

Programme of Work 2026





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01 Foreword



Mark Cullen
Chief Executive Officer

Building on the momentum achieved in 2025, this programme sets out a breadth of initiatives across our mandates that will progress our vision for healthy and safe working lives, robust regulation and accreditation services, and supporting vibrant enterprises.

This Programme of Work has been developed in a wider context of economic volatility and change, both in Ireland and internationally. Public service bodies are required now, more than ever, to demonstrate the strategic agility to respond to evolving challenges and disruptive technologies, while remaining focused on the outcomes we intend to achieve for the public. Alongside our whole-of-Government and European partners, the Health and Safety Authority will continue in 2026 to support the growth of an innovative, resilient, safe and productive economic landscape.

In 2026 we will deliver a comprehensive range of activities that will reflect the depth and diversity of our mandate. While actions will be delivered and measured in different ways, they will be evidence-led, risk-based and reflective of our values of collaboration, outcomes-focus, responsiveness and ethics.

Partnership is a key theme across our 2026 Programme of Work. The cornerstone of our occupational health and occupational safety mandates this year will be the delivery of a comprehensive compliance programme. This programme will utilise a range of measures – from evidence-based inspections to public awareness campaigns – to help realise improved health and safety outcomes in all sectors of the economy. Where necessary, we will hold duty holders to account through enforcement. In every instance, our partners in industry will play a key role in helping to realise our shared commitment to safe work practices. In 2026, this approach will be supported by implementation of the action plans of our Construction Safety Partnership, Farm Safety Partnership and Health and Social Care Advisory Committees, as well as wider collaboration with stakeholders in other high-risk sectors.

I am pleased to present this Programme of Work for 2026, which is the second of three annual programmes that will give effect to the ambition and intent of our 2025-2027 Strategy Statement.

Under our chemicals and market surveillance mandates, we will deliver a diverse range of competent authority functions in 2026. This will extend from a comprehensive chemical inspection programme, targeting high-risk substances and high-risk activities, to the provision of technical expertise in support of ongoing reform of EU chemicals regulations. This will support increased competitiveness and simplified compliance processes while maintaining protections for human health and the environment.

Our ongoing work in market surveillance will be augmented by our designation as a competent authority under the EU Artificial Intelligence Act. Understanding, anticipating and discharging these new responsibilities, as part of a whole-of-Government framework, will be a strategic area of focus in 2026.

This year also marks a key moment for the Irish National Accreditation Board, as it undergoes its scheduled peer evaluation and enters into the final year of the current Strategy for Accreditation.

All of this will require the right people, with the right skills, working together to deliver our shared ambitions. Our commitment to innovation and continuous improvement, with support for our people at its core, will continue at scale in 2026. A central pillar will be delivery of the remaining phases of our Córas case management platform, as part of our wider ICT reform programme, which will enhance how we capture, understand and use key data. In addition, our development of public-facing online portals will streamline and simplify the ways in which duty holders can comply with their regulatory obligations.

In 2026, we will develop our approach to measuring the wider outcomes of our work. Developing this model will allow us to demonstrate how our complex range of compliance, outreach, advisory and policy actions are collectively supporting clear strategic outcomes for safe workers and safe work.

Finally, as Ireland prepares to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026, we will embrace the opportunity to strengthen ties and deepen partnerships with our fellow competent authorities, both in Ireland and Europe.

Mark Cullen
Chief Executive Officer, Health and Safety Authority

Vision

To deliver healthy and safe working lives and contribute to productive enterprises.

To regulate, enforce, and promote work-related safety, health, and welfare, and the safe use of chemicals and products; and to provide the national accreditation service.

Mandate

- ▶ To regulate the safety, health and welfare of people at work and those affected by work activities.
- ▶ To influence improvement in the safety, health, and welfare of people at work and those affected by work activities.
- ▶ To regulate and promote the safe manufacture, use, placing on the market, trade, supply, storage, and transport of chemicals.
- ▶ To strengthen market surveillance in relation to relevant single European market legislation.
- ▶ To be the national accreditation body for Ireland.

Our CORE Values

Collaboration:

We are a people-centred organisation that listens, consults and collaborates with employees, employers, stakeholders, and partners.

Outcomes focus:

All our work is focused on achieving better outcomes.

