

**Department of the Taoiseach Scheme  
2009-2012  
under Section 15 of the  
Official Languages Act 2003**

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction and Background**

This scheme was prepared by the Department of the Taoiseach under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003.

Section 11 of the Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services they will provide –

- through the medium of Irish
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

- and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe. Our first scheme under the Act came into force on 23 August 2005. Section 15 of the Act requires public bodies to review their existing scheme, and to prepare a new scheme.

### **1.1 Preparation of the Language Scheme**

This scheme has been prepared in accordance with the **Guidelines under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003**.

The Department published a notice under Section 13 on 18 April 2008, inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from any interested parties. Four submissions were received, representing individual and Irish language organisation interests. These submissions are available on the Department's website ([www.taoiseach.gov.ie](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie)) and were taken into account in drawing up the scheme.

Members of the Department's staff were also consulted and their views and suggestions have also informed the scheme, as have the findings, in relation to the provision of service in Irish, of our recent customer surveys.

### **1.2 The Content of the Language Scheme**

This scheme builds on the Department's first language scheme, on the principles of Quality Customer Service, and on the commitment in the Department's Customer Charter to ensure that customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so. It sets out the extent to which services are currently available through Irish, and identifies areas for future enhancement. It also includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish through regular customer surveys, and to ensure that the Department continues to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and accessible way.

### **1.3 Commencement Date of the Scheme**

The scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. It commences with effect from 21 December 2009 and shall remain in force for a period of three years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is earlier.

## 1.4 Overview of the Department of the Taoiseach

### 1.4.1 Mission and Mandate

The mission of the Department of the Taoiseach is to provide the Government, Taoiseach and Ministers of State with the support, policy advice and information necessary for the effective conduct of Government and for the dynamic leadership, co-ordination and strategic direction of Government policy.

The mandate of the Department is to support the Taoiseach in his constitutional and ceremonial role as Head of Government and to assist him in providing effective leadership, co-ordination and guidance across key policy areas. The Department provides three main kinds of support to the Taoiseach:

- **Supporting the efficient functioning of Government:** providing a Secretariat to the Government, liaison with the President and Houses of the Oireachtas, provision of Government Press and Information Services, and of Private Office, Corporate Support and Protocol Services to the Taoiseach and his Ministers of State
- **Supporting Government policy direction and Government co-ordination of major national priorities:** providing an overview of the key policy priorities of the Government; providing timely and relevant information and advice on issues that arise; and providing a longer-term vision and approach. The Department's *Strategy Statement 2008-2010* identifies the following strategic priorities:
  - Northern Ireland
  - European Union and International Affairs
  - Economic and Social Policy
  - Social Partnership
  - Public Service Modernisation
  - Corporate Support Services
- **Providing support services to the Taoiseach, Government Chief Whip, and Minister of State for European Affairs,** including drafting speeches and messages, preparing replies for Parliamentary Questions, and responding to Freedom of Information requests and other representations, often working directly with other Agencies and Departments.

The Taoiseach is assisted by the Minister of State for European Affairs and by the Government Chief Whip. The Chief Whip organises Government business in the Dáil and has specific responsibilities for the Government's legislative programme, Oireachtas Reform, the Central Statistics Office, and Active Citizenship. The Minister of State for European Affairs has responsibility for advancing co-ordination on the full range of European Union issues, and also represents the Government at meetings in a wide range of contexts related to European affairs.

In carrying out these tasks the Department has a staff of just over 200 people.

### **1.4.2 Customers and Stakeholders**

The Department interacts with a broad spectrum of stakeholders including:

- The Taoiseach, Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for Europe, the Government, public representatives and other Government Departments, Offices and Agencies
- The institutions and parties in Northern Ireland, other Governments, and international institutions
- A wide range of actors from outside the public service including the social partners - employers, trade unions, farmers' and other representative bodies, and community and voluntary groups.

We also have links with the academic and research community, with business, with the legal and other professions, and with suppliers of goods and services to the Department.

