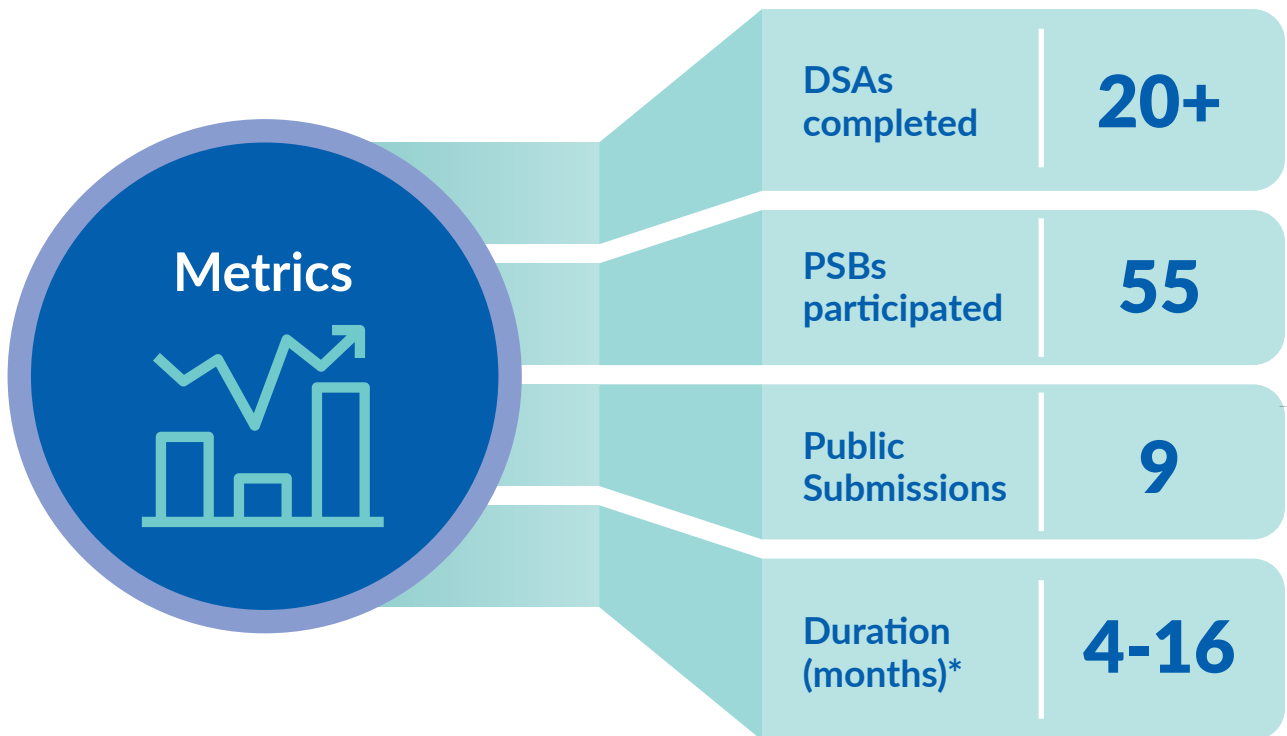
This review process was bolstered by the range of experience and expertise in many different aspects of data available to the Board. Board members are appointed by the Minister on the basis of their knowledge, experience and competence in relation to the functions of the Board, including in relation to the protection of personal data. Committee members are approved by the Board based on their expertise in the area covered by their Committee.

To this end, the Board considered review reports for 12 Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) between July

2022 and June 2023. This involved an extensive review of reports from the Data Sharing Committee (DSC) on each DSA. There were 93 observations for the DSAs considered by the Board. Following this review, the Board issued a report with their recommendations to each of the public bodies involved in the relevant DSAs.

The Board recommended that one DSA should not progress, during the last year. This DSA was amended by the lead public body based on the Board’s recommendations and then resubmitted. It was subsequently recommended to progress following another review process by the Board.

The Board also approved publication of the [DSGA Model Data Sharing Agreement Template](#), which is used by all public bodies when submitting a DSA for review under the Framework, ensuring that all public bodies comply with the provisions of the Act.



\* Quickest and longest time from drafting the DSA to completing all 9 stages of the Playbook. The longest was a DSA that involved 32 public bodies.





# The DSGA Data Sharing Framework

The Data Sharing and Governance Act is the first pillar of the DSGA Data Sharing Framework (“the Framework”) which provides clarity to public bodies and transparency to citizens. The Framework sets out the process that all public bodies need to follow when they wish to align with the legislation. It provides standards and guidelines for public bodies

to follow that support a comprehensive, transparent environment for all data sharing arrangements relevant to the Act and allowed for the creation of a standard data sharing agreement template to be used for data sharing between public bodies.

There are four distinct, but linked, pillars in the Framework:



## What does the Framework Do?

- Ensures that all personal data handled by the public service is collected, stored, processed and shared in a manner that puts the right to privacy and data protection at the heart of how we design and deliver all our digital services;
- Increases the public's awareness as to why their data is collected, stored and used through public consultations;
- Increases data sharing across the Public Service;
- Cuts down on waste and duplication of efforts ensuring that individuals and businesses do not have to supply the same information more than once to public bodies;
- Provides for the safe handling of data through an appropriate governance framework giving transparency to the data sharing agreements in place;
- Improves data management and access within and between public bodies to streamline and automate back office functions;
- Delivers pan-Government solutions to provide individuals better access to their data and transparency over its use, in an efficient manner, and;
- Supports better policy development and more efficient and effective policy measurement and implementation.