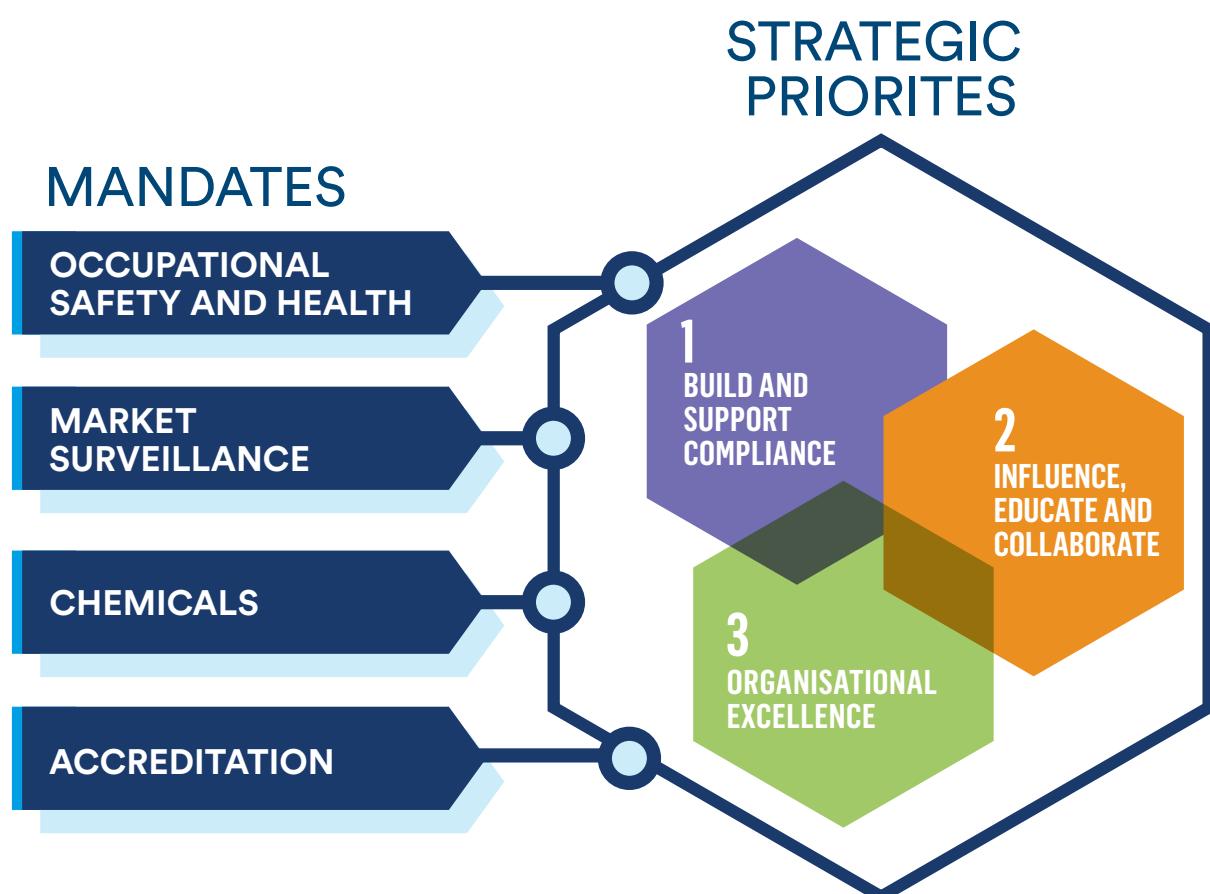
Responsiveness:

We are a progressive organisation that drives continuous improvement through innovation. We use data to inform what we do, and we evaluate and share learnings.

Ethics:

We uphold the highest professional, governance, and ethical standards. We will earn trust by being accountable and delivering our services in a rigorous, consistent and fair manner.

Strategic Priorities 2025-2027



Strategic Priority 1:

Build and Support Compliance

Embed a culture of compliance, collaboration and best practice.