Unlike many Government Departments, we have limited direct contact with the general public and are not primarily involved in the provision of specific public services to the general public. However, members of the public contact the Department for information or with other queries, and the Taoiseach's Private and Constituency Offices deal with most of these enquiries. The Government Press and Information Services also have a significant role to play in conveying information to the wider public. We also facilitate Saturday Tours of Government Buildings by members of the general public.

### **1.4.3 Functional Areas of the Department**

The functional areas of the Department consist of:

- Government Secretariat
- Protocol and General Division
- Government Press and Information Services
- Northern Ireland Division
- European and International Affairs Division
- Economic and Social Policy Division
- Public Service Modernisation Division
- Social Partnership/Social Dialogue Division

#### **Support Units:**

- Taoiseach's Private Office
- Government Chief Whip's Office
- Minister of State's Office
- Internal Audit Unit
- Corporate Support Services (including Finance, Personnel, IT, Change Management and Training, and other management services Units).

#### **1.4.4 Assessment of the extent to which services are already available through Irish**

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of service to the public in Irish. In its Customer Charter the Department undertakes that customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so. Staff are made aware of this provision as part of their induction and customer service training, and arrangements are in place to ensure that this commitment is fulfilled. Complaints and appeals regarding service in Irish are dealt with through the normal Quality Customer Service (QCS) complaint procedures ([www.taoiseach.ie](http://www.taoiseach.ie)).

Because the primary focus of the Department's work is on dealings with Government and with other Departments and Agencies, we do not experience a significant level of demand from the public for service in Irish. Nevertheless, the Department is committed to improving the services it provides in Irish, and to developing a positive culture that encourages the use of Irish both within the Department and with our customers.

All the commitments made in the Department's First Scheme to improve the level of service in Irish have been delivered. The objective of this Second Scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and to enhance the level of service over the period of the Scheme (2009-2012).

## **Chapter 2 Provision of General Departmental Services/Activities**

This Chapter sets out the official language regime operated by the Department in relation to the general provision of services. Chapter 3 sets out the position in relation to service provision/activities by individual Divisions within the Department.

### **2.1 Means of Communication with the Public/Information to the Public**

The Department's principal means of communication with the general public are:

- Documents arising from statutory or other obligations (e.g. Strategy Statements, Annual Reports, etc.)
- Press Releases
- Publications
- Websites
- Brochures and Information Leaflets

#### *English and Irish*

During the lifetime of our First Scheme, a wide range of documents was published in both languages. A number were published bilingually within one cover, by placing the Irish and English text on facing pages (Irish on the left, English on the right), in accordance with best practice, including:

- Annual Report (Summary) 2005
- Guide to Government Buildings
- Department of the Taoiseach's Official Languages Scheme 2005-2008
- Annual Report 2006
- Cabinet Handbook
- Department of the Taoiseach Strategy Statement 2008 – 2010 (March 2008)
- Annual Report 2007

The Department is committed to ensuring that where publications such as those referred to above, for example Annual Reports and Statements of Strategy, are published in hard-copy format, they will continue to be published bilingually within the one cover.

Other documents were published in separate Irish and English versions.

#### *Irish only*

- Certain warrants of appointment such as Patents of Precedence for admission to the Inner Bar

#### *English only*

- Reports, with limited circulation and aimed at specialist groups, which do not contain policy proposals (e.g. quarterly progress reports on *Towards 2016*; progress reports to the Civil Service Performance Verification Group under *Towards 2016*)

The main pages of the Department's websites - [www.taoiseach.ie](http://www.taoiseach.ie); [www.onegov.ie](http://www.onegov.ie) (the Transforming Public Services website); [www.betterregulation.ie](http://www.betterregulation.ie) (the Better Regulation website); and [www.orp.ie](http://www.orp.ie) (the Organisational Review Programme website) – are available in both Irish and English.

Speeches or statements, including those made in the Oireachtas, by the Taoiseach or Ministers of State, or speeches by senior officials, are and will continue to be made available in the language(s) in which they are delivered.