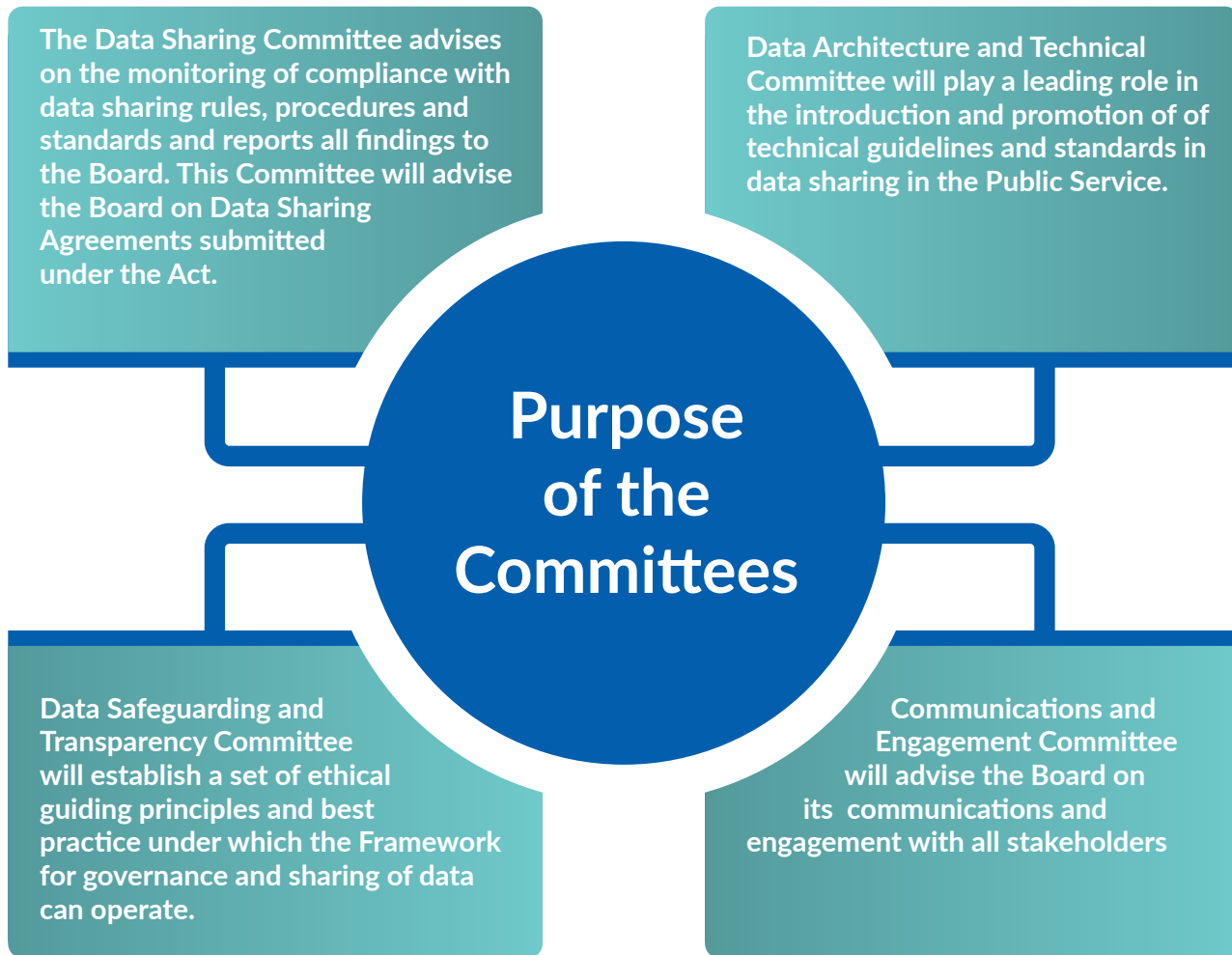
The Framework has been recognised through the CSEIA Award received; and it has also been recognised internationally<sup>4</sup> as providing clarity and guidance for public bodies undergoing the complex process of data sharing.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.riigikantselei.ee/media/2316/download>





## Progressing the work through Committees



The Board established four committees<sup>5</sup> in order to provide them with targeted specialist advice in four key areas.

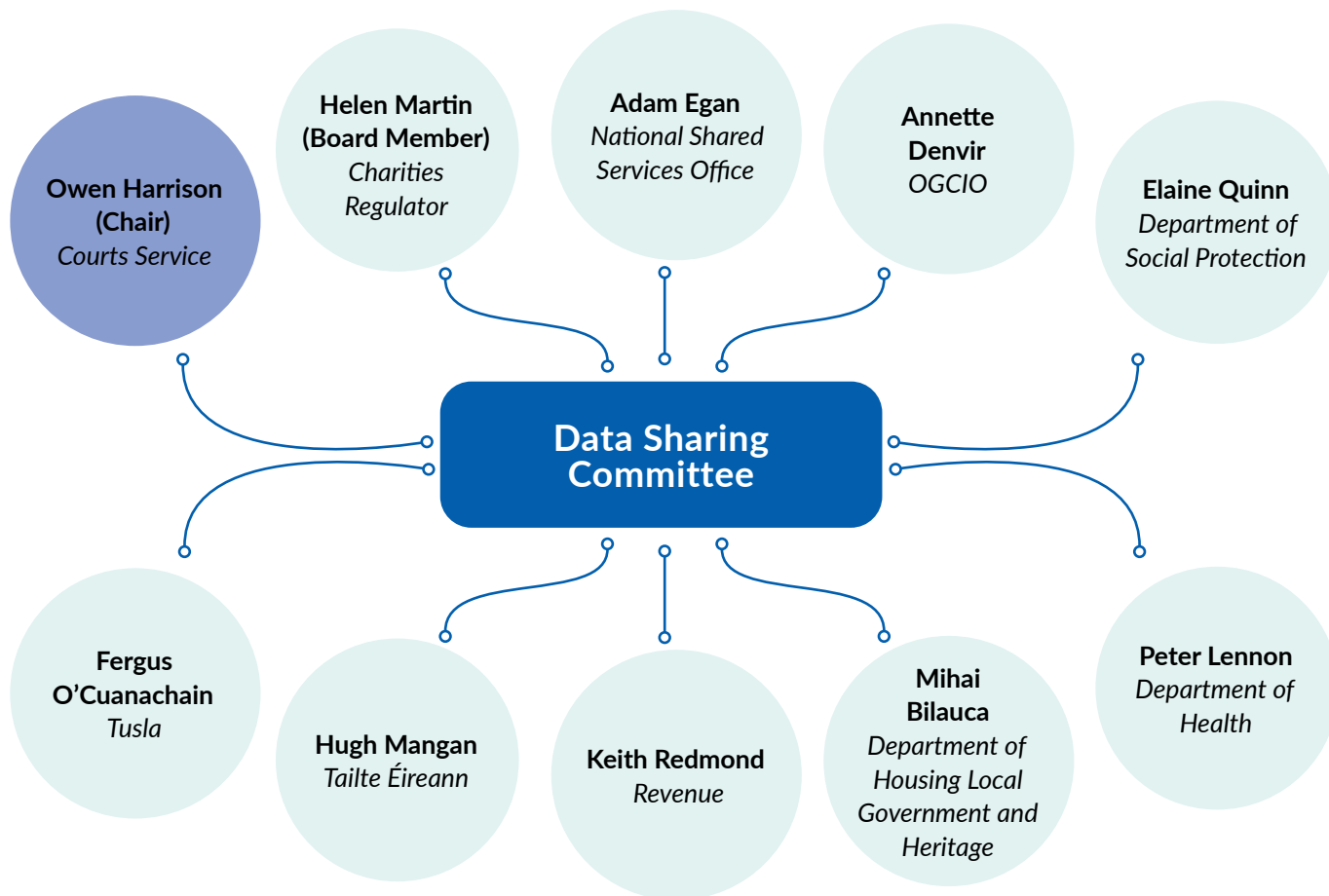
- Data Sharing
- Data Architecture and Technical Standards
- Data Safeguarding and Transparency
- Communications and Engagement

