

# **Public Appointments Service**

## **Irish Language Scheme 2013-2016**

**under Section 15 of the**

## **Official Languages Act 2003**

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# **Chapter 1: Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This second Irish Language Scheme has been prepared by the Public Appointments Service (PAS), in accordance with the terms of Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003 ("the Act").

Section 11 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory 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

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 Approach to the development of the Scheme**

This Scheme is based on the guidelines of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. As provided for in Section 13 of the Act, the Public Appointments Service published a notice, in February 2013, inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from interested parties. The notice was placed on the PAS website, in an Irish language newspaper and was forwarded, through Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, to various Irish language organisations. Seven submissions were received and can be seen on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) and [www.postannapoibli.ie](http://www.postannapoibli.ie).

The content of the Scheme has been informed by our experience of delivering on our commitments of the first Scheme; the submissions made by the public; ongoing feedback from our customers; a review of the level of demand for services in the Irish language and suggestions put forward by staff of the Office. The objective of the second Language Scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and build on the progress achieved over the period of the last scheme.

The Public Appointments Service would like to thank all those who took the time to engage with this process.

## **1.3 Commencement date of Scheme**

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and has effect from **22 July 2013**. It will 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 the later.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the first Irish Language Scheme**

The Public Appointments Service has a good track record in the provision of services through Irish. The commitments made in the first Scheme, to further enhance the level of service provided through the Irish language, were ambitious. All commitments have been delivered. However, due to business developments not envisaged in the first Scheme, PAS has been working with the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga to address certain issues.

Publicjobs.ie is the main channel for managing and delivering our business. During the first Scheme, considerable investment was made to ensure that the computer systems, which provide an interface to candidates and to the general public, were able to accept Irish language content. Our IT Unit has ensured that the Irish language services provided electronically are of the same technical standard as those provided in English. We now provide a comprehensive on-line bilingual recruitment facility, which is easy to navigate and effective for both clients and candidates. An Irish language alias / domain name, [www.postannapoibli.ie](http://www.postannapoibli.ie), has been created. There is direct access to this site, with a link to [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie). An Irish language general information mailbox, [eolas@postannapoibli.ie](mailto:eolas@postannapoibli.ie) has also been set up. Disclaimers appearing at the end of emails issuing from this Office are bilingual.

Publicjobs.ie includes a wide range of general information about the Office and its resources; contact details; the competition process, and the Civil Service in general. All this information is available in both official languages. Much of the content relating to the competition process changes on a daily basis and requires daily translation. The first Scheme committed to providing bilingual Application Forms and Information Booklets for general service positions and certain other posts requiring Irish competence. During the lifetime of the first Scheme, this commitment was honoured and was extended to include documentation for a number of other competitions. Any marketing material presented by the Office at career fairs was available in both official languages.

A section was developed on the website regarding the Office's Language Scheme. Contents included the Scheme itself, the submissions received and details of the deadlines associated with the Scheme.

A section was developed on the Office's Intranet dealing with Irish language matters. Content includes a list of the staff members competent to deal with members of the public through the medium of Irish.

Our Human Resources Unit provided information on the Office's Irish language services, together with information on the contents of the Scheme, at induction courses. Staff competent in Irish greetings and basic interactions were available at the primary points of contact with the public. Staff were actively encouraged to take day-time courses in Irish and a number of courses were run in-house.

The Office fulfilled the commitment to place a member of staff who is competent to provide the services of the Clerical Recruitment Unit and the Garda Trainee Recruitment Unit, through Irish, in each of these Units.

Publications relating to corporate governance, which were deemed to have the general public as part of their target audience (section 10 of the Act) – e.g. the Quality Customer Service Action Plan, the Customer Charter, the Annual Report and the Strategy Statement – were made available simultaneously in both official languages.

## Chapter 3: Irish Language Scheme 2013 - 2016

The content of the second Language Scheme is focussed on our two main customer groups - applicants for public service positions and the general public. Irish language services for other customer groups will be provided on request.

The Public Appointments Service is committed to maintaining and further enhancing our standard of service in the Irish language, during the lifetime of this second Scheme. In doing so, we must recognise that the context in which we currently operate is particularly challenging. Since the economic crisis, Government measures to reduce public service costs have led to a significant reduction (40%) in staff numbers, involving the loss of key skills, including competence in the Irish language. Continued restriction in numbers will make it difficult to replenish this loss. As part of the measures taken to meet our staffing limitations, we now share our Irish Translator across other government departments / offices.