## **2.2 Points of Contact with the Public**

We are aware of the importance of switchboard operators and receptionists as our first points of contact with the public. Standard Quality Customer Service (QCS) practice, and current practice in the Department, is that:

- Reception/switchboard staff give the name of the Department in Irish and English. Our switchboard currently provides a high standard of service in Irish
- These staff are at least familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and suitable arrangements are in place so that they can put members of the public in touch without delay with whatever office or officer is responsible for offering the service required through Irish

Given our direct dial facilities, and the consequential limited volume of calls to the Department's switchboard, we are happy that our current arrangements meets quality customer service standards and do not result in any delay in calls being answered.

## **Chapter 3 Summary of Services/Activities provided by Divisions**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This Chapter sets out the position in relation to service provision/activities by individual Divisions within the Department. The first section of the chapter lists the various Divisions and the official language regime operated in each case. The second section briefly describes the functions/activities of each Division. The third section lists areas where the provision of services in Irish was enhanced during the lifetime of our previous scheme.

#### **3.1.1 List of Departmental Divisions working in Irish**

There are no Divisions of the Department that work exclusively in Irish.

#### **3.1.2 List of Departmental Divisions working bilingually**

The following is a list of Divisions within the Department that are in a position to provide a bilingual service in the official language of the customer's choosing:

- Government Secretariat
- Protocol and General Division
- Government Press and Information Services
- Northern Ireland Division
- European and International Affairs Division
- Economic and Social Policy Division
- Public Service Modernisation Division
- Social Partnership/Social Dialogue Division

#### **Support Units:**

- Taoiseach's Private Office
- Government Chief Whip's Office
- Minister of State's Office
- Internal Audit Unit
- Corporate Support Services (including Finance, Personnel, IT, Change Management and Training, and other management services Units).

### **3.2 Departmental Divisions working bilingually**

This section sets out the activities of the Divisions or functional areas referred to above that provide a one-to-one bilingual service, through the medium of Irish and English, in the language of the customer's choosing. As outlined in paragraph 1.4.4 above, the nature of the operations of the Department means that the level of interaction with the general public is not extensive. However, where the Department does interact with the public it is fully committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Official Languages Act. Accordingly, it is the Department's policy that at least one staff member with the competence to conduct business through Irish is allocated to

deal with customers where Irish is the language of choice, subject to availability of such staff.

This service is provided by referring queries to staff who have the competence to conduct business through Irish, and who can act as a channel of communication between the Division and the individual. Arrangements have also been made to ensure that, where Divisions do not have a member of staff proficient in Irish, a designated member of staff from another Division will provide this service. These arrangements will be reviewed in light of evolving demand throughout the lifetime of the Scheme. The aim is to ensure that the same high quality of service is available in both languages. Contact details of staff who deal with queries in Irish are given in Appendix 1.

### **Secretary General's Office and Government Secretariat**

The Government Secretariat ensures the efficient and orderly conduct of the Government's business. It assists the Taoiseach in his observance of the constitutional and legal requirements of his office in relation to the Government and the President, and it compiles the weekly Parliamentary Questions (PQ) listings for the Department, together with a database of submissions to and rulings of the Chair in relation to these PQs.

### **Protocol and General Division**

This Division has responsibility for State protocol, including protocol for the Taoiseach and the Ministers of State. Its other responsibilities include relations between the President and Government; and liaison with the Offices of the Attorney General, Chief State Solicitor, Director of Public Prosecutions, Law Reform Commission and the Tribunal of Enquiry (Payments to Politicians). It also assists in the implementation of the Government's legislative programme, the programme of Oireachtas Reform, and the operation of the Department's responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Acts.

A service in Irish is provided as part of the Division's protocol duties. Menus and invitations for dinners, luncheons etc. are in both languages, and material in Irish is included in speeches, as appropriate. Invitations and commemorative brochures, together with an RSVP phone line, are made available in both Irish and English for high-profile events such as the 1916 Commemoration.

### **Government Press and Information Services**

These services provide information to the media and the public on Government matters, while the Government Press Secretary advises the Taoiseach on media relations.