This has enabled the Board to progress a number of key initiatives that will significantly increase the supports available to public bodies, and ensure that benefits of data sharing that facilitates services provided by these bodies, are clearly demonstrated to consumers of those services.

A member of the Board sits on each committee. The theme of transparency underpins each initiative undertaken by the Board and its committees.

<sup>5</sup> Under Section (48) (5) of the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019





The Data Sharing Committee (DSC) has worked continuously since its establishment in February 2022, to support and advise the Data Governance Board. The committee has focused its attention on three key roles:

- Advising on and promoting compliance with data sharing rules, standards and procedures set by the Minister.
- Advising on the cataloguing of all data sharing within the Public Service.
- Advising on opportunities for data sharing across the Public Service, which will improve services and outcomes for citizens, businesses, and the public service itself.

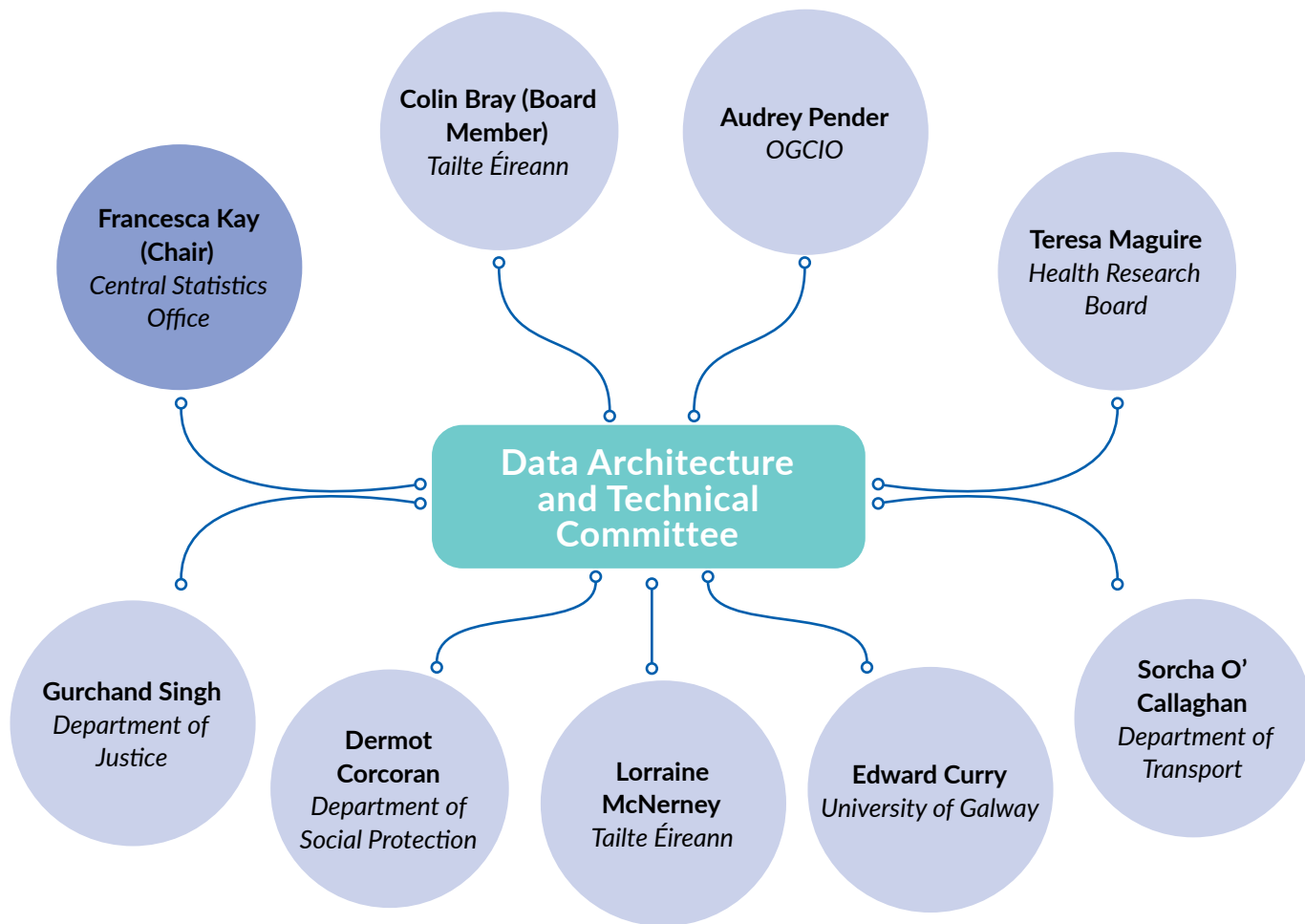
In addition, the committee:

- Reviews Data Sharing Agreements and reports its findings to the Board; and
- As a key committee in the [DSGA Data Sharing](#)

[Framework](#) and with a focus on reviewing data sharing agreements under the DSGA, the committee achieved its target of completing reviews of all DSAs presented before the final commencement of the DSGA in December 2022. In total, the DSC has now met on 16 occasions, advised the Board in 17 individual review reports and made 93 observations on 16 separate DSAs.

