

Derville Rowland: Launch of Ireland's National Payments Strategy

Remarks by Ms Derville Rowland, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, at the Launch of the National Payments Strategy, Dublin, 15 October 2024.

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I would like to welcome the Minister for Finance - Minister Jack Chambers TD - and everyone here today to the Central Bank's offices for the launch of the National Payments Strategy. Let me also echo the Minister's thanks to all involved in the development of the strategy.

In particular, I would like to thank the Department's Strategy Team for their collaboration over the past 16 months, and for providing the Central Bank with the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy.

My thanks also to the members of the Central Bank's Payments Steering Group and the internal expert group who has been supporting the our input into the Strategy.

Call for collaboration

The National Payments Strategy represents a significant milestone for the future development of the Irish payments ecosystem. The Central Bank looks forward to contributing to the successful realisation of the Strategy over the next 5 years and beyond.

We see the Strategy as an opportunity to:

- Ensure that the Irish market stays up-to-date with modern payment functionalities and technologies;
- Put in place initiatives that strengthen the security and resilience of retail payments; and
- To ensure that the Irish payments ecosystem remains interconnected with the rest of the Europe.

As the Minister has referenced, the Strategy outlines a number of ambitious actions that will lay the foundation for the future growth of the Irish payments ecosystem.

In terms of specific actions I would call out, I would highlight that:

- the Strategy will require cooperation in the advancement of **Pay-by-Account solutions** built upon the effective implementation of instant payments and Open Banking; and
- A role for the Central Bank around a **Research and Insights Programme** that we will lead. Enhancing our research and analytical capabilities is critical to understanding the direction and possible impacts of the future evolution of the Irish payments ecosystem.

Fraud

Another area I will highlight and that relates to the issue of **Fraud**. This is an issue which cuts right across the work of the Central Bank – from consumer protection, to our work in payments and to our financial integrity / AML work.

Whilst the volume of **payments fraud** is quite low in Ireland as a percentage of total transactions, nevertheless it can have a detrimental impact on individuals and businesses.

As payments evolve, so too do the techniques used by fraudsters. The rise of social engineering scams has exposed consumers to increasingly sophisticated fraud schemes that can be difficult to detect and prevent. This is why individual firms must be proactive, ensuring they incorporate security by design when developing new payment solutions.

Innovation is required to keep pace with criminal elements seeking to disrupt the payments ecosystem, thereby undermining public trust in the broader financial system.

The fight against fraud is not limited to any individual firm - the entire ecosystem, including both financial and non-financial stakeholders, must work together to meet the challenge of evolving fraud techniques and typologies.

This is why – at the Central Bank - we have been engaging with a number of large tech firms since the start of the year, including Google, encouraging them to do more to ensure they are not facilitating consumer harm. I am pleased that progress has been made in this regard and welcome Google's announcement last week that they will introduce a verification process for financial services advertisers. An effective financial services verification policy is a key disruptive tool in the fight against online financial scams.

For that reason, in particular, I want to welcome the establishment of the Anti-Fraud Forum under the Strategy. This Forum will seek to enhance the formal cooperation between the financial sector, telecoms, and social media companies, whose networks and platforms are often utilised to propagate fraudulent activity.

Let me conclude.

As Minister Chambers outlined, the overarching objective of the National Payments Strategy is to build and enhance public trust in the payment system, by ensuring that it works in the best interests of all consumers and businesses.

Ultimately, the success of the National Payments Strategy will be largely determined by the organisations in attendance today, and the degree to which we all engage in and support this multi-year programme of work.

The Department of Finance has set out the roadmap for the future of the Irish payments ecosystem, and it is now up to us, as a collective, to put our words into action.

I would like to thank you all again for attending the event today. We have arranged a small reception which I hope some of you will be able to stay to attend.

Thank you.