



**Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council**

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME**

2020-2023

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide:

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

The language scheme sets the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Local Authority is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by Monaghan County Council will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

The time and effort put in by all concerned in this process is acknowledged and appreciated.

1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. It commences with effect from 27 December 2020 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Chapter 2: Overview of Monaghan County Council

2.1 Mission and Objectives

Monaghan County Council provides high quality, sustainable public services to enhance the economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our people and county.

Monaghan County Council acting on its broader remit and local leadership role is making a significant difference in supporting the expansion of existing businesses, creating new enterprise and increasing local employment opportunities.

The Council's open, innovative and transparent approach helps maximise operational efficiency, prioritise inclusive and accessible services to citizens, and continuously review value for money in service provision, in order to deliver a broader range of services that promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities within the county.

Monaghan County Council is responsive to local needs and circumstances, recognising our role in developing sustainable communities.

The main departments of Monaghan County Council are listed below:

- Housing and Building
- Roads and Transportation
- Motor Taxation
- Water Services
- Finance
- Governance & Corporate Affairs
- Planning & Economic Development
- Tourism
- Community Development
- Environment
- Fire Service, Building Control & Civil Defence
- Library Service
- County Museum
- Arts Office
- Human Resource Management
- Ballybay-Clones Municipal District
- Monaghan Municipal District
- Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District

2.2 Key Services

The Council's open and transparent approach helps maximise operational efficiency, prioritises inclusive and accessible services to citizens, and continuously reviews value for money in service provision in order to deliver a broader range of services that promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities within the county.

The move to devolve greater decision-making to local level and give Elected Representatives and communities more control over a broader range of issues means the council is more responsive to local needs and circumstances, and enables stakeholders to solve problems at local level. This is enhancing the Council's role in developing sustainable communities, improved community identity and is contributing to the effectiveness and credibility of democratic representation.

2.3 Customers and Clients

Monaghan County Council takes account of relevant policies and objectives set out in National, Regional and Local Plans and National Legislation. The main stakeholders for Monaghan County Council are our citizens and community, and the following issues are highlighted as areas that our stakeholders are particularly interested in.

- Social inclusion to enable everyone – especially the marginalised – to participate in local decision making;
- Meaningful citizen and community engagement, participation in identifying priorities and shaping local communities through LCDC's (Local Community Development Committees) including voluntary activity and active citizenship;
- Inter-agency co-operation and working to achieve successful outcomes for communities;
- Promotion of economic development and job creation;
- The integration of sustainable development considerations;
- Having a clear focus on making the best use of available resources and achieving the best value-for-money possible from these resources;
- Consideration of environmental issues.

Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English; **including services in Gaeltacht areas.**

Current Provision of Services			
Services (General)	In English only	In Irish only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Housing & Building	✓		
Water Services	✓		
Planning	✓		
Roads & Transportation	✓		
Governance & Corporate Affairs	✓		✓
Finance, IT & Motor Taxation	✓		
Planning & Economic Development	✓		
Community Development	✓		
Environment			✓
Fire, Building Control & Civil Defence	✓		
Human Resources	✓		
Museum	✓		
Arts			✓
Libraries			✓
Services in Gaeltacht Areas	In English only	In Irish Only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
N/A			

Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions in the table below are mandatory requirements under the Official Languages Act 2003.

Means of communication with the public	Commitment	
Recorded Oral Announcements	<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed.</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system.</p> <p>(c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p> <p>This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements rather than 'live announcements'.</p> <p>Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.</p>	Mandatory
Written Communication	Letters and Electronic Mail	Mandatory
	Stationery	Mandatory
Signage	<p>Signage</p> <p>All signage placed by Monaghan County Council or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).</p> <p>An approval system for signage shall be developed to ensure compliance with the Act.</p>	Mandatory Year 1
Publications	Publications	Mandatory

		audited accounts or financial statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	
	Circulars/Mailshots	Where a public body communicates in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish language or in the English and Irish languages.	Mandatory
An Ghaeltacht	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body in accordance with the legislation.	Mandatory

The objectives of this second Scheme are to build on the progress achieved since 2008 in the provision of quality services to our Irish-speaking customers and to broaden the range of services available bilingually over the lifetime of the scheme.