All commitments to continuing and enhancing services through Irish by PAS are grounded in the realities of current capabilities, having regard to resource restrictions in particular. It should be noted also that delivery on these commitments may be negatively impacted in the future by circumstances that are beyond the control of PAS.

During the lifetime of the first Scheme, the range of services provided by the Public Appointments Service expanded. One of the changes that took place was the provision of a facility for other public sector organisations, educational institutions, European and international bodies to advertise posts on publicjobs.ie. Frequently, the advertisements placed by external organisations outnumber significantly the number of advertisements for competitions run by PAS itself. Other than facilitating the placement of the advertisements, PAS has no further role in these particular competitions and no direct responsibility for the provision of associated material. It is intended that measures will be put in place during the lifetime of this Scheme to require Irish-based organisations which advertise on our website to make Irish versions of relevant documentation available.

This Chapter sets out the measures which PAS will take over the lifetime of this Scheme to ensure a continued high standard of service in Irish to our customers. The commitments made in the Scheme relate to the competitions for which PAS has responsibility and not to those conducted by other organisations referred to in the preceding paragraph.

### **Internet Services –[www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) and [www.postannapoibli.ie](http://www.postannapoibli.ie)**

The Public Appointments Service has invested heavily in the development of [www.postannapoibli.ie](http://www.postannapoibli.ie) and [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) as its primary recruitment interface. Publicjobs.ie provides a wide range of information, including general information about the Office, its resources, contact details and the Civil Service in general. This is, and will continue to be, available to candidates in the Official Language of their choice.

The on-line application facility of publicjobs.ie is comprised of the following:-

**Candidate Registration:** The candidate provides certain personal information such as name, address and contact information.

**Job Title and Description:** Details of the post being advertised. Typically, this is similar to the information about the post that appears in the recruitment advertisement.

**Application Form:** The official Application Form for the post allows candidates to enter Personal Details, Educational Qualifications and Employment History.

**Information Booklet:** Specific details of the requirements of the post, the conditions of service and the competition process are contained in the Information Booklet.

PAS is committed to maintaining the standard of service relating to the competition process which was developed during the first Scheme and to extend this to other competitions, where possible.

### **Competitions for which PAS is directly responsible**

The Candidate Registration Facility is already in place in both Official Languages.

The Job Title, Job Description and Application Form will be available in both Official Languages during the application period.

Information Booklets will be available in both Official Languages for the following:

1. Open Competition Civil Service posts: Clerical Officer; Executive Officer; Higher Executive Officer; Assistant Principal Officer; Third Secretary; Administrative Officer
2. Health Service Executive Posts in Gaeltacht Counties (see Appendix D)
3. Local Authority Posts in Gaeltacht Counties (see Appendix D)
4. Posts where the Irish language is a particular requirement of the post, such as Oifigeach Logainmneacha; Aistritheoir; and Cigirí Oideachais.
5. Posts under the remit of the Department of Education and Skills.

*Note:* It is necessary from time to time to include correspondence, which is not generated within this office, in Information Booklets. This will appear in the Official Language in which it was received.

### **Competitions advertised on publicjobs.ie by external organisations**

During the lifetime of this Scheme, it is intended to put measures in place to require Irish-based organisations which advertise on publicjobs.ie to make the Job Title, Job Description and Application Form (where applicable) available in both Official Languages. This requirement will not apply to advertisements placed by European and International organisations.

### **IT Unit**

The IT Unit will support the Translator and the Recruitment Units in ensuring that material is available on both the Irish and English language versions of the website. Any upgrading or enhancement of publicjobs.ie will be reflected in parallel on the Irish version of the site.

Within the framework of the overall publicjobs.ie development project, the IT Unit will address any site navigation concerns for both the Irish and English versions of the site. The creation of an Irish language alias / domain name, [www.postannapoibli.ie](http://www.postannapoibli.ie), and an Irish language general information mailbox, [eolas@postannapoibli.ie](mailto:eolas@postannapoibli.ie) has been helpful in this regard.