- The learnings from this review process have also informed an update to the core data sharing standard, the Data Sharing Agreement Model Template.
- Looking ahead the committee has a full programme of work to continue reviewing data sharing agreements, reviewing its Terms of Reference, advising the Data Governance Board on the updated DSA Model Template and playing an advisory role in the development of Base Registries in Ireland.





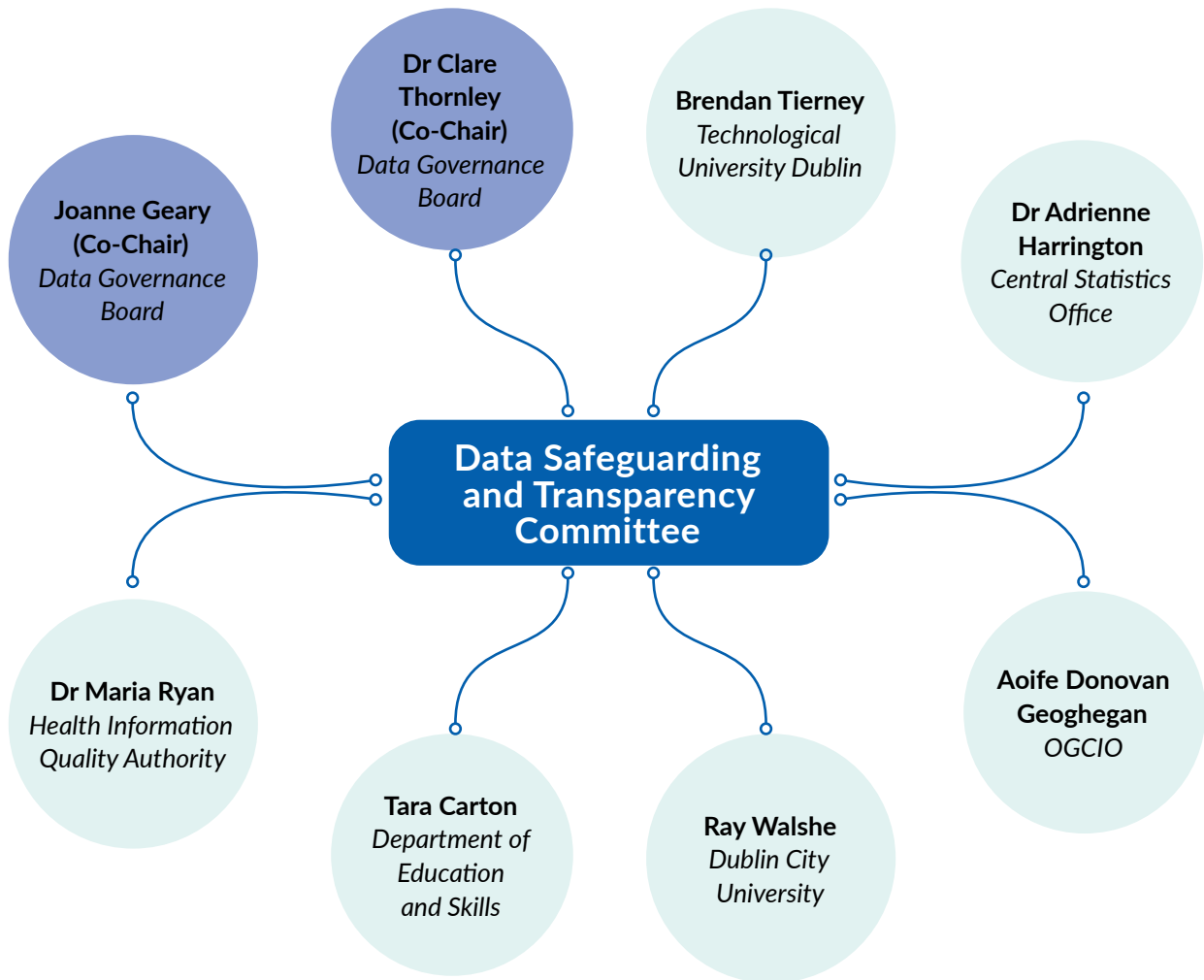
The Data Architecture & Technical Committee (DATC) is focused on enabling data sharing across the entire Public Service; by identifying where and how standardisation of data and technical architecture can be implemented. They are progressing a number of key initiatives by developing frameworks and reusing existing frameworks where possible.

The work of the committee is currently focused on providing practical supports that will enable meaningful collaboration between public bodies when sharing data.

- A Data Sharing Standards Framework, which will provide a reference point for public bodies when sharing data under the DSGA.

- The committee is acting as the Project Board for a project underway with the Central Statistics Office, which will provide **Virtual Data Rooms** that can be used for data analysis purposes by public bodies.
- The committee is also providing considerable input to ongoing work by the Data Sharing committee to develop **Base Registries** and an **API Catalogue**.

The committee has provided the Board with a wealth of expert knowledge, through the sharing of technical approaches on data management, and the information and insights it provides on evolving technologies.



