

2025-
2027



THE LABOUR COURT
An Chúirt Oibreachais

Labour Court Strategic Plan 2025-2027

Our Mission

“To provide high quality, fair and impartial arrangements for the resolution of industrial disputes and the determination of appeals in disputes based on employment law.”

Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Implementation	2
1.2 Delivery.....	2
2. About the Labour Court	2
2.1 The Labour Court in numbers (2024)	3
3. The Labour Court’s mission, values, vision	4
4. Strategic Priorities, Objectives and KPIs	5
5. Public Sector Duty.....	9

1. Introduction

This strategic plan aims to set goals and objectives for the Labour Court to support and continue to deliver on this mission for the three-year period 2025-2027.

This strategic plan builds on the innovations introduced during 2022–2024, embedding new ways of working both within the Court and across the workplaces it serves. Key developments include the widespread transition to flexible and remote working, and the increased use of technology to support virtual, blended and in-person hearings.

As the workplace continues to evolve, the Court will prioritise adaptability, flexibility and excellence in service delivery for all individuals and organisations that avail of its services. A key element of this Strategy is the commitment to embedding equality and human rights across all decision-making, policies and service delivery. Through this commitment, the Court will ensure that its procedures, information and services are inclusive, accessible and respectful of the rights and needs of all Court users.

1.1 Implementation

- Assigning specific objectives to the most appropriate individuals and teams to lead their delivery.
- Developing annual business plans that set out clear goals, targets, and lead responsibilities.
- Continuously monitoring and reporting progress against the established performance indicators.
- Applying a rolling review approach to ensure the Strategy remains relevant in a changing environment.

1.2 Delivery

- Strong leadership, effective change management, and a shared commitment from Court members and staff.
- Flexible, skilled personnel supported by targeted learning and development to maintain high-quality service delivery.
- Robust, transparent governance and sustainable resourcing to ensure efficient and accountable operations.
- Active fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty across all policies, decisions and services.
- Close alignment with DETE policies and strategic priorities to support coherence within the wider workplace-relations and regulatory system.

2. About the Labour Court

The Labour Court is an independent workplace dispute resolution body providing a comprehensive service for the resolution of disputes concerning industrial relations and employments rights. The Labour Court is publicly funded and, in general, provides its services free of charge to the public.

The Labour Court deals with two main types of cases. In industrial relations disputes, it acts as a tribunal that hears both sides and issues a written recommendation outlining its view on the merits of the dispute and how it should be resolved. While not legally binding, parties are expected to give serious consideration to these recommendations.

In employment rights cases, the Court hears appeals of Adjudication Officers’ decisions under employment law statutes where a worker claims their statutory rights have been breached. These cases concern legal entitlements, and the Court’s written decisions are binding and enforceable. Decisions may be appealed to the High Court on a point of law or challenged through judicial review.

The Labour Court consists of ten full-time members: the Chairman, three Deputy Chairmen, and six Ordinary Members, three of whom are Employer Members and three of whom are Worker Members.

The Labour Court is supported in its function by a Registrar and administration service which is staffed by permanent employees who are civil servants and part of the staffing establishment of the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.

2.1 The Labour Court in numbers (2024)



1,119 Appeals/Referrals



1,385 Hearings Scheduled



834 Cases Completed



10 Members



22 (21.2wte) Admin Staff



€3.538m Spend



57 hearings in a Virtual Courtroom

3. The Labour Court’s mission, values, vision and strategic priorities



4. Strategic Priorities, Objectives and KPIs

Strategic Priority 1: Provide an efficient and high-quality service to court users

The Court provides services to a wide range of users, including workers, employers, legal representatives, public bodies, and the wider public. As many cases arise in challenging or adversarial circumstances, we are committed to delivering a consistent, impartial and user-centred service. In line with DETE’s focus on accessible, high-quality public services, we aim to ensure every Court user experiences a professional and respectful service that supports confidence in the workplace relations system.

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
Deliver improved processing, listing and management of cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology-led solutions with minimal use of paper files put in place • Implementation of efficient and effective processes and resources • Value for money delivered • Court operating to optimum capacity
Ensure that all scheduled Court sittings are supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous achievement of high standards of accessibility for people with disabilities and/or language needs • Hybrid hearings and fully remote hearings will continue to be delivered
Enhance public understanding of the Labour Court’s role and services through updated public information and improved communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated and modernised public information materials published during the strategy period • Website design and content refreshed to improve clarity and accessibility • Increased public awareness and understanding of the Court’s functions via the website and social media • Consistent application of updated visual and communication standards across public-facing materials
Develop appropriate Customer Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Customer Service Action Plan and Charter • Ensure Administration Team receive appropriate training to deliver on high Customer Service levels

Strategic Priority 2: Develop and support Court members and administrative staff

The Court must demonstrate strong expertise in industrial relations, collective employment practices, and employment law, reflecting its role as the State's sole appellate body for employment-rights disputes. Court members continually develop their judicial, legal and industrial-relations skills through ongoing professional learning. Administrative staff must likewise possess the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively, support the Court's work, and achieve their full potential.

