

20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 - 2030

Progress Report: 2010 - 2015

Department of Social Protection

The Department, including the organisations under its aegis, is committed to providing a quality customer service in both Irish and English. The Department's Customer Charter and Action Plan 2013-2015, delivered in accordance with Quality Customer Service Principles, states that the Department will 'provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages'. In addition, the contact details of staff willing to provide a service through Irish, by location, have been published on the Department's intranet site.

The Department, together with other Government Departments, is working with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on the Shared Translation Service initiative.

The Department's website, www.welfare.ie, is a critical information service to customers, providing application forms and details of available schemes and services in Irish. In addition, notices advising customers of the availability of services through Irish are displayed in all relevant offices.

The Department's Irish Language Scheme 2015-2018, which took effect from 16 March 2015, sets out the Department's commitments to customer service in Irish and advises of the availability of services through Irish. The scheme sets out how the Department's services will be improved during the lifetime of the scheme.

The Department has four public offices in Gaeltacht areas: Acaill Intreo office, Co. Mayo, An Clochán Liath Intreo office, Co. Donegal, Béal an Mhuirthead Intreo office, Co. Mayo and Daingean Uí Chúis branch office, Co. Kerry. All of these offices can currently provide a direct (telephone/face to face) service through Irish.

Measures for Irish in the Public Service

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Department will, by the end of year one of the Irish Language Scheme, identify posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be undertaken to fill these positions by the end of this scheme, having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate.

This will enable the Department to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a strategic manner.