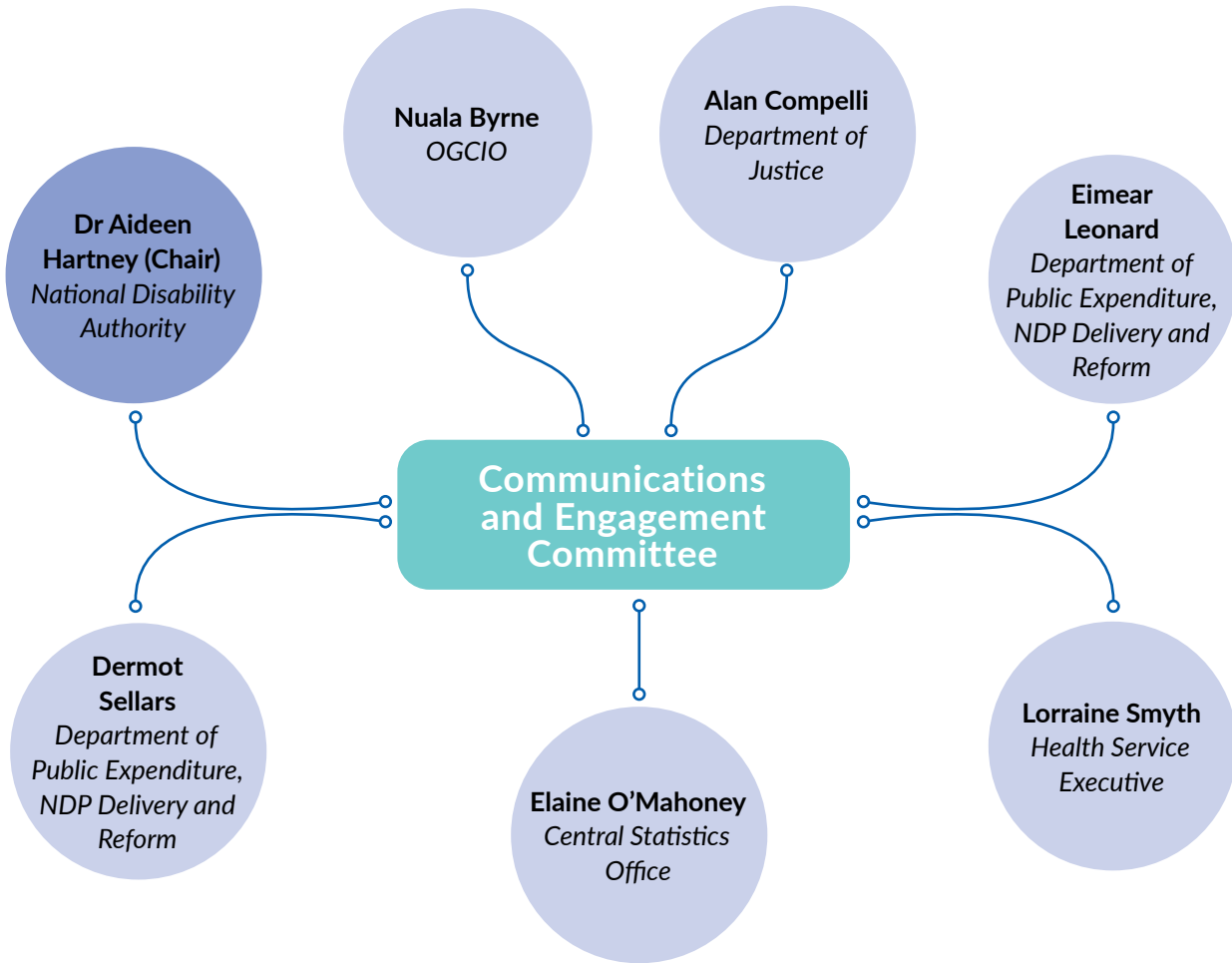
The Data Safeguarding and Transparency Committee (DSTC), established in December 2022, is working on the development of a Data Sharing Ethics framework to support public bodies as they address the ethical issues around sharing data.

This Board initiative will serve as a guide for public bodies to assist in the integration of ethics into their decisions around data sharing, by advising public bodies on how to engage openly, and how to fully consider the potential benefits and harms in data sharing.

The DSTC works closely with the Communications and Engagement committee to provide guidance on how to define and communicate the overall public good of data sharing.

This critical work by the committee allows for the safe and effective sharing of data across the public service, maintaining trust and unlocking the full potential of data for the benefit of society.





The Communications and Engagement Committee (CEC) was established to advise the Board on its communications and engagement with all stakeholders, noting that public consultation on Data Sharing Agreements is a key part of communications and engagement with stakeholders.

The CEC is working to deliver an overarching Communications Strategy to guide the communications and engagement activity of the

Board and its committees. This Strategy will guide short/medium term activities in relation to data sharing and data governance; and will be used to underpin a Communications and Engagement Framework for the longer term. This allows the Board to build a shared sense of understanding and acceptance of public service data sharing activities for the public good, as well as national and international stakeholders who can look to the work of the Board as a model of good practice in promoting transparent and safe data sharing.

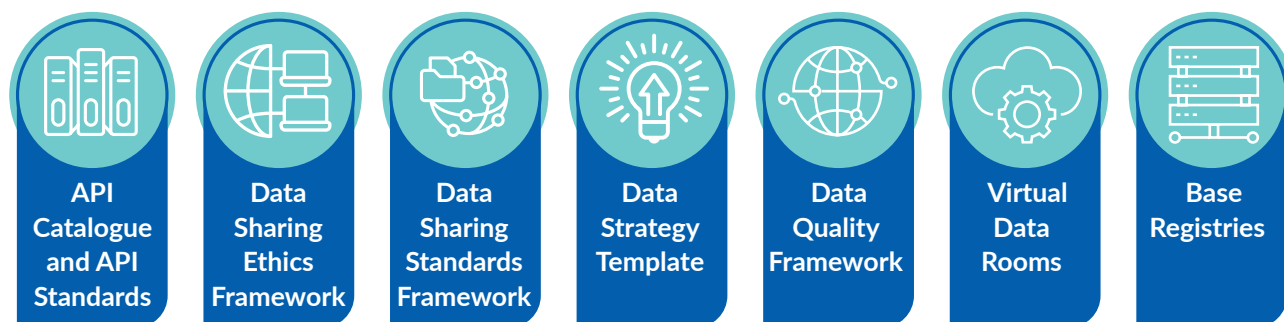


# The Data Governance Unit

## Key Enablers for Work Programme from 2024 for Public Bodies

The Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019 assists public bodies in delivering better public services through maximising the potential benefits of using and re-using data. The Board and DGU have worked to ensure that significant progress on initiatives allowed in the Act, has been achieved during the period covered by this Annual Report.

