

20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 - 2030

Progress Report: 2010 - 2015

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

In 2013, the Government introduced a new approach to support Irish language proficiency in the civil service. The policy of awarding bonus marks for Irish language proficiency in civil service recruitment and promotion competitions was replaced with measures that seek to increase the cohort of functional bilinguals in the civil service.

Under the new approach, Departments were asked to identify any posts and areas of work that require functional bilinguals and to update their workforce plans to reflect any demand. In respect of future needs, the workforce planning framework for the period 2015-2017 requires that all Departments/Offices identify specific posts/areas which require fluency in Irish. Having regard to the implementation of the Gaeltacht Act 2012, Departments are asked to pay particular attention to posts that are located in, or that are serving, Gaeltacht areas. The Government decision in 2013 also provides for the specification of posts that require functional bilinguals in future language schemes agreed under the Official Languages Act 2003.

These processes are central to ensuring that recruitment and inter-Departmental promotion competitions organised by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) make sufficient provision for appointments to posts requiring functional bilinguals. In the case of Departmental recruitment and promotion competitions, an assessment is made of the requirement for functional bilinguals and, where necessary and appropriate, a sub-panel of functional bilinguals is put in place.

The new arrangements for recruiting Irish language functional bilinguals were piloted in the 2014 Executive Officer (EO) competition which is currently in its final phase. The experience gained in the EO competition will form the basis of a review of the approach undertaken. The review will be conducted by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Public Appointments Service. The outcome of the review will inform the arrangements for future competitions. In the meantime, the new

arrangements are being applied to the following recruitment competitions: Clerical Officer, Administrative Officer, Assistant Principal Officer and Principal Officer.

This Department recognises the importance of having a number of staff fluent in and capable of providing services in Irish. In line with Government policy, future language schemes of the Department under the Official Languages Act will specify the posts that have an Irish language competency requirement.