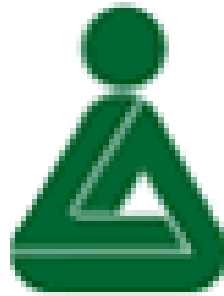


**LEGAL AID BOARD
SCHEME 2007 – 2010
UNDER SECTION 11 OF THE OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES ACT 2003.**



May 2007

SCHEME 2007 – 2010 UNDER SECTION 11 OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

On 22 March 2006, the Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Board was requested by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to prepare a draft scheme under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (the Act) and to present it to him for confirmation on or before 21 September 2006. This scheme has been prepared in accordance with this request.

Section 11 of the Act 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, 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 Preparation of the scheme

The Scheme was drawn up by the Board having regard to the Guidelines prepared under Section 12 of the Act by the Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and in particular that the provision of service in Irish should be based on the following:

- The underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language in the context of specific provision
- The resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the public body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

1.2.1 Consultation

In accordance with section 13(1) (a) of the Act, on 9 May 2006, the Board published a notice of the intention to prepare a draft Scheme. Bilingual advertisements inviting submissions were published in the national press and on the Board's website, and notices in Irish were placed in one Irish language publication. The same information was conveyed to Board staff via our internal bulletin board. A total of three submissions were received from the external consultation and these are available on the Board's website www.legalaidboard.ie.

1.3 Assessment of demand for services through Irish

In June 2006, all law centres and head office units were requested to indicate the level of demand for services in Irish since the beginning of 2004. This indicated that there had been limited demand for the service up to that date. Requests for legal service in Irish were confined to one law centre where a full Irish language legal service is

already available. A total of five clients requested service in Irish from the law centre service during the period. To put this in context the Board provided service in some 12,500 cases through its law centre service in 2005 alone.

A working group was established to prepare the scheme, representing all relevant functional areas of the Board.

1.4 Scheme objectives

The Board is committed to the implementation of the provisions of the Official Languages Act. It is proposed to achieve this gradually, building on the existing arrangements for service provision with this first scheme which will be developed in accordance with demand and resource availability.

CHAPTER 2 - OVERVIEW OF THE LEGAL AID BOARD

2.1 Mandate

The Legal Aid Board was established by the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 as the statutory, independent body responsible for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means. Section 5(1) of the Act states:

“The principal function of the Board shall be to provide, within the Board’s resources and subject to the other provisions of this Act, legal aid and advice in civil cases to persons who satisfy the requirements of this Act.”

2.2 Mission

The Board’s Corporate Plan 2006 to 2008 defines its mission as follows:

“To provide a professional, efficient, cost-effective and accessible legal aid and advice service.”

2.3 Governance

The Board is governed by a statutory Board, appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Board consists of a chairperson and 12 ordinary members. It has responsibility under the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 for:

- the strategic direction of the organisation;
- determining policy and monitoring its implementation;
- overseeing the proper and effective management of the organisation;
- monitoring the implementation of effective financial procedures and providing accountability;
- approving and monitoring budgets, and
- making certain reserved decisions.

2.4 Services provided

The Board makes the services of solicitors and, where necessary, barristers available to persons of modest means in relation to matters of civil law. The Board’s current statutory remit and the level of resources provided are the main determinants of the range and responsiveness of the services provided by the organisation.

The services provided include legal advice covering advice on matters relating to civil law and legal aid covering representation by a solicitor or a barrister engaged by the Board to provide representation in court proceedings as permitted by the Act.

The service also covers legal advice and legal aid to applicants for asylum in the state.

The service is provided on a nationwide basis with some 33 full-time and 12 part-time law centres across the country, including 3 full time law centres that comprise the Refugee Legal Service (RLS).

In 2005, the Board provided service in some 17,500 cases through its law centre and RLS services.

The Board also operates a specialised Refugee Documentation Centre which provides an independent and professional research and library service for all of the main bodies involved in the asylum process.

2.5 Board Staff

The Board has over 380 staff in total, headed by the Chief Executive, and includes some 110 solicitors who are located in 33 law centres throughout the country and supported by paralegals and administrative staff. There are also a number of key units in Cahirciveen and Dublin, managing functions including legal support services, finance, ICT, human resources and corporate services.

2.6 Head Office

The Board's Head Office is located in Cahirciveen, County Kerry where some 50 staff are located. Some of the headquarters' functions are also undertaken in Dublin.

Details of the individual law centres and head office locations are contained in appendix 1.

2.7 Clients and stakeholders

As a state funded professional legal service, the Board's clients are persons eligible for legal services who avail of the Board's services. The statutory and professional requirements of the solicitor client relationship apply in the case of all such clients.

The Board's stakeholders are a much broader group including:

Government

Taxpayers

Potential Clients

The Courts Service

The Legal Profession

State Agencies dealing with the Board's client base

Voluntary Groups dealing with the Board's client base.

CHAPTER 3 - SCHEME

3.1 EXISTING LANGUAGE REGIME FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES

3.1.1 Legal Service - Law Centres

The Board's main law centre service is provided mainly through English. The Board also provides its full law centre legal service in the Irish language to those who request it, through its Galway Law Centre. In this context law centre legal service refers to the services provided by a solicitor in the Board's law centres. In the event that a client in another part of the country requires service in Irish, the solicitor providing service in Irish will travel to a location suitable to that client. This is the same procedure as applies when the English language service requires the provision of service by a solicitor from a law centre in a different catchment area. The reception and support services in this office are not yet at the level of being fully bilingual.