The Board is now moving to the next stage of working with public bodies to deliver key enablers that will allow further exploitation of the Act's potential. Initiatives from the Public Service Data Strategy, the Board and the DGU being undertaken in this phase include:



### API Catalogue and API Standards

In parallel with this, an API Catalogue is under development, a key deliverable in the current [Public Service Data Strategy](#). The Data Architecture and Technical committee are acting as the steering committee for this project.

This catalogue will assist in the discovery of reusable data by public bodies by reducing the administrative burden on public bodies having to recollect data again from citizens and businesses.

The API Catalogue will facilitate an ecosystem of digital interaction between public bodies underpinned by data reusability, transparency and discoverability. This is a major deliverable, which will promote joined up public services as part of the strategy's vision *"to establish a data ecosystem that will improve how we govern, manage and re-use data in a secure, efficient, and transparent way, for the benefit of citizens, businesses and policy makers"*.

The design and development of APIs is complex. The development of a complete set of standards that public bodies should work towards will ensure an improved data sharing ecosystem where security and ease of use are a priority.



### Data Sharing Ethics Framework

The Data Sharing Ethics Framework is another Board initiative that will provide focus for public bodies on the ethical considerations necessary when sharing citizens' personal data. The framework has a people-centred approach, which will serve as a guide for public bodies and allow for the integration of ethics in their decisions about data sharing.

It advises public bodies on how to engage openly, how to fully consider the potential benefits and harms associated with data sharing and how to define and communicate the overall public good.

By addressing these areas through the framework, public bodies can confidently and transparently engage in the safe and effective sharing of data, maintaining trust and enabling the full potential of data for the benefit of all.





## Data Sharing Standards Frameworks

Recognising that a new approach to sharing is needed, the Data Sharing Standards Framework will move the public service towards a comprehensive government-wide data-sharing approach, which encompasses leadership, management and technical skills. The framework will provide a clear roadmap, actions and standards for sharing data across the public sector under the Act. Development of the framework is in line with the deliverables from the current [Public Service Data Strategy](#) and the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#). The framework will ensure that data is managed appropriately and consistently across all public bodies, enhancing public trust in data sharing by those bodies, thus maintaining trust with Government. It will provide public bodies with a set of data sharing standards covering rules, policies, procedures, roles, and guidelines. Combined together these will create an environment promoting data accuracy, consistency, completeness, availability, transparency and security.



## Data Strategy Template

The Data Strategy Template will provide Data Officers within the public service with a practical approach to the development of a data strategy, which can be aligned with varying levels of data governance maturity and data holdings size. In line with previous supports, the template will guide each public body through the Data Strategy formulation process in the form of a Playbook.



## Data Quality Framework

The aim of this framework is to improve the level of data quality management practices across the public sector. It will provide public bodies with a path for continuous improvement and monitoring of the quality of their data holdings. The Board is supporting this work as a significant enabling step, which will facilitate the development of Base Registries and the promotion of data sharing in general. This Framework will guide public bodies through the data quality review process taking into account data quality design principles and data quality dimensions.



## Virtual Data Rooms

The Board is also supporting work on Virtual Data Rooms (VDRs), also called Data Spaces or Data Hubs, which are secure virtual locations for the analysis of data. VDRs will provide public bodies that may have more limited resources and technical capabilities with the opportunity to access high quality data and analytical tools in an environment based on strong data governance, to assist with the development of an evidence-based foundation for key policy and decision-making processes.

Evidence-informed policy and services designed for and with the public is a key aspect of Public Service Transformation 2030. The DGU and the Central Statistics Office are working together to deliver VDRs with governance for the project (sitting with the Data Architecture and Technical committee, and the Board), with the service itself provided by the CSO on an ongoing basis.



## Base Registries

The Base Registries Project has commenced, led by the Board and the DGU, and working closely with Data Officers in public bodies. This project, when implemented, will deliver base registries for the Irish Public Service, which will, among other things, provide secure access to authoritative sources of data that promote the once-only principle of data collection and reuse.

The implementation of base registries is a key action to deliver a joined-up whole of Public Service approach to data governance, management and reuse, as envisaged under [Part 7](#) of Act.

The DGU has surveyed public bodies to identify information on current data collection and reuse workflows, potential master datasets that may be suitable as base registries and any duplicate data holdings. The aim is to gain insight into public bodies' perspectives on the idea of base registries and how they can help reduce the administrative burden on public organisations.







# Working with the Data Governance Unit

## Working with the Data Governance Unit

The Data Governance Unit (DGU), established in 2020, under the remit of the OGCIO provides whole of Public Service support for all matters related to the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#).

The DGU Data Governance Support team provides Secretariat services for the Board and its Committees, and also acts as Secretariat to the Minister of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform for their responsibilities under the Act, along with managing communications, stakeholder engagement and the DSA Register for the Board.

The DGU Data Policy team continues to expand the suite of publications for data sharing standards and guidelines available online for all public bodies. The team also supports public bodies as they move through the DSGA Data Sharing Framework, from the drafting of each DSA through the public consultation process and reviews by the Data Sharing Committee and the Data Governance Board.

The DGU Data Analytics team supports the Board and committees across a range of projects that will ultimately lead to better management and analysis of data.

## Working with the Data Officer Network

The Board and DGU's objective is to encourage consistent and well-governed data sharing, thereby improving the quality of public service data and a more efficient use of data for the delivery of public services. In order to progress this and to ensure that public bodies can leverage the supports available to them, the DGU has continued to grow the network of Data Officers, which was established as part of the DSGA Data Sharing Framework. Data Officers play a key role in managing DSAs for their organisation and in ensuring adherence to the new rules and processes for data sharing.

