

European Charter For Regional Or Minority Languages
Department for Regional Development
Code Of Courtesy For Irish

September 2009

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Courtesy sets out the ways in which the DRD should fulfil its commitment to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). Guidance on the ECRML is available on the DCAL internet site at:

http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/guidance_for_public_servants.doc.doc

The Code of Courtesy is available on the DRD internet site, in both English and Irish, at:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/equality_agenda/equality_agenda_european_charter.htm

- 1.2 Linguistic diversity must be regarded as a common cultural wealth. Everyone is entitled to respect and courtesy, which extends to their language. Every effort should be made to convey this respect even if it is not possible to deal with the person in the language of his/her choice.
- 1.3 Officers should become familiar with the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages that apply to Irish and the measures the Department has decided upon to implement them, including correspondence and translations.

2. Personal Names

- 2.1 A person is legally entitled to assume any name he or she wishes – in English or in any other language. If he or she is generally known by that name, it is valid for purposes of legal identification. Unless it appears that he or she is not generally known by that name, staff must respect the wishes of anyone who wants to be known by the Irish version of their name, and should use only that name in official business. Care should be taken to avoid confusion and duplication if an individual is known by both Irish and English names. It may be useful to put a record of both versions on file.

- 2.2 If an officer believes that the person in question may also have been using an English form of their name, they might ask, “*Is this the form of your name you always use? I have to ensure that all your records are together*”.
- 2.3 If a person gives his/her name in Irish, and the officer dealing with the person has difficulty in writing or even pronouncing it, they should ask the person to help them spell it.
- 2.4 If the name includes an accent, this should present no problem. Practically all computer software packages cater for this.¹
- 2.5 In short, a person may use whatever form of their name they choose. This right should never be questioned. Every effort should be made to write and/or pronounce a person’s name correctly. Don’t be embarrassed to seek that person’s help.

3. Face-to-Face Interviews and Meetings

- 3.1 If someone starts speaking in Irish to staff who do not speak Irish you should explain this and offer the person the choice of:
 - continuing the interview/meeting in English;
 - giving written views in Irish
 - making an appointment for a meeting when an interpreter is present.

If in doubt, clarify that the language in question is Irish.

- 3.2 If a person gives advance notice that they want to speak Irish, an interpreter should generally be arranged. This can be done through the NICS Central Translation Service, telephone Linguistic Operations Branch (58979). An exception to the general requirement to provide an interpreter might be

¹ Vowels in Irish may have long accents, similar to the *accent aigu* in French. However, unlike French, the accent in Irish is also used in the case of capitals. When using Microsoft Word, the accent can be keyed in by pressing the *Alt Gr* key and then the vowel in question. In the case of capitals the *Shift* key should also be pressed. All such letters can also be accessed by using the *Insert-Symbol* facility.

recruitment interviews, where necessary testing of communication skills in English could not be carried out properly unless English was the working medium.

If no notice is given, the person should be offered the choice of -

- drawing on the assistance of Irish speaking staff, if available;
- making their point in English;
- giving written views in Irish;
- making an appointment for a meeting when an interpreter is present.

If a meeting is arranged, double-check beforehand that the interpreter is available. Never promise a service on which you cannot deliver.

4. Telephone Calls and Voicemail

4.1 If a caller begins the conversation in Irish the officer may respond in Irish (if they speak it) or English. If the officer does not speak Irish they should explain this and offer alternatives for dealing with the call. The following form of words may be helpful:

“I am sorry I cannot answer you in Irish. But I can offer you the following options for dealing with your call. You may:

- *continue the call in English*
- *write to us in Irish*
- *wait while I transfer you to an Irish speaking colleague*
- *transfer to our voice mail where you can leave a message in Irish.”*

4.2 Irish speaking officers in the Department who are willing to assist with telephone calls are **Fionntan Magee (ext. 40624)** and **Michael Cooney (ext. 34118)**. They will speak to the caller and, afterwards, pass the message to the relevant business area for follow-up action.

To contact the **voice mail** phone – **extension 58971**.

4.3 **Procedures for use of Irish Language Voicemail:** If a caller contacts the central switchboard or an individual Department indicating that they wish to conduct their business in Irish, the official receiving the call will speak to them in Irish if they feel confident they can do so. If they cannot do so, or are unable to divert the caller to the above Irish speaking members of staff, they will divert or direct the caller to the Irish language voice mail on extension 58971.

The voice mail is monitored by officials in Linguistic Operations Branch, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Messages received will be translated immediately or forwarded to an interpreter for translation.

Translated enquiries will be forwarded to the appropriate Department / official for action.

4.4 **MESSAGE ON IRISH VOICE MAIL FACILITY (IN IRISH):**

“Welcome to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. If you would like to leave a message with us someone will come back to you as soon as possible. You can leave your message after the tone. To handle your call we need you to give us the following information:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your daytime telephone number
- The name of the person you would like to contact, if you know it
- The name of the Department you would like to contact, if you know it.
- The nature of your business

We will try to get back to you as soon as possible but if your business is very urgent you are advised to contact the particular Department directly in English.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Charter obliges Departments to accept written applications in Irish. If it seems that, taking translation into account, it will not be possible to provide a substantive reply by the relevant deadline, an acknowledgement should be issued in the normal way, explaining that the letter is being translated and that a

substantive reply will follow (Annex A). The acknowledgment should issue in Irish using the translation provided at Annex B.

- 5.2 The Charter does not oblige Departments to acknowledge or reply in Irish to correspondence received in Irish, but the Department's policy is to do so, using the Central Translation Service, where necessary. English translations of the original letter and response should be filed. For the avoidance of doubt officials issuing responses in Irish who have no Irish themselves may wish to sign the English translation of a response and attach a copy to the unsigned Irish version.
- 5.3 Business areas should ensure that all external correspondence issues on the trilingual writing paper approved by the Minister.
- 5.4 **Correspondence with Irish Language Organisations:** All communication initiated with the following Irish language organisations should be made in Irish:
- Foras na Gaeilge;
 - POBAL;
 - An Gaeláras;
 - Fobairt Feirste;
 - An Creathrú Gaeltacht;
 - Gaelphobail an Tsratha Báin;
 - Comhaltas Uladh.

6. Translations

- 6.1 All Ministerial forewords to Plans, Reports and Consultation documents should be routinely translated into Irish.
- 6.2 All new and revised information leaflets should be translated into Irish. The leaflets do not need to be printed in Irish. The translation can be held and provided as a word document. It would be good practice to include a sentence in Irish in the English version of the leaflet, indicating that an Irish translation is available.
- 6.3 All widely used application forms should be translated into Irish. These can be provided as word documents. Any requests made for translation of other

departmental documents into Irish should be discussed with the Equality Unit. This will ensure a consistent approach.

- 6.4 All translations should be obtained through the Equality Unit (Jackie Gregg, ext. 40867, Tim Lavery, ext. 40850 and Louise Macrory, 41143), who can advise and arrange translation of documents or correspondence from, or into, Irish via the Central Translations Service. Requests for Purchase Orders should be raised as normal through Account NI by the business area requesting the translation, as business areas are responsible for paying for translations which originate with them. On receipt of translation, the originating business area must complete a Goods Received form to be sent to Account NI which will authorize the payment.
- 6.5 Business Areas are advised to allow sufficient time for translation of time-bound projects, and ideally should contact the Equality Unit at an early stage to advise of upcoming large translation jobs.

7. **Advertising**

- 7.1 **Public Notices:** The Minister has decided that greater use should be made of Irish in advertising and presenting departmental business. This includes the use of bilingual headings in the advertising of all public notices. Notices should be placed in the press through the Graphics Design Unit. Translations of headings can be arranged through the Equality Unit. When arranging translation, the actions being carried out need to be translated into Irish, but locations, such as towns or street names, may remain in English. Examples are shown at Annex C.
- 7.2 **Significant Departmental Announcements:** An appropriate Irish Language Newspaper should be included when making important departmental announcements. This should include notices about equality issues, policy consultations, public appointments and major recruitment exercises. Translations of these should be obtained through the Equality Unit. Graphic Design Unit (GDU) will provide cost details, and arrange to place the notice in an Irish Language Newspaper and the three daily papers as appropriate. The Equality Unit is happy to provide advice on a case-by-case basis on suitable

Irish language media for announcements and public notices, as required..

- 7.3 Advertising Campaigns:** Business areas should consider, on a case-by-case basis, the use of Irish language media when placing campaign advertising, such as using Raidió Fáilte or billboards. The Equality Unit can provide advice.

