



CCPC Opening Statement Committee of Public Accounts

28 May 2026

Good afternoon, Cathaoirleach and members of the Committee,

I am Brian McHugh, the Chairperson of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), and I am joined by Úna Butler, Member of the CCPC, Geoffrey Gray, Member of the CCPC, Emily Barry, Director of Corporate Services and Enda Duffy, Head of Finance. We welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss the CCPC's Financial Statements for 2024.

What the CCPC is

The CCPC is the statutory body responsible for enforcing and promoting compliance with competition, consumer protection and product safety law. We also have important and expanding roles in relation to digital markets and data.

Evolution of the CCPC

The CCPC was established under the Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014, which sets out our role and powers

It was formed from the amalgamation of two agencies: the National Consumer Agency (NCA) and the Competition Authority (TCA). This brought under one roof the consumer regimes of Consumer Enforcement, Product Safety, Consumer Information, Financial Education and Consumer Advocacy and the competition regimes of Cartels, Antitrust, Mergers and Competition Advocacy.

The decision to establish the CCPC acknowledged the important synergies between competition and consumer protection. It also delivered significant corporate efficiencies. The same Commissioner structure used in the Competition Authority was tasked with overseeing the combined agency. The amalgamation has been a real success, and we continue to see powerful benefits from the combination of consumer and competition functions.

Expanded Mandate

In more than a decade since we were established, our functions, powers and mandate have expanded significantly. Examples include:

- Acting as national co-ordinator for the EU Data Act
- New supervision and enforcement responsibilities under the EU Digital Services Act
- A new administrative adjudication regime for breaches of competition law
- Responsibility for the European Consumer Centre, which supports consumers in cross-border transactions
- Enhanced surveillance powers for investigating serious breaches of competition law
- New responsibilities for products under the EU Accessibility Act
- New powers under the AI Act including to address safety risks with products using AI

We understand further responsibilities may be assigned to the CCPC in the coming months. While some of these new functions strengthen our competition and consumer powers, a number of them expand our mandate into new areas which brings additional challenges.

Evolution of staff/resources budget

When the CCPC was first established, the Commission consisted of one chair and four commission members, overseeing 75 staff working across nine specialist divisions.

Our expanded mandate has required the addition of multiple new divisions over the last decade. Our sanctioned headcount has grown to 275 posts and we have seen our overall budget increase from €12.5 million to €35.8 million, although we note the CCPC received no significant additional exchequer funding in 2026.

While the increase in resources is welcome, real pressure remains with managing the expanding mandate. In particular, we would note that all the new functions have been added without significant changes to the most senior management structure. We welcome recent positive engagement with the Department and addressing this remains the most urgent priority for the Commission in managing our risks.

CCPC value

I mentioned already that the creation of the CCPC has been a success and our work in recent years highlights this. This includes:

- Uncovering cartel activity that harms taxpayers. In December 2025, following a CCPC investigation, five school transport operators were found guilty of rigging bids in a public tender competition.
- Opening investigations into suspected breaches of competition law in multiple sectors including: [small household electric appliances](#), [healthcare software](#), [port services](#) and [betting](#).
- Successfully blocking the sale of a car park near Dublin Airport to DAA due to serious competition concerns. Today, thanks to our decision, consumers parking at the airport have more choice and lower prices.
- Prosecuting several major retailers for breaches of consumer protection law, including Boots, BT Arnotts, Tesco, Lifestyle Sports, DID Electrical and Rathwood, and most recently, prosecuting Quills Woollen Market in Kerry for misleading consumers, mostly tourists, by labelling products as made in Ireland.
- Preventing over 276,000 unsafe products from reaching the Irish market in 2025, including the recall of over 10,000 unsafe baby soothers.
- As well as specific cases, we have published a high-level review of our impact in competition and consumer interventions. This peer-reviewed analysis showed that for every €1 spent on the CCPC, it gives a consumer benefit of €21.

Financials and corporate governance

The CCPC is governed by a Commission structure which consists of a Chairperson and currently three Members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. The Chairperson and Members form a collegiate decision-making



Commission for key statutory decisions in addition to having whole-time executive responsibilities.

While the funding model of the CCPC has become more complex since 2024, there is a strong system of internal financial controls and effective governance arrangements in place including a robust risk management framework, internal audit function and oversight by its Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).

The CCPC also has well-established external accountability and reporting responsibilities with the Oireachtas and the Department.

Future focus

Looking to the future, we welcome the proposed Consumer Protection, Competition and Enforcement Bill 2026, which is set to include new powers for the CCPC to screen public tender data for signs of bid-rigging.

Cartels can increase prices by 20-30%. With the State committing €275 billion of public capital investment over the next ten years under the National Development Plan, it is essential the CCPC has access to public tender data so we can protect the public purse from cartels.

The Bill will also enable the CCPC to impose more impactful financial sanctions for breaches of consumer law. This will allow us to impose fines that reflect the seriousness of the breach and act as a more effective deterrent.

In terms of identifying and advocating for change in markets to boost Ireland's competitiveness and improve consumers' lives, we have recently looked at the taxi sector, homebuying and legal sectors. We pledge to continue that work.

Promoting competitive markets and protecting consumers go hand-in-hand. The CCPC will continue to engage constructively to ensure appropriate structures are in place to manage our expanded functions and maintain an efficient and well-governed organisation. As chairperson, I'm hugely proud of the CCPC's team, its work and the positive impact it has on Irish businesses and consumers.

We look forward to our engagement with the Committee and we are happy to answer any questions.