The Data Officer is a key stakeholder, providing a critical conduit between public bodies, the DGU and the Board. The Board recognises the important advocacy role played by Data Officers, enabling public bodies to be aware of all initiatives, regulations and legislation (national and EU) and raising awareness of the impact it will have on their organisation.

At the time of this report, there are 47 Data Officers across 40 public bodies. The DGU ensures that Data Officers are informed of key issues and developments through regular Data Officer Bulletins. An in-person seminar for network members is planned for autumn 2023 to provide more clarity on the importance of this role to the success of the DSGA Data Sharing Framework and to look at how the role may develop further, including in the context of the EU Data Governance Act, which will be fully implemented by September 2023.





# Value Added by the Data Governance Board

## Value for the Consumer of public services

The past year has seen the delivery of some very positive outcomes from the work of the Board and the sharing of data under the DSGA Data Sharing Framework. The execution of Data Sharing Agreements reviewed by the Board have enabled a wide range of initiatives, from helping the farming community understand their carbon footprint to supporting micro enterprises at a local level.

Feedback from the Board on the content of DSAs has led to more clarity on the reasons for data sharing and consent for data sharing within individual DSAs. The public consultation process has also provided public bodies with a greater understanding of issues around individual data sharing arrangements.

## Value for the Public Service Bodies

The Data Governance Unit, in working with Data Officers across the public service have provided ongoing advice on the insights gained in guiding DSAs through the data sharing process, enabling

a cycle of continuous improvement in how data is shared.

The process of identifying legal basis for data sharing has led to a reduction in the amount of unnecessary data sharing carried out by public bodies.

Execution of DSAs under the DSGA Data Sharing Framework has led to improved communication around the way that data is used within public bodies. The level of engagement between the Data Officer, Data Protection Officer, Security Specialist and Authorised Signatory, who all play a role in developing each DSA has increased since the introduction of the Framework, and the provision of recommendations by the Board.

The Board is well placed to continue leveraging the legislation to empower public bodies with additional supports, which will lead to continued improvements in data governance and sharing across the public sector in Ireland.

The DSAs considered under the Act to date are delivering value across a broad range of subjects:

# The Value so far

- Helps the families of deceased abroad.
- Helps provide services to graduates.
- Helps farmers understand their carbon footprint.
- Helps provision of schemes funding to eligible people.
- Helps provide protection of animal welfare.
- Helping babies born through international surrogacy.
- Permits organisations to meet their commitments to the OECD.
- Prevents fraud.
- Helps target quality improvements in delivery of a service.
- Provision of centralised IT systems for Local Enterprise Offices.
- Maintains quality assurance schemes.



An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí  
Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe  
Department of Public Expenditure  
NDP Delivery and Reform





# Appendix

## Appendix A – Data Governance Board Member Biographies



### Barry Lowry - Chair

Barry Lowry has been the Chief Information Officer for the Irish Government since April 2016 with the primary task of taking forward the Government's digital agenda. This includes developing the use of shared services, digital ID, digital services and data to better serve the people of Ireland and ensure that Ireland is well-placed to influence and exemplify the EU's digital ambitions for 2030.

Barry is also the Chief Adviser to Government on all Digital matters affecting the State and its citizens.

Barry was previously the Director for IT Shared Services and Strategy and Head of the IT Profession within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.



### Colin Bray

Colin Bray is Chief Operations Officer Surveying, Tailte Éireann. He was previously Chief Executive Officer and Chief Survey Officer of Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi), the national mapping agency. Colin has over 25 years' experience in strategic geospatial information management and took up the position of CEO in 2013.

Colin is President of 'EuroGeographics (the association of Heads of European National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities)', a past member of the European Executive Committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and is a Past-President of the Society of Chartered Survey Ireland (SCSI).

Colin holds a Master's of Science Degree in Management/Organisational Behaviour (Trinity College Dublin), a European Honours degree in Geodetic Engineering (Fachhochschule Oldenburg, Germany) and a Diploma in Geo-Surveying (Dublin Institute of Technology).



### Seamus Carroll

Seamus Carroll has worked in the Department of Justice where he was responsible for policy development and law reform in a number of civil law areas, including data protection. He represented the State in the negotiations leading up to adoption of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and law enforcement Directive, as well as the Council of Europe's updated Data Protection Convention (Convention 108+). He was subsequently involved in drafting the legislation that became the Data Protection Act 2018. Prior to his work in the Department of Justice, Seamus had worked in the Department of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission.





## Pádraig Dalton (Observer)

Pádraig was appointed to the role of Director General of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) at the end of May 2012. Pádraig is a career statistician having joined the CSO in 1991 and worked in most areas of the Office throughout his career

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) is Ireland's national statistical office and its purpose is to impartially collect, analyse and make available statistics about Ireland's people, society and economy. The CSO also has a legislative role in to coordinating official statistics compiled by public authorities to ensure, in particular, adherence to standards and the use of appropriate classifications.

Pádraig is engaged in a broad range of groups both nationally and internationally including the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC - a comitology committee), Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and the CES Bureau, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) High Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics, serving as Chair from November 2013 to March 2018, the National Statistics Board and the Civil Service Management Board.

Pádraig is a graduate of University College Dublin where he was awarded a Masters in Economics in 1990



## Angela Denning

Angela Denning is the Chief Executive of the Courts Service where she leads an ambitious modernisation programme centred around digital delivery of services so as to improve access to justice.

She is a qualified barrister with over 20 year's operational experience in the Courts Service including a period where she was appointed as Deputy Master of the High Court.

Prior to her appointment to her current role, Angela worked in the Reform Division of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform where she had responsibility for a range of policy areas supporting increased transparency and improved public trust in Government.



## Mark Finlay

Mark Finlay is Head of Public Sector (PS) for Ireland at Amazon Web Services (AWS). His team supports PS customers to drive digital transformation by leveraging AWS Cloud. This focus includes Government, National Security, Education, Healthcare, State-Owned, and Not for Profit Organisations (NPOs), supporting the delivery of scalable, reliable, secure, and cost effective solutions to transform public services.