The IT Unit will continue to assist in the maintenance and development of the separate section devoted to Irish language matters on the Office's Intranet. Contact details on the Intranet for staff at the Primary Points of Contact will continue to be maintained and updated. Further contact names will be added, as appropriate.

### **Recruitment Units**

The Office will continue to provide a service, through Irish, to Irish speakers who make contact with any of its recruitment units and will endeavour to have a level of Irish

competence within each unit by the end of this Scheme. We will continue to fulfil our legal obligations to reply, in Irish, to correspondence received in Irish. In this regard, recruitment staff will continue to be encouraged to take Irish courses.

### **Human Resources Unit**

**Induction** - The Human Resources Unit will continue to include information on the Irish language services provided by the Office and information on the contents of this Scheme, during Induction courses, so that staff

- understand why the Office implements a bilingual policy
- understand the context and background to the policy and are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work
- understand how the Office will assist them to develop competency in the area.

**Primary points of contact** - The Office will continue to ensure that receptionists and switchboard operators, who are normally the first points of contact with the public, will be familiar with basic greetings in Irish. The Office will ensure that arrangements are in place to put members of the public in touch, with minimum delay, with an appropriate member of staff who can deal with their business, whether in Irish or English. Reception and switchboard staff will have a list of the staff members competent in Irish, to whom such callers may be directed. This list will also be updated on the Office Intranet.

**Enhancement of Irish language capability** - For staff who work at the 'Primary Points of Contact' the Human Resources Unit will continue to source Irish language classes focussed on customer service. Training may be organised through the arrangements put in place by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, or sourced locally where resources permit. The Office will continue to facilitate staff attending Irish language classes during office hours, within constraints. Advice will continue to be given to staff in relation to the range of high-quality Irish language classes available outside office hours.

**Irish as a required competence for appointment to posts** - As was done in the case of the appointment of the Office's Translator, the Office's recruitment policy will continue to be reviewed in the context of posts within the Public Appointments Service where proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) is an essential requirement.

**Extension of coverage to include Internal Staff** – Human Resources Unit will deal bilingually with internal staff in the language of their choice.

### **Corporate Governance**

Publications in relation to corporate governance, which are deemed to have the general public as part of their target audience (section 10 of the Act) – e.g. the Quality Customer Service Action Plan, the Customer Charter, the Annual Report and the Strategy Statement - will continue to be made available simultaneously in both Official Languages.

### **Press and Information**

The Office will continue to provide a spokesperson to talk to the Irish language media, such as RTE Raidió na Gaeltachta, RTE 1 and TG4, on issues of relevance to the Office, subject to reasonable advance notice being given to the Office of the time and the subject matter of the interview.

## **Chapter 4: Monitoring the Scheme**

The Management Advisory Committee of the Public Appointments Service will keep the effective operation of the Scheme under review. Responsibility for the day-day monitoring of the Scheme rests with senior management of the organisation.

As the role of the Office evolves over time, every effort will be made to take advantage of any new opportunities to enhance the service provided, through Irish, to the public.

A review of the progress of the Scheme will be included in the Annual Report of the Public Appointments Service.



## **Chapter 5: Publicising the Scheme**

PAS will promote the services it provides through Irish in the following manner, so that its customers and staff are aware of the availability of these services. The contents of this Scheme will be publicised to the general public by means of the website and to staff by means of the Intranet.

In addition to these measures, PAS 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 PAS through Irish, e.g. by the display of notices at Reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available and also by prominently listing these on the website.
- footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms, explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual material is not produced under a single cover); and
- information in publications and advertisements that the Office provides services through Irish and, accordingly, welcomes customers who wish to deal with us in Irish, according to the commitments in the Scheme.

The English language version is the original text of this Scheme. Any dispute regarding interpretation will be resolved by reference to the English language version.

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

## **Appendix A Overview of the Public Appointments Service**

The Public Appointments Service (PAS) was established in October 2004, under the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act 2004 and is the central provider of recruitment, assessment and selection services for the civil service. PAS also provides recruitment and related human resource advisory services to local authorities, the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána and other public bodies, as requested.

Mission statement: We will source the highest quality candidates for positions in the civil service and public service and we will facilitate the movement of public servants within, and between, sectors in accordance with the needs of clients, thus ensuring a more efficient and appropriate resourcing of essential services.