8. Addresses

- 8.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 provides that a District Council may place a version of a street name in another language alongside the English name. For up to date information on non-English street names adopted by District Councils go to http://www.osni.gov.uk/paper/dual_lang.html or contact the Ordnance Survey (info@pointer-ni.gov.uk). When a person has used a lawful Irish language street name staff should use the Irish form in replying to correspondence or while processing applications. Both Irish and English versions should be noted on the official record.
- 8.2 Where third parties may be involved i.e. where a document may need to be scrutinised (e.g. driving licence) or publicised (e.g. planning application) the English form of the street address should be shown as well as the Irish version. There are no restrictions on using Irish versions of other parts of an address e.g. townland, town, county, country.
- 8.3 When contact is being initiated, it would be in keeping with the spirit of the Charter to use both versions initially, and then continue using whichever language was used in the reply. Departments and associated bodies are encouraged to use both versions in their documents and publications.

9. Enquiries and Monitoring

- 9.1 Enquiries about this Guidance and further advice on requests to do business (oral or written) in Irish should be addressed to the Equality Unit (Jackie Gregg, ext. 40867 and Tim Lavery, ext. 40850).

Department for Regional Development

Tel: (028) 90 258851
Fax: (028) 90 258898
email: drd@drdni.gov.uk

(Name)
(Department)
(Address)
(Address)
(Address)

(Date)

Dear

Thank you for your letter to dated

The matter is being dealt with and a reply will issue in due course.

Yours sincerely

(NAME)
Department for Regional Development

An Roinn Forbartha Réigiúnaí

Tel: (028) 90 258851
Fax: (028) 90 258898
email: drdni.gov.uk.

(Name)
(Department)
(Address)
(Address)
(Address)

(Date)

A *[sender's name]* , a chara,

Go raibh maith agat as do litir chuig *[recipient's name]* dar dáta *[date of letter]*.

Táthar ag plé leis an ábhar agus éiseofar freagra in am agus i dtráth.

Is mise le meas

(NAME)

An Roinn Forbartha Réigiúnaí

Months of the Year in Irish

January – Eanáir

February – Feabhra

March – Márta

April – Aibreán

May – Bealtaine

June – Meitheamh

July – Iúil

August – Lúnasa

September - Meán Fómhair

October - Deireadh Fómhair

November – Samhain

December - Nollaig

Other useful links:

- <http://home.connect.ie/smacsuibhne/bng/tobar/index.html>
- <http://www.englishirishdictionary.com/dictionary>

The Equality Unit maintains a wordbank of commonly used phrases for Roads Service advertising headlines.



Department for
**Regional
Development**
www.drdni.gov.uk

Public Meeting Cruinniú Poiblí

The Department for Regional Development has just completed a review of the **Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan**, which aimed actively to improve access to the transport system for older people and disabled people.

DRD is holding a meeting in Belfast at Grosvenor House on Friday 30 November 2007 beginning at 2.00pm in order to hear your views on the new Action Plan 2007 – 2009.

To reserve your place contact Janet on 028 9054 0580 or Kathleen 028 9054 0610 or email janet.watson@drdni.gov.uk.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

AN ROINN

Forbartha Réigiúnaí

www.drdni.gov.uk

ROADS Service

Abandonment Order Ordú Tréigin

Antiville Road & Ballymena Road, Larne

The Department for Regional Development, being of the opinion that two areas of road between Antiville Road and Ballymena Road, Larne are not necessary for road traffic, proposes to make an Order under Article 68 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 the effect of which would be to abandon 423 square metres opposite No. 8 Antiville Road on the south-east side of Antiville Road, Larne and 42 square metres on the northern side of Ballymena Road, Larne.

The areas of road proposed to be abandoned are delineated on a map, which together with a copy of a draft of the Order, may be inspected by any person free of charge at all reasonable hours during the period from 8th February 2008 to 18th March 2008 at the Department's Roads Service offices, Headquarters, Room 201, Clarence Court, 10–18 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8GB; and Northern Division, Ballymena/Larne Section Office, Ballykeel Depot, 190 Larne Road Link, Ballymena BT42 3HA.

Any person may within the said period object to the proposal by written notice to Roads Service Northern Division, Ballymena/Larne Section Office at the address above stating the grounds of objection.

Authorised Officer: R.Sherman

Date: 22nd January 2008



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An Agency within the Department for

**Regional
Development**

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