**BUILD AND
SUPPORT
COMPLIANCE**



**Identify and focus on the areas
of highest risk where we can
have the greatest impact**

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Deliver a comprehensive programme of risk-based, evidence-led workplace health and safety inspections across all sectors of the economy.
- ▶ Respond appropriately to serious workplace incidents, complaints and emergencies.
- ▶ Utilise data to identify specific sectors that pose the highest health and safety risks, and respond with a targeted range of enforcement, compliance and awareness-raising interventions.
- ▶ Use the insights and objectives of our Construction Safety Partnership, Farm Safety Partnership and Health and Social Care Advisory Committee action plans to inform our risk-based approach.
- ▶ Along with the construction, agriculture and healthcare sectors, we will also target a number of other high-risk sectors for workplace health and safety inspections, including manufacturing, utilities, ports, quarries and waste industries.
- ▶ Conduct targeted occupational health and hygiene inspections across key sectors, with a focus on chemical, biological and physical agents, along with health surveillance and first aid.

- ▶ Continue to assess our processes to ensure psychosocial risks are regulated in an efficient, effective and proportionate manner.
- ▶ Participate in and support EU enforcement and compliance campaigns in health and safety.
- ▶ Work with our European partner authorities and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to play a leading role in supporting delivery of the European Chemicals Strategy for the safe and sustainable use of chemicals. In 2026, our technical experts will:
 - Help identify hazards posed by chemical substances
 - Collaborate with other competent authorities in the development of scientific opinions on potentially hazardous chemical substances.
- ▶ Deliver a comprehensive programme of risk-based inspections targeting the handling, storage and transport of dangerous substances. In 2026, this will also include interventions at petrol stations and healthcare facilities.
- ▶ Continue to conduct market surveillance on industrial and chemical products. In 2026, this will include participation in EU-wide enforcement activities targeting high-risk chemical products; and continued participation in EU harmonised projects, including personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers.
- ▶ Assess safety reports, evaluate significant modifications and provide land use planning advice for establishments that fall under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations.



Support compliance while enforcing where required

In 2026 we will:

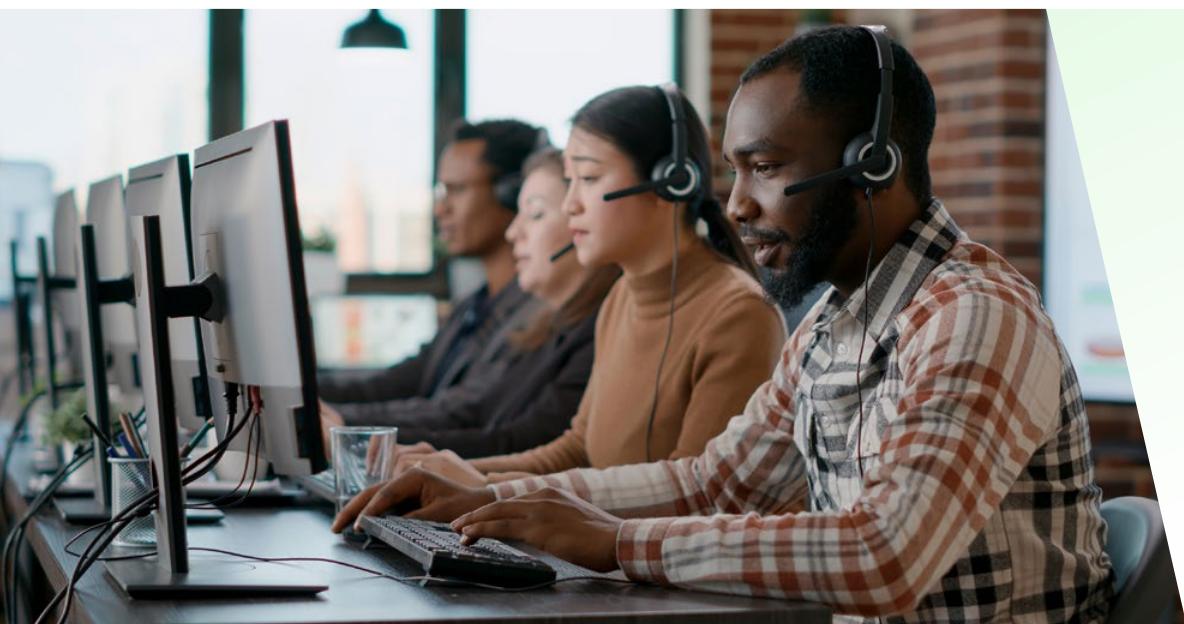
- ▶ Hold duty holders to account by using our full range of enforcement powers, up to and including recommending prosecutions where necessary.
- ▶ Monitor, assess and investigate current trends in fatal and serious workplace incidents, responding as appropriate through inspections, guidance and enforcement actions where necessary.
- ▶ Continue to deliver a victim-centred approach when investigating serious workplace incidents.
- ▶ Design and deliver a series of evidence-based activities to promote improved health and safety outcomes in key sectors, including hospitality, financial services, the public sector, education, arts, motor vehicle maintenance and others.
- ▶ Focus on engaging with large multi-site employers, in order to ensure consistency, clarity and high health and safety standards across all site locations.
- ▶ Strengthen and promote our suite of compliance support tools, including BeSMART, WorkPositive, and HSALearning.ie.
- ▶ As part of the Irish National Accreditation Board Strategy for Accreditation 2022-2026, grow the number of accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies in Ireland to meet demand, and support Irish industry.