Prior to AWS, Mark worked as Sales and Marketing Director at Motech, an assisted living start-up, providing technology to support the elderly to live independently for longer, working with channel partners, local authorities, and housing associations across Ireland and the UK. Mark also worked for 8 years at Telefónica O2 Ireland leading the Internet of Things (IoT) business, supporting financial services, transport, and security organisations with secure and reliable connectivity to enable their customer solutions.





## Joanne Geary

Joanne is a senior leader with over 20 years' experience leading transformative change in both public and private sector organisations. She holds several independent non-executive directorships and provides coaching to business leaders and their teams. She comes with a strong background in the establishment, operation and oversight of data registers and associated eco-systems.

Joanne began her career as a statistician in the Central Statistics Office. She later specialised in strategy and change consultancy with PWC and IBM where she led enterprise-wide transformational projects in both Ireland and the UK. She also worked with UCD, providing commercial, strategic advisory and planning services to the Vice President for Research.

Joanne holds both a BComm and MBS from University College Cork; post graduate Diploma in Commercial Law from the Law Society of Ireland; and post graduate Diploma in Business and Executive coaching from Leeds Beckett University.



## Dr. Aideen Hartney

Dr Aideen Hartney became Director (Chief Executive) of the National Disability Authority (NDA) in mid-2020, having joined the organisation in 2016 as its Head of Policy, Research and Public Affairs. The National Disability Authority (NDA) is the independent statutory body, which provides evidence-based advice and research to Government on disability policy and practice and promotes Universal Design. (Universal Design involves the design of the built environment, products, services and information and communications technology (ICT) so that they can be accessed, understood and used by all, regardless of age, size, ability or disability).

A key function of the organisation is gather and use data and statistics to inform the planning and delivery of policies relevant to persons with disabilities. The NDA does this by conducting primary research itself, as well as through secondary data analysis using information gathered by the Central Statistics Office and administrative data held across the public sector. The organisation works closely with public stakeholders to improve the collection, availability and use of disability data.

Aideen has had a long career in overseeing research for the public good, having managed several major funded research programmes in University College Dublin, before coming to the NDA. She also has private sector experience following 7 years as a market research consultant. Aideen holds a doctorate in Ancient History, and lectured for a time at the University of Bristol.







## Helen Martin

Helen was appointed Chief Executive of the Charities Regulator in 2019 having joined as Director of Regulation in 2017. The Charities Regulator is the independent statutory body responsible for maintaining a public register of charitable organisations in Ireland and ensuring compliance with the Charities Acts. It works closely with public bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that standards of governance, transparency and accountability in the charities sector are enhanced for the benefit of donors, beneficiaries and the wider public.

Prior to joining the Charities Regulator, Helen was an Assistant Parliamentary Counsel in the Office of the Attorney General for 8 years, where she was responsible for drafting primary and secondary legislation for the Government. Previously Helen worked in the private sector for over 10 years specialising in the national and European regulatory framework for electronic communications. During that time, Helen worked as a senior associate in the EU, Competition and Regulatory Law unit of a large law firm and as an in-house legal and regulatory adviser for a number of telecommunications companies.

Qualifying originally as a barrister in 2002, Helen was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2008. She holds a Bachelor of Civil Law Degree, a Barrister at Law Degree, a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies, a Postgraduate Diploma in EC Competition Law, and an Advanced Diploma in Media Law and Social Media.



## Dr. Clare Thornley

Clare Thornley has an MA in Philosophy from the University of Edinburgh and an MSc in Information Management and a PhD in Information Retrieval from the University of Strathclyde. She started her career as an Information Officer in the UK voluntary sector before completing her PhD and moving into research. Currently she works as a standards and ICT professionalism expert on a number of projects under the Digital Europe Programme.

Clare has extensive expertise in the use of data, information and knowledge to improve practice and policy. Her recent research projects and publications cover a range of topics including the codification of ethics into knowledge resources for the ICT profession and the nature of innovation in academic industry collaborative research projects.

Clare also teaches 'Information Organisation' for the Masters of Library and Information Management at Dublin Business School.



## Brendan Twomey

Brendan J. Twomey was educated at CBS, Synge Street, Dublin, University College, Dublin and the University of Amsterdam. He was admitted as a Solicitor in 1978 and holds a Bachelor of Civil Law degree and a Diploma in the Legal aspects of European Integration.

He retired as sole principal of James P. Sweeney & Co in Falcarragh, Donegal in 2018 with forty years' experience as a solicitor in general practice. He is the Revenue Sheriff for County Donegal since 1987, and in that capacity has experience of data protection issues and implementation of GDPR.

He is a past President of the Donegal Bar Association. He is a director and trustee of The Solicitor's Benevolent Association. He was elected to the Council of the Law Society in 2008 and has served as Chair of the Curriculum Development Unit, Co- Chair of Law Society Finuas Skillnet and the Education Committee and The Law Society Guidance and Ethics Committee.

He has served on the Law Society Task Force on Conveyancing Conflicts, the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and on the Peart Commission on the reform of Solicitor training and the Mental Health and Capacity Task force and the Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee.

Brendan is also a founder member and director of Donegal Famine Heritage Centre (Dunfanaghy) CLG, the Workhouse Heritage Centre in Dunfanaghy.



## Barbara Ubaldi

Barbara Ubaldi is the Head of the Digital Government and Data Unit in the Division on Open and Innovative Governments within the OECD Public Governance Directorate.

Barbara leads the work on digital technologies and data to enhance openness, efficiency and innovation in governments. She is responsible for country reviews, for monitoring the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies and for the OECD OURdata Index and Digital Government Index.

Barbara served for eight years as Programme Officer within the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. She gathered extensive experience working on digital government, ICT and knowledge management for development. A Fulbright Scholar, Barbara holds a M.S. on Public Administration from Northeastern University in Boston. Apolitical listed Barbara among the 2018 and 2019 TOP 20 most influential figures on Digital Government worldwide.





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