

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENTS' SCHEME

under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and Background

This second Irish language scheme was prepared under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (“the Act”) by the Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

Section 11 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
- 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.

1.2 Preparation of a Scheme

A notice under Section 13 of the Act was published in the national newspapers and on the Commission’s website on 29 April 2008, inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme under Section 11 from any interested parties. No representations were received in response.

1.3 The Content and Commencement Date of the Language Scheme

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. The scheme commenced with effect from 11 May 2009 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 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.

This office is committed to fulfilling all of its obligations under the Act and subsequent regulations. The scheme builds on the commitments made in this office’s first scheme, published in 2005 as well as the Principles of Quality Customer Service. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the scheme will rest with the senior management within this office.

The scheme also includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that the office meets this demand in a planned and coherent way.

1.4 Overview of the Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments

The Commission for Public Service Appointments was established in October 2004 in accordance with the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 as an independent body to regulate recruitment to the Civil Service and to certain other public service organisations, such as An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Health Information and Quality Authority.

The Commission sets standards, which it publishes as codes of practice, for recruitment and selection to positions in the organisations under its remit. One of the principal functions of the Commission is to safeguard these standards through regular monitoring and auditing of recruitment and selection activities.

The Commission also grants licences to certain public service bodies to recruit on their own behalf.

The Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments supports the work of the Commission. The office is structured as a single unit where the day-to-day functions of the Commission together with the associated finance, HR and general office administrative matters are managed. It has a staff of 12 and is currently located at Chapter House, 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin1.

Stakeholders

The outcome of the work of the Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments impacts on our stakeholders. The key stakeholders are listed below:

Government Departments/Offices

An Garda Síochána

The Health Service Executive

The Health Information and Quality Authority

Candidates competing at appointment processes under the Commission's remit

The external customers include members of the general public and suppliers.

The Office of the Commission interacts with members of the public in responding to general enquiries, processing cases of alleged breaches of the Codes of Practice, and in responding to requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

1.5 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 public services through Irish.

When establishing the office in 2004 due regard was given to the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003.

The office conducted a review of the operation of its first scheme in early 2008. The office has fulfilled all its obligations under the Official Languages Act, 2003, and has met all of its commitments contained in the first scheme. During the three year period of operation of the scheme a number of telephone calls and tens general correspondence were received through the Irish language. All such queries were dealt with in Irish. All of the office's publications were published bilingually in the one document.

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). In this regard, this office is committed to ensuring all publications are published bilingually during the lifetime of this scheme. This includes but is not limited to:

- Strategy Statements
- Annual Reports
- Codes of Practice
- Audit Reports
- Customer Charter
- Quality Customer Service Action Plan
- Section 7 and Section 8 Review Procedures Leaflet
- Section 15 and 16 Freedom of Information Manual

The website is fully bilingual. The Customer Charter commits to fulfilling obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003, and ensuring that all members of the public are facilitated in using the official language of their choice. The Customer Charter also sets out the following specific commitments:

- All website facilities will be bilingual
- All publications will be available in Irish
- All communications in Irish will be responded to in Irish in accordance with section 9(2) of the Official Languages Act 2003

Chapter 2

This chapter briefly describes the functions/activities of the Commission and sets out the official language regime operated by the support office.

2.1 Functions

Establishing Standards for Recruitment and Selection

- establishing standards of probity, merit, equity and fairness, and other principles to be followed in the appointment of persons to positions in the organisations under the Commission's remit

Codes of Practice

- publishing the standards established as codes of practice

Monitoring Standards

- auditing and evaluating recruitment policies and practices to safeguard the standards and to establish whether the Code of Practice is being observed

Licensing

- evaluating applications for recruitment licences
- granting recruitment licences
- revoking recruitment licences where necessary
- issuing instructions and advices to licence holders

Appeals Procedures

- establishing and setting down appropriate appeal procedures
- investigating of complaints under Section 8 of the Code

Providing Information

- reporting to both the Oireachtas and the Government
- providing information to ministers on the operation of recruitment and selection processes

2.2 Language Regime Operated by the Office

Means of communication with the public/information to the public

The office's communications with the general public relating to the range of services provided are made available in both Irish and English, including:

- All publications, including Codes of Practice, which have as part of its intended audience the general public, will be available bilingually within the one cover
- The website is bilingual and will continue to be bilingual for the lifetime of this scheme. Should the office introduce any new website during the lifetime of the scheme, it shall also be bilingual.

Chapter 3

3.1 Services to be provided bilingually

One-to-one Services

3.1.1 The nature of the operations of the office means that the level of interaction with the general public is not extensive. However, where the office does interact with the public it is fully committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Official Languages Act. Accordingly it is the office'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. The office is also committed to ensuring that its team will continue to include two members of staff who

- are able to give the name of the office in Irish and English
- are at least familiar with the basic greetings in Irish and can arrange to respond satisfactorily to the enquiry.

3.1.2 The office will continue to facilitate staff attending Irish language classes during office hours thus improving the office's capacity to respond to the needs of its Irish speaking customers.

Within 12 months of the commencement of this scheme two of the twelve staff members will have participated in advanced Irish language classes with a view to supporting and enhancing the day-to-day services through the Irish language. This office is committed to ensuring that all staff who have regular contact with members of the public will undergo language awareness training, and all staff will be encouraged to develop their Irish language skills.

3.1.3 This office will set up a dedicated email address for correspondence in Irish – eolas@cpsa-online.ie. Emails to this account will be directed automatically to designated staff members to ensure a prompt response to all queries.

3.1.4 All written correspondence will be responded to in the official language in which it is written in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act.

3.1.5 Allegations of breaches of the Code of Practice made in Irish will be responded to in Irish and the report issued in Irish

3.1.6 Telephone calls received will be directed to the most appropriate staff member.

3.1.7 All publications, Codes of Practice, information leaflets and any application forms aimed at the general public will be made available bilingually within the one cover.

3.1.8 All office computer systems are compatible with the Irish language and the office will ensure that any future additions will be compatible with the Irish language. The office does not currently have any on-line

interactive services. Any on-line interactive services introduced in the future aimed at the general public will be available bilingually.

3.1.9 All press releases issued from the office will be bilingual.

Chapter 4

4.1 Monitoring and Revision

A designated member of staff within the office will keep the effective operation of this scheme under review. As the role of this office evolves over time, every effort will be made to take advantage of any new opportunities to enhance the service provided to the public. A report on the level of demand for services in Irish will be presented to the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) periodically with an update on the operation of this scheme. Commitments made in this scheme will be reported on in the Commission's Annual Report.

Chapter 5

5.1 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

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

- Advertisement in Irish language media
- press release
- the public advertisement of the availability of the Scheme
- circulation to appropriate bodies
- a permanent, high-visibility link to the Scheme on the homepage of the office's web site.

In addition to these measures, the office will take every opportunity in its day-to-day interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, including by:

directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the office through Irish, for example by the display of notices at reception areas indicating what Irish language services are available and also listing the Irish language services that are available in a prominent location on the office's website.

All advertisements placed on behalf of the Commission will emphasise that this office provides services through Irish and accordingly welcomes contact in the Irish language.

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