Be forward-thinking and scan the horizon for emerging issues and technologies

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Work collaboratively with our partners across the Irish public sector to understand future challenges, anticipate emerging risks, and contribute to the design of whole-of-Government policy responses.
- ▶ This will be underpinned by our horizon scanning processes, which will utilise current data and evidence to define priority areas for research, and anticipate developments in the future world of work.
- ▶ Work collaboratively with our European partners, through ECHA, the European Commission and other appropriate forums, to identify and address emerging regulatory challenges.
- ▶ Promote the online asbestos notification system to support increased efficiency for businesses, and check documentary compliance against the current guide and industry standards.
- ▶ Promote enhanced notification systems for occupational diseases, working with stakeholders in healthcare to develop pathways to gather information on occupational illnesses, and inform our occupational health programme.
- ▶ Through our leading involvement in the EU-OSHA Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-2028, we will focus on mental health and psychosocial risks at work.



Strategic Priority 2:

Influence, Educate and Collaborate

**INFLUENCE,
EDUCATE AND
COLLABORATE**

Influence, educate and collaborate with stakeholders, to ensure appropriate expertise is developed, risks within our remit are mitigated, and society is protected.



Focus key messages on small enterprises, self-employed, and vulnerable workers

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Design and implement initiatives and interventions tailored to the needs of small and medium enterprises, self-employed individuals, and vulnerable workers, including targeted, sector-specific guidance.
- ▶ Develop communication strategies and public outreach initiatives to support our regulatory and enforcement activities, concentrating on areas with the highest risk.
- ▶ Expand the resources available for workplace safety representatives, including information on work-related psychosocial risks.
- ▶ Introduce an occupational health framework to guide employers and other key stakeholders.

- ▶ Actively participate in the EU Senior Labour Inspector Committee and the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health and associated working groups, to ensure Ireland remains a key voice in the development of occupational health and safety policy and regulation at EU level.
- ▶ Provide technical expertise in support of reform of EU chemicals regulations, which will seek to balance the creation of a streamlined regulatory model with the need to protect human health.
- ▶ Hold a client forum for the Conformity Assessment Bodies accredited by the Irish National Accreditation Board. In addition, we will support the Eurachem Analytical Measurement Competition (EAMC).



Proactively influence policy and legislation using our expertise

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Continue to provide technical expertise to the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment in the development of new occupational health and safety regulations in a number of areas, including renewable energy; construction; carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances; asbestos; and the transposition of the EU Platform Directive into domestic law.



Develop a culture of collaboration with industry, stakeholders and education providers

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Maximise opportunities for knowledge exchange with our public sector partners, in order to broaden our insights and support safe and productive work activity.
- ▶ Collaborate with external stakeholders in order to build specialist knowledge, share expertise, and better inform the resources we offer to employers.
- ▶ Establish occupational health and safety learning outcomes for education providers and workplaces.

- ▶ Utilise opportunities to collaborate with our EU-level partners, access specialist knowledge and expertise, benefit from the latest technical and scientific research, and influence and amplify key messages through our EU networks.
- ▶ Support the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment in their engagements as part of reform and simplification of EU chemicals regulations.
- ▶ Work with stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Quarries) Regulations and the Code of Practice on Industrial Trucks.



Strategic Priority 3:

Organisational Excellence

ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Ambitious, ethical, outcome driven, innovative and data enriched organisation, which empowers our people to deliver on our mandate.