### **Northern Ireland Division**

Northern Ireland Division supports the Taoiseach in carrying out his responsibilities in this priority area, by working on strategic policy formulation, development and communication. It also supports his meetings and contacts with relevant key players.

In conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs, it co-ordinates implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, and it co-ordinates and supports the Taoiseach's participation in the North-South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council.

### **European and International Affairs Division**

This Division supports the Taoiseach in his role as a member of the European Council and in respect of his other European and international responsibilities. It co-ordinates and contributes to the development of Government policy and overall strategy in relation to Ireland's role in EU issues (in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other key Departments), and identifies and responds to current and prospective items on the European agenda which affect Ireland's core interests.

### **Economic and Social Policy Division**

This Division advises the Taoiseach on economic and social policy with a view to promoting sustainable and inclusive development of Ireland's economy and society. The Division co-ordinates and supports policy on key national issues such as infrastructure, social inclusion and climate change. It liaises with other Departments and State Agencies operating in this area, and provides a secretariat to a number of Cabinet Committees. In addition, the Division has a role in ensuring the continued development and success of the international financial services industry in Ireland, with the support of Government Departments, agencies and the industry, through the mechanism of the IFSC Clearing House Group (CHG) and the various Working Groups and Task Forces which operate under the aegis of the Department.

### **Public Service Modernisation Division**

The Public Service Modernisation Division develops and co-ordinates policy on public service transformation, ensures negotiation and implementation of modernisation programmes for the public service as part of social partnership agreements, and supports public service organisations in the implementation of their transformation programmes. The Division comprises the Transforming Public Services Programme Office, the Better Regulation Unit and the Organisational Review Programme Team.

The Programme Office supports the Government in driving, co-ordinating and monitoring progress on implementation of the Transforming Public Service Programme. It also supports organisations across the Public Service in their transformation efforts. The Better Regulation Unit is tasked with the promotion of the Better Regulation agenda across Government Departments and Offices while the Organisational Review Programme (ORP) has been established in the Division to examine the capacities of the public service to lead and deliver focussed public services into the future.

### **Social Partnership/Social Dialogue Division**

This Division seeks to promote and support social partnership as a mechanism for national economic and social development, and to maximise the level of industrial relations peace and stability through the process of pay determination, dispute

resolution and workplace partnership, in line with the Government's competitive and social goals and the provisions set out in *Towards 2016*. It monitors implementation of the provisions of *Towards 2016* and supports the social partnership structures established under the agreement. It advises the Taoiseach on pay, industrial relations and workplace related issues; services the National Implementation Body (NIB); and supports the work of the National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO), including the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPP).

### **Taoiseach's Private Office**

The Private Office supports the Taoiseach in respect of his Parliamentary role and obligations, and in his role as Head of Government. It also supports him in respect of his Departmental and public commitments, and manages his domestic and foreign engagements. The Private Office handles general correspondence and queries addressed to the Taoiseach by the public.

### **Government Chief Whip's Office**

This Office provides a support service to the Government Chief Whip.

### **Minister of State's Office**

This Office provides a support service to the Minister of State.

### **Internal Audit Unit**

This unit provides assurance to the Accounting Officer on the internal control systems and the extent to which these systems contribute to the achievement of policy and business objectives in the most economic, efficient and effective way. It also acts as a resource to the Department's management through its analysis and appraisal of departmental control systems.

### **Corporate Affairs Division**

Corporate Affairs Division has responsibility for policies and strategic advice in relation to the organization, management, and administration of the Department's human resources, which are dealt with by **Personnel Section**. The **Change Management Unit** supports the implementation of the modernisation agenda within the Department, and the **Training Unit** ensures the provision of staff training and development.

Financial services are provided by the **Finance Unit**, which manages the Department's financial resources and provides all financial services to the Taoiseach, Minister of State, Accounting Officer, management and staff, other Government Departments and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The **IT Unit** has responsibility for the Department's information technology functions, and provides a service geared to meet the Department's needs and those of

its customers, in relation to the provision and management of information and I.T. Systems.

The Division is also charged with the development and provision of support services in the Department. The responsibilities of **Management Services Unit** include: accommodation, maintenance of Government Buildings, security, Health & Safety, Quality Customer Service, supervision of services and cleaning staff, purchasing and maintenance of furnishings and office equipment, and organisation of the Saturday Tours of Government Buildings. The **Registry** provides a central repository for departmental files, active and dormant, and for personnel files of serving staff and those who have retired, transferred or resigned, as well as providing a file management service; while the **Archives Unit** provides an archive service in accordance with the provisions of the National Archives legislation. The **Library** provides a library and information service to staff.

### 3.3 Achievements under our first Scheme

A range of measures was taken during the lifetime of our previous scheme to achieve our aim of providing a service in Irish of equal standard to the service we supply in English. Among these measures are the following:

- In-house classes in Irish were held in the Department, and staff also attended courses in customer service in Irish and language awareness training.
- A set of Guidelines for staff was produced, which explain the implications of the Official Languages Act, and best practice in relation to the use of Irish
- We went beyond the terms of the Official Languages Act by providing many documents of public interest in both languages
- The text and graphics on the main pages of our websites ([www.taoiseach.ie](http://www.taoiseach.ie); [www.onegov.ie](http://www.onegov.ie) (formerly [www.bettergov.ie](http://www.bettergov.ie)), [www.betterregulation.ie](http://www.betterregulation.ie) and [www.orp.ie](http://www.orp.ie)) are fully bilingual
- Irish language domain names for [www.bettergov.ie](http://www.bettergov.ie) ([www.rialtasniosferr.ie](http://www.rialtasniosferr.ie)) and for [www.betterregulation.ie](http://www.betterregulation.ie) ([www.rialailniosferr.ie](http://www.rialailniosferr.ie)) were registered. These names gave direct access to the Irish language sections of these sites
- Arrangements were made to ensure that our email disclaimer notice and all out-of-office messages are in both languages
- Arrangements for translation were formalised, in order to ensure provision of high-quality and timely translations
- A glossary of technical terms and terminology was developed to assist in translations
- An email address for queries in Irish ([gaeilge@taoiseach.ie](mailto:gaeilge@taoiseach.ie)) was set up and is monitored on an ongoing basis
- In relation to our Annual Report and certain other documents (see paragraph 2.1), we followed best practise by placing the Irish and English text on facing pages (Irish on the left, English on the right) to ensure the equal visibility of both languages
- Staff working with Irish are provided with the necessary software and other resources
- The Saturday Tours of Government Buildings in Irish are provided in Irish, on request

- We have ensured that our stationery and public signage are fully bilingual
- The opening paragraphs of the Taoiseach's speeches, giving a brief summary of the contents, are in Irish
- Voicemail for use by the general public (e.g. for replying to invitations to public events) is bilingual to indicate that messages in both languages are welcome
- A member of staff was recruited from the Irish language panel of the Public Appointments Service, to assist in providing a service in Irish to the public
- We have met our target of issuing 20% of our press releases in both Irish and English.

In the following chapter we outline how we intend to build on these achievements in order to further enhance our service.

## **Chapter 4 Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually**

### **4.1 Background**

We will continue to provide the services achieved under our first Official Languages Scheme. In addition, we will build on these achievements by further enhancing our services, and increasing the visibility of Irish, in our dealings with the public. In this section we outline the additional measures we will take within the lifetime of this Scheme.

### **4.2 Fully Bilingual Services**

- We will continue to ensure, as changes are made to all our websites, that the static text and graphics are and will remain fully bilingual
- Should the Department introduce any new websites during the course of this scheme, the static text and graphics on the main pages on these websites will be bilingual. Audio and video clips will be made available in the language(s) in which they were delivered/given. Irish language domain names, which will give direct access to the Irish language section of the sites, will be registered for these sites
- A new home page ('splash screen') will be introduced for our websites to give customers the choice of using the Irish or the English version of the site. The Irish version will be listed first to ensure visibility
- Our publicly accessible computer systems are fully capable of handling the Irish language, and this capability will be retained in any future upgrade of such systems
- Any application forms and any accompanying information will be made available in both languages and within the one cover, except where this is not practicable because of the size or nature of the document. In such cases, the Irish language version of the document will be as readily available as the English language version
- The Department does not currently provide on-line interactive services for the public. If interactive services for the public are provided in the future, they will be made available in both languages
- Information leaflets will continue to be fully bilingual and within the same cover
- An Irish version of each non-personal email address will be made available, and linked to the English version so that each email will go to the same address
- We will explore the possibility of modifying the correspondence tracking system in the Taoiseach's Private Office, to help ensure a timely and high-quality response to correspondence in Irish
- We will continue to provide Saturday Tours of Government Buildings in Irish and develop their availability throughout the life of the scheme, having regard to demand. These will receive the same level of promotion, through our usual channels, as the English language tours.

Documents which do not set out public policy proposals, and which have limited circulation and are aimed at specialist groups, will continue to be in English only

unless we are aware that there is a specific prior demand for their publication in Irish. We will continue to review this position in the light of evolving demand and having regard to capacity issues.

Speeches will continue to be made available in the language in which they were made. However, speeches of particular public and national interest will continue to be made available in both languages.

We will continue to ensure that at least 20% of our press releases per annum issue in both Irish and English from the commencement of the Scheme.

### **4.3 Oral Announcements**

- In order to enhance the service provided at our main points of contact with the public (e.g. receptionists, switchboard staff, etc.) we will continue to:
  - Maintain the high standard of service currently provided by our switchboard, by requesting the service provider to ensure that staff assigned to the switchboard continue to have a good level of fluency in Irish
  - Provide relevant and accessible training to those in key service areas with the most direct relationship to the public
- Staff who provide a service in Irish will use bilingual voicemail messages.

### **4.4 Recruitment & Placement**

In order to ensure that the Department has an adequate number of staff with proficiency in the Irish language to comply with the provisions of the Act:

- As part of its recruitment policy the Department, in co-operation with the Public Appointments Service, will continue to seek that, as far as possible, staff recruited have proficiency in Irish
- Subject to the other constraints governing staff placement, the Department will seek to ensure that at least one staff member in each Division has proficiency in Irish. Where this is not possible, due to a shortage of such staff, formal arrangements will be put in place to ensure that other staff who are proficient in Irish can deal with queries. These arrangements will be reviewed in the light of evolving demand

### **4.5 Training & Development**

There is an ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for all staff, in both official languages, to meet the evolving needs of our customers and to develop the full potential of staff during their careers in this Department.

The **Change Management and Training Unit (CMTU)**, which drives the implementation of this scheme, will continue to:

- Monitor supply and demand for Irish language services across all sections of the Department

- Seek volunteers to provide Irish language services across the Department. These officers are identified in our internal telephone directory which is available to all staff. Other officers will be encouraged to develop their language skills in order to expand this list, so that individual staff members do not become over-burdened should demand increase. Once responsibility for the provision of service in Irish has been assigned, this responsibility will become part of each officer's role profile under PMDS.
- Support social activities which promote the use of Irish
- Monitor staff requirements with regard to Irish language training and resources (e.g. manuals, glossaries, template letters, translation company emails) and work to meet these requirements
- Assist in raising awareness of Irish within the Department, and encourage staff to attend classes and other events related to Irish
- Explore the development of joint initiatives with other Departments and Offices to promote Irish
- Agree on the assignment of responsibility for the provision of service in Irish by Divisions
- Monitor implementation of the Scheme on an ongoing basis, and report to the Management Advisory Committee as necessary
- Liaise with the Irish Language Network, which will :
  - Provide feedback on implementation of the Scheme and monitor ways of improving service
  - Exchange information and advice in order to ensure a high quality of translation, conversation skills etc
  - Assist CMTU in monitoring and analysing the demand for services in Irish
  - Assist in raising awareness of Irish within the Department
  - Assist in the mentoring and developing of other staff with an interest in Irish