The programme of activities undertaken by PAS includes:

- open recruitment for positions in the Civil Service
- open recruitment for certain senior positions in the Local Authorities, the Health Service Executive, Harbour Authorities, Fisheries Boards and Education and Training Boards;
- selection of candidates for promotion within the Civil Service by means of competitive inter-departmental selection tests and interviews;
- assisting other public sector organisations with open recruitment (e.g. An Garda Síochána, the Nursing Careers Centre) and providing an application management service.
- assisting, as requested, the Top Level Appointments Committee in making senior appointments within the Civil Service by, for instance, conducting preliminary interviews.
- supporting the Public Service Redeployment Scheme by managing the Redeployment Resource Panel and matching the skills and experience of the resources available for redeployment with the skills requirements of sanctioned posts.
- providing a facility to other public sector organisations, educational institutions, European and international bodies to advertise jobs on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie).

This represents a vast range of recruitment and selection activity - from clerical and administrative posts to senior managerial appointments, together with a wide variety of professional and technical recruitment.

Increasingly, our role includes training, advisory and consultancy services which complement our recruitment and selection services, viz,

- advice and support on recruitment and selection matters to client organisations and other public bodies;
- job analysis services in order to obtain accurate job-related information to guide competency-based selection processes, which are also of benefit to our client organisations for human resource development activity;
- a selection testing service;
- assessor training in selection techniques, including interviewing;
- seminars on human resource related matters;
- a research programme.

The Office is located at Chapter House, 26-30 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

## **Appendix B Customers and Clients of the Public Appointments Service**

The Public Appointments Service recognises the following seven distinct groups of customers:

**Client Organisation:** This group includes all government departments/offices, local authorities, the Health Service Executive and other public bodies who avail of the recruitment, selection and advisory services that we provide. Certain clients e.g. certain educational institutions, European and international bodies, avail of the facility to advertise jobs on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie), but conduct their own recruitment.

**Applicants for Public Service Positions:** This group includes members of the public who apply for any public service position advertised by us and who are entitled to have their applications dealt with fairly, impartially and in an efficient and courteous manner.

**The General Public:** Members of the public, who may or may not be interested in applying for a public service position, but who have an interest in knowing that such positions are filled in an open, transparent manner. We also have a duty to account publicly for our use of the public funds entrusted to us and to demonstrate that such monies are spent properly, sensibly and with due consideration for value for money.

**Interview Board Members:** The Office relies heavily on the valuable contribution of all board members. It is essential that all possible assistance is provided to them in carrying out their task and thus ensure a positive experience while working with us.

**The Board of the Public Appointments Service:** We support the Board in carrying out its functions, as set down in Section 36 (3) of the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act 2004.

**Internal Staff:** We believe that internal staff members should be considered as customers and should be entitled, as are all customers, to expect the highest standards of service delivery in their dealings with the organisation.

**The Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA):** The CPSA has established Codes of Practice by which the recruitment and selection procedures of the Public Appointments Service are regulated. The Public Appointments Service adheres to the Codes of Practice, co-operates with audits and provides feedback on the Codes as required.

**The policy of the Office is to provide services in Irish to our customers to the greatest extent possible, within existing resources.**

## **Appendix C Functional Areas of the Public Appointment Service**

The following are the functional areas of the Public Appointments Service:

1. Recruitment Units
  - Graduate Recruitment, Clerical, some Professional, Interdepartmental & IT
  - Garda Trainee, Garda Reserve, Temporary Clerical Officer and some large volume competitions for HSE and Local Authorities
  - Senior Management
  - Senior Professional
  - Medical Consultant Recruitment
  
2. Related Recruitment / Placement Services
  - Assessment Services
  - Redeployment
  - Freedom of Information
  - Careers Store
  - Reception
  - Switchboard
  
3. Corporate Support Units
  - Human Resources (internal)
  - I T Unit
  - Business Support and Records Management
  - Finance Unit

## **Appendix D Gaeltacht Counties**

Where reference is made to “Gaeltacht Counties” in this scheme the following counties are intended:

|           |
|-----------|
| Meath     |
| Kerry     |
| Cork      |
| Donegal   |
| Galway    |
| Mayo      |
| Waterford |