Ensure the Authority has the right skills for the future

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Continue to manage our recruitment process to ensure that we attract and retain candidates with the skills and experience we need to deliver our mandate.
- ▶ Provide extensive learning and development programmes for all of our people, tailored to support them in their specific roles, ranging from technical and IT skills to management and leadership development.
- ▶ Review, update and strengthen our core inspector development programme.
- ▶ Work with other organisations to explore opportunities for joint training and knowledge-sharing, including in key areas such as investigation skills and regulation of artificial intelligence.
- ▶ Build on the success of our Leadership Academy Programme in 2025 by implementing improvements across a range of organisational areas, with a focus on key themes identified in our Work Positive survey.



Be innovative and agile

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Undertake a comprehensive review of our current risk management framework, to ensure swift identification and mitigation of potential challenges or disruptions
- ▶ Embed the principles of ISO9001 into our operations in order to support best practice, consistency, customer focus and continuous improvement.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence in a proactive and secure manner to increase efficiencies in our day-to-day activity, in line with public sector guidance.
- ▶ Ensure that the Authority is prepared for a major emergency or crisis incident by embedding a resilience framework that will ensure business continuity, crisis management and disaster recovery.
- ▶ Facilitate professional and innovative delivery of the Authority's EU presidency programme, with events organised to the highest standard, showcasing the best locations, facilities and engagement opportunities for visitors from across Europe.



Measure better the outcomes of our work

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Develop and test our pilot approach to outcomes-based reporting, setting clear goals, utilising simple tracking tools and conducting regular reviews of a number of pilot projects, in order to demonstrate the benefits and impacts of our work.
- ▶ Leverage advanced data collection and workflow technologies to enhance reporting of inspection results, enforcement decisions, and stakeholder interactions.
- ▶ Complete a review of the delivery of our People Strategy and Communications Strategy, bring forward key objectives to the next strategy cycle, and consider new objectives to support delivery of the Authority's 2025-2027 Strategy Statement.



Maximise the value of the investment made in technology

In 2026 we will:

- ▶ Deliver the remaining phases of the Córas case management platform, introducing automation, enhanced functionality and improved workflows to support regulatory operations.
- ▶ Deploy mobile-enabled inspection tools and geospatial mapping capabilities to support remote fieldwork, improve planning, visualise risk data, and enhance oversight of chemical sites and control areas.
- ▶ Develop the Irish National Accreditation Board's Client Relationship Management system and other IT tools, in order to maximise effectiveness and efficiency.
- ▶ Successfully procure and commence implementation of an IT solution to support our human resources activity.



It is essential that the Authority can demonstrate where we have delivered against strategic priorities and achieved a positive impact. To do this we will need to report on a range of outcome and output measures.

In our Annual Reports, we evaluate and appraise the implementation of our annual programmes of work. We will continue to report against the output metrics in the table below and the associated targets as agreed with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment in our annual Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement. Quarterly and annual reports will be approved by the Board and submitted to the Department.

With the support of our Board, we have committed to developing a framework for reporting on progress against longer-term strategic outcomes. Measuring and reporting the outcomes and impact of our work is a complex task, and it will take time to develop a suitable and effective framework.

Many of our desired strategic outcomes will be achieved over the three annual work programmes of the strategy period, and beyond, and will require longer-term evaluation methods. Evaluations will also need to take account of the impact of Authority interventions compared to other influencing factors. Updates on the project to develop an outcome reporting framework will be provided in future annual reports.

An important objective in 2026 is that the Authority provides significant support to Ireland as it assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Authority will have a key role in providing technical expertise and support to the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. It is expected that there will be a substantial workload in this, particularly with regard to forthcoming chemicals legislation, and so to help to ensure that the Presidency is as effective as possible a significant volume of the Authority's resources will be dedicated to supporting it.

Output target metrics		2026
Inspections (Occupational Safety and Health)		11,550
Inspections (Chemicals Act and Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road)		900
Market Surveillance assessments (Chemical Products)		750
Market Surveillance assessments (Industrial Products)		450
New users of BeSMART		15,000
Scientific opinions prepared for ECHA Committees		6
Accreditation decisions (New applications)		15
Accreditation decisions (Renewal of existing accreditation or extensions to scope)		420
HSA Learning course taken		65,000
Events hosted by HSA during the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU		4

Notes



Our Vision:

To deliver healthy and safe working lives and contribute to productive enterprises



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

Health and Safety Authority

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