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
Court members demonstrate a high level of competence and expertise in industrial relations and employment law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rate of acceptance by external parties of industrial relations recommendations • Low rate of appeals of decisions of the Court on points of law • Low rate of Judicial Review • Consistent quality of legal decision writing
Identify current and future professional development needs and implement measures to address and support member development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court members demonstrate active engagement with CPD and participation in CPD events organised by the Court
Support administrative staff development by identifying and addressing current and future training needs and ensuring that all staff are provided with the skills, knowledge and experience to perform and develop within their roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have clarity in relation to their roles, duties, and responsibilities • Staff training needs identified and addressed, and training courses implemented where required • Opportunities for internal and external mobility identified • Continuous assessment and feedback on staff performance in place
Provide for knowledge transfer to ensure continuity of service when administrative staff move due to promotion, mobility, or retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of handover document • Robust procedure manuals • Training/educational programmes provided
Enhance internal communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and members kept informed through regular communications and updates • Internal Communication Strategy implemented

Strategic Priority 3: Optimise technology and improve case management process

The Labour Court is committed to strengthening its digital and technology capacity in line with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment’s (DETE) strategic focus on digital transformation, innovation, user-centred services and future-proofed infrastructure.

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<p>Generate efficiencies from greater use of digital and online service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement of the Labour Court’s digital infrastructure to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of digital and virtual access to Court users where required ○ Remote hearings through virtual platforms ○ Blended physical and remote hearings • Enhanced use of document management systems (CMS) to optimise resources and reduce administrative burden
<p>Identify and implement more efficient processes and workflows supporting DETE’s focus on developing workforce capability and embedding continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training needs to support the digitised infrastructure are identified, documented, and incorporated into staff training planning • Process reviews are completed on schedule, with recommendations implemented to enhance efficiency and user experience
<p>Enhance the Labour Court’s website to provide improved and user-friendly access to information and online services for court users in keeping with DETE’s commitment to high-quality and transparent public services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website traffic increased using social media platforms • Ongoing review and update of website content to ensure accuracy, accessibility and relevance • Expansion and increased uptake of online appeals, submissions and digital forms, aligned with DETE’s digitalisation goals

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure effective governance

Effective governance is essential to maintaining the Labour Court’s independence, credibility and operational capabilities. Securing the resources necessary for the Court’s efficient functioning underpins the delivery of our statutory mandate. In alignment with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment’s (DETE) strategic commitment to strengthening the regulatory environment, enhancing organisational performance, and ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources, the Labour Court will embed strong governance systems that support compliance, resilience and continuous improvement

Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
Full compliance with DETE governance requirements, including business planning, financial procedures, procurement, GDPR, FOI, records management and BCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly governance updates submitted to DETE through the Liaison Unit • Zero material findings in internal audits relating to governance or statutory compliance. • Review of governance policies completed and improvements incorporated during strategy period
Secure sustainable resourcing to ensure effective delivery of the Court’s statutory mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget allocation secured through structured engagement with DETE through Liaison Unit • Funding utilisation reported transparently • Evidence of value for money demonstrated through procurement compliance
Embed robust risk-management practices to support organisational resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk register updated quarterly, with mitigation actions tracked, in line with latest DETE Risk Management Policy • All staff complete risk management training biennially

5. Public Sector Duty

The Labour Court is committed to promoting equality and human rights across all of its functions. In line with our obligations under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, we are working to embed these principles in all decision-making, policies, services and organisational practices, ensuring that our operations are fair, inclusive and respectful of the rights of all who engage with the Court.

Assessment

The Labour Court has carried out an assessment of the human rights and equality issues of relevance to the Court and this can be accessed on the Publications page of the Labour Court website.

Actions

Over the lifetime of this strategic plan, the Labour Court will progress the actions identified in our Human Rights and Equality Assessment to ensure equality of access, participation, and fair outcomes for all users of the Court. This includes ensuring that our procedures, information, and services are inclusive, accessible, and fully respectful of human rights. To support this, we will complete an accessibility and equality review of all public-facing information and Court venues, and staff will receive equality and human rights training relevant to Court services during the Strategy period. Progress on these actions will be reported through the Labour Court Annual Report.