In relation to **training**, the CMTU will continue to:

- Assess levels of competency and develop appropriate training and other resources
- Offer in-house Irish language classes to all staff
- Offer time in lieu to officers attending Irish language training courses on Saturdays
- Assess all Irish language courses on a regular basis to ascertain how effectively they meet the Department's goals
- Continue to include language awareness as part of both Induction and Customer Service training, and to circulate the Guidelines, so as to ensure that staff:
  - Understand why the Department implements a bilingual policy
  - Understand the context and background to the policy
  - Are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work
  - Can identify themselves as having proficiency in Irish

#### **4.6 Improving the Department's Irish Language capability**

The following actions will be pursued in order to ensure that both the level and standard of services to the public are improved during the duration of the scheme:

- The Department will continue to facilitate staff attending in-house Irish language classes, and Training Unit will investigate extending the provision of these classes, subject to demand
- The Department will continue to promote the availability of our Irish language services through signage, the website, etc.
- Continue to ensure that the translations we commission are of the highest quality
- In order to promote general awareness of Irish within the Department, we will look at ways of providing an internal customer service to staff through Irish on a phased basis, subject to demand

#### **4.7 An Ghaeltacht**

As mentioned earlier, this Department is not primarily involved in providing services directly to the public, either in Gaeltacht or in non-Gaeltacht areas. However, while we do not normally have direct contact with the Gaeltacht community, should this arise we would ensure that such contact would be conducted through Irish.

In any situation where use of Gaeltacht placenames arises (e.g. publications or internal databases), the names of these areas to be used for official purposes will be as declared by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Placenames (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) Order 2004.

## **Chapter 5 Monitoring and Review**

The Management Advisory Committee within this Department will keep the effective operation of the scheme under review, while ongoing monitoring of service provision and of the level of demand for services through Irish will be carried out by the Change Management and Training Unit.

As part of their overall responsibilities under the modernisation programme, line managers in Divisions will monitor the day-to-day implementation of the scheme within their own areas, and report on a regular basis to their Assistant Secretary.

Future customer surveys will continue to include questions in relation to satisfaction with the provision of services in Irish, and the demand for these services.

Progress on meeting the aims of the scheme will be published in the Department's Annual Reports.

## Chapter 6 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme, together with its commitments and provisions, will be publicised to the general public by means of:

- Press release
- Official launch of the scheme
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies
- A permanent, high-visibility link to the Scheme on the homepage of the Department's website

In addition to these measures, the Department will, in its day-to-day interactions with customers, promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, for example:

- By directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the Department through Irish, for example by the display of notices at reception indicating that an Irish language service is available. This information will also be displayed in a prominent location on the Department's website
- By including footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets and brochures explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover)
- By including notes in selected publications, such as advertisements in newspapers and other publications, that the Department provides services through Irish and accordingly welcomes customers who wish to deal with it in Irish, according to the commitments in its agreed Scheme.

Furthermore, once Divisions that have committed to delivering a service in Irish are in a position to do so, this will also be publicised in the appropriate manner, as will other significant service enhancements.

A copy of this scheme has also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

The English language version is the original text of this scheme.

## APPENDIX 1

### Contact details of personnel providing an Irish language service

Cian Hynes  
Department of the Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Dublin 2  
01-619.4161  
[cian.hynes@taoiseach.gov.ie](mailto:cian.hynes@taoiseach.gov.ie)

Sinéad Nic Coitir  
Department of the Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Dublin 2  
01-619.4261  
[sinead.niccoitir@taoiseach.gov.ie](mailto:sinead.niccoitir@taoiseach.gov.ie)

Stacey Roche  
Department of the Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Dublin 2  
01-619.4322  
[stacey.roche@taoiseach.gov.ie](mailto:stacey.roche@taoiseach.gov.ie)

*These details will be kept up to date on our website ([www.taoiseach.ie](http://www.taoiseach.ie))*