Our second Scheme includes a commitment to monitor the level of demand for services through Irish on an ongoing basis, so that we can continue to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and practical way. Monaghan County Council undertakes to make the following commitments to the development of the Irish language under this second Scheme over the lifetime of the Scheme unless otherwise stated:

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Oral / Written Communication	Reception switchboard, Face to Face/Counter Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception/switchboard staff will continue to give the name of the Local Authority in Irish. 	Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This requirement shall be extended to Municipal District Offices and Libraries. 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish and will be able to acknowledge a request for service in Irish. 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will put customers in touch with the appropriate officer responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where such is available. 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The names of the members of staff who can communicate in Irish will be advertised in the various sections of the organisation and online. 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish will be made available. 	Year 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All recorded phone greetings and out of 	

		<p>hours messages will be bilingual and reviewed on regular basis to ensure compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All written communication received by post or email from the public, other organisations or elected representatives will be responded to in the official language in which it was received. The service in Irish should not be of a lower standard than the service in English. The Council will record and report on all correspondence received in Irish. • Record of every request for service in Irish and what type of service is sought shall be maintained. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 1</p>
	Telephone communications with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be provided with guidance and training on handling telephone calls from Irish speaking members of the public. • Staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish and will be able to acknowledge a request for service in Irish. • Staff will put customers in touch with the appropriate officer responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where such is available 	Year 1
	Recorded Oral Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual staff will have their pre-recorded personal telephone greetings in bilingual format. 	Year 2
	Live announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No live announcements are made in Monaghan Co. Co. buildings however if this was to change all announcements would be made bilingually. 	N/A
	Information Leaflets/ Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to ensure that during the lifetime of the scheme, policy documents approved by Council for publication are made available in Irish and English within the same cover except where it is not feasible because of the nature, size or layout of the material. • In these circumstances documents will be published in one language only, but a statement will be included in the English version of the document, stating that an Irish version of the form is also available. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where applications forms and information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English versions, equal prominence will be given to both versions at public locations. • There will be a bilingual or Irish version of the most commonly used leaflets & brochures available. Other leaflets will be made available in Irish upon request. 	Ongoing Ongoing
	Application Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a bilingual or Irish version of the most commonly used application forms available. All other forms will be made available upon request. • In exceptional circumstances, forms will be published in one language only, but a statement will be included in the English version of the form, stating that an Irish version of the form is also available. • An Irish version of the forms that have already been translated into Irish should be available on Monaghan County Council's website near the English version. 	Ongoing Ongoing Year 1
	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications such as the Corporate Plan and the Annual Report will be published bilingually. 	Ongoing
Media	Press Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases relating to the Irish language issues will be issued in Irish or bilingually and circulated to the Irish language and English language media simultaneously. • There will be content As Gaeilge in any Council Newsletter published, including items not related to the Irish Language. 	Ongoing Year 2
	Media Spokespersons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Irish speaking spokesperson will be available for interviews with the Irish language media. • Notices and advertisements published in local/national newspapers where the subject matter relates specifically to Irish language issues will be published bilingually. 	Ongoing Ongoing
	Speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches by the Cathaoirleach of the Council, Mayors of the Municipal Districts, and Chief Executive relating to matters of Irish Language interest will be produced 	Ongoing

		<p>bilingually and circulated simultaneously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At public events, speeches by the public officials or elected members should include some Irish Language content. 	Year 1
Information Technology	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated e-mail eolas@monaghancoco.ie address will be established for persons wishing to communicate directly in Irish with Monaghan County Council. • There will be a commitment to also have this email as eolas@muineachancoco.ie. • The option to use Irish version of email shall be available to staff and elected members. • Those who speak Irish should have a line in email stating that they have Irish and that the use of Irish is welcomed by that person. • Standard email messages such as disclaimers, will be bilingual. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Irish version of the domain name should be available. www.muineachan.ie. • The static material on the home page and the specified main pages on the public body's website will be available in Irish. • An option will be available on the home page for language, either Irish or English. • A separate website page will be developed to bring together links to all Irish language content from within the site to facilitate access to relevant material by Irish speakers. • Details of the Irish Language Officer shall be made available on the website. • Details of the Irish Language Committee shall be made available on the website. • The list of Officers who can provide an Irish-language service should be visible on Monaghan County Council's website. • The information on the homepage and description of each Department will be available in Irish. This will be activated by clicking on an "As Gaeilge" button. • A Section on Staff Portal will be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of 	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year2</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p>

		bilingualism.	
	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5% of Social Media content will be made available as Gaeilge. Posts not relating to the Irish Language will be included in the 5%. 	Annually
	Computer Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public body will continue to actively use technology to improve the provision of bilingual services Any new computer software systems being installed will be bilingual. 	Ongoing
	Interactive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of all interactive service available to General public will be conducted to ensure compliance with the Act and scheme. All future interactive services online will be available bilingually. Any online and interactive services that are developed by external companies will be fully available on a bilingual basis, in accordance with technical availability. Any new interactive services which allow the public to make applications or on line will be introduced simultaneously in both languages by the end of the scheme. 	Year 2 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Other	Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions in Irish or English are welcome at public meetings organised by Monaghan County Council. Meetings organised by the public body that deal with Irish language issues will be held in Irish or bilingually, as appropriate. Monaghan Local Authorities will continue to support the work of An Coiste Logainmneacha. The committee will continue to promote actively the use of Irish and local knowledge, culture and heritage in the selection of place names for new developments both public and private. 	Ongoing Ongoing Year 1
	<u>Events</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will endeavour to organise and support events for the Irish Language community on an annual basis. One of the ways this will be achieved is through the provision of a small grant scheme for Seachtain na Gaeilge. At public events, the Irish language should be used as part of the event by council officials and elected members as part of their 	Year 1 Year 1

		welcoming and speeches.	
	<u>Placenames Order</u>	The Council will use the official Irish version of placenames that are to be found on www.logainm.ie for official business.	Ongoing

Chapter 5: Improving Language Capability

5.1 Training and Development

Monaghan County Council is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	New staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our Scheme.	Year 1
	Training	<p>Opportunities to develop the Irish language competence of staff and elected members will be provided.</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements will be made for the provision of Irish language training and proficiency testing certification for staff in order to support staff in maintaining their proficiency in the Irish language.</p> <p>This shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house Irish Language training for beginners and intermediate competencies. • Training for front line staff answering Switch in basis greetings. • Funding for staff members and elected members to avail of intensive Irish language training in Gaeltacht areas or elsewhere. 	Ongoing
	Other	<p>Monaghan County Council will provide resources to implement this Scheme; The Council will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the Gaeltacht Scholarship Scheme. • Assist traditional Irish music and song concerts. • Foster in young people reading through Irish with the assistance of the libraries. • Help to promote the Irish language in the everyday activities and events of the community at large. • Liaise with other organisations such as the G.A.A., Gael Scoileanna & other Irish language organisations to promote the 	Ongoing

		<p>language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monaghan Local Authorities recognise and acknowledge the linguistic preferences of Naíonraí and Gael Scoileanna in County Monaghan, as well as other Irish Language organisations and groups operating throughout the county and nationally. The provision of services in Irish to these bodies and groups will be facilitated over the lifetime of this scheme. • Monaghan County Council will be committed to assisting Muineachán Le Gaeilge and other community groups in the county in drafting a Language Plan for the County. • Monaghan County Council shall be committed to helping Muineachán Le Gaeilge in achieving their goal of the status of “Líonra Gaeilge” for Monaghan town. 	
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Designated Irish Language Posts

The post listed below has been designated as having an Irish language competency requirement. It is the intention that holders of this posts will have achieved specified accredited standards or training in the Irish language, commensurate with the responsibilities of the post.

Before the end of the scheme Monaghan County Council will examine, through the Human Resources Department further posts can be identified where Irish is a pre requisite. Monaghan County Council will also be guided by any changes in National Policy with regard to recruitment of staff with Irish Language competencies

Title of Post	Location	Gaeltacht/Irish speaking community served	Indication of standard of Irish required (choose from basic, intermediate or advanced)
Irish Officer (Oifigeach Gaeilge)	County Monaghan	All Irish language speaking communities in County Monaghan	Intermediate/advanced
Switch operators	Head Quarters, MD, Libraries		Basic

Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by Governance & Corporate Affairs Services through a quarterly report to the Director of Service.

All sections will be required to submit a report on the implementation of the scheme on an annual basis for review by the Director and Oifigeach Gaeilge.

An annual report of activities of the Coiste Gaeilge and compliance and progress with the Scheme by the Council shall be provided to Members at March Council meeting

Further monitoring will take place by An Coiste Gaeilge, made up of elected members at the 3 scheduled meetings per annum.

The contact person for the scheme will be Nial Ó Conchúir Oifigeach Gaeilge, noconnor@monaghancoco.ie

Chapter 7: Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- Directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices on emails indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- Prominently listing these services on our website;
- Giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.