3.1.2. Legal Service - Refugee Legal Service

The Board's Refugee Legal Service (RLS) provides a legal service to persons applying for asylum in Ireland. This service is provided in English with the aid of interpreters for those clients who require it. From the establishment of the service in 1999 to date, no client of the RLS has sought to receive service through Irish.

3.1.3 Head Office Services

The Board's head office functions are mainly directed at support for frontline service delivery. Service is provided through Irish by the Board's head office units as required in response to specific requests. To date, there have been a limited number of requests for such service.

3.2 Public Interface

3.2.1 Forms and Leaflets:

It is Board policy that all of its forms and leaflets should be available in Irish. To this end all of the forms and leaflets relating to its law centre service have been translated and are available in Irish and English in law centres. Where written/phone/email requests are received for information about the Board's services, a copy of the relevant leaflet is provided in the language of the request or in the language requested if different. Forms and leaflets are also distributed through a number of other outlets for example – the Citizen's Information Centres. They may be requested directly by contacting the Board's Head Office in Cahirciveen, Locall 1890 – 615 200.

3.2.2 Website

The revised version of the Board's website, which is currently under preparation, will include an Irish language option – which will be a full mirror image of the English version. All web pages will be made available in both languages. Users will be able to choose the language version they wish to access at any point on the website. Board publications and policy documents being placed on the site will be made available in the languages in which they are published. The revised website will be available in both language options from the date of its relaunch (Summer 2007).

3.2.3 Publications

Since mid June 2004, major corporate publications are published bilingually, within one cover, in accordance with Section 10 of the Official Languages Act 2003.

3.3 SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF IRISH

The Board does not currently provide services solely through the medium of Irish and there are no proposals to do so. None of the Board's offices are located in a Gaeltacht area.

3.4 SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF BOTH IRISH AND ENGLISH

3.4.0 Assessment of potential future demand

In the first year of this scheme, the Board will undertake a survey of potential demand for its services in Irish. This survey will be undertaken in recognition of the possibility that the limited availability of the Irish language service has influenced demand for it. The examination of options to enhance service provision in Irish, which are outlined below, will be informed by the results of this survey.

3.4.1 Legal Service - Law centres

The Board's current arrangements for the provision of service are set out at paragraph 3.1.1 above. This section sets out the measures the Board proposes to take to improve and develop the existing service.

The Board's Irish language legal service is currently located in its Galway law centre. The reception and support services in this office are not yet at the level of being fully bilingual. The Board will take the necessary measures to develop reception and support services in Irish at its Galway Law Centre. This element of the service will be in place within two years of the start of the scheme i.e. by 25 May 2009

The Board will build on the existing arrangements for service provision in Irish, outlined at 3.1.1, by making available a referral service. Specifically, persons contacting any of the Board's law centres or offices seeking legal service through Irish will be referred directly to Galway Law Centre. This will require that the enhancement of the capacity of the existing support staff, clerical and paralegal, to handle such queries, as outlined above, is in place.

In addition, the Board will use the results of the survey of potential demand outlined at 3.4.0 above to identify locations where it needs to enhance its capacity to provide service in Irish. It is expected that such developments would focus on offices whose catchment area includes Gaeltacht areas, and also some of the larger urban centres. The measures to be taken will include the development of the capacity of the staff in these offices to provide service in Irish and also the identification of suitably qualified private practitioners to complement the Board's Irish language service. The enhanced arrangements outlined above will be in place by the end of the lifetime of this scheme.

3.4.2 Interpreter based service

The Board, through its Refugee Legal Service, already has extensive experience of the provision of service with the aid of interpreters.

The Board will examine the feasibility of the provision of services for its clients in Gaeltacht areas with the assistance of interpreters. One of the options to be considered in this examination will be the operation of a pilot scheme for interpreter based services. This examination will be completed within 2 years of the commencement of the scheme.

3.4.3 Private practitioner based services

The Board currently uses the services of private practitioners to complement the service provided by its staff. The Board will investigate the capacity of private practitioners to provide service in Irish to the standards required by the Board. This investigation will be completed within two years of the commencement of the scheme.

3.4.4 Barristers

The Board also avails of the services of barristers, instructed by Board solicitors, to represent clients in court. The Board will seek to identify suitably qualified barristers to support its provision of service in Irish. This will be achieved within two years of the commencement of the scheme.

3.4.5 Head Office Services

The Board's head office functions are mainly directed at support for frontline service delivery. Staff on the Board's head office switchboard will be trained to respond to telephone enquiries made through Irish during 2007. The Board will provide training to enhance the capacity of other head office personnel to conduct business through Irish also during 2007. This will ensure that the front line services provided by Head Office will be delivered bilingually when required by 26 May 2008.

3.4.6 Services to be provided through the medium of English only - Refugee Legal Service

The Board's Refugee Legal Service currently provides a service through the medium of English. The service is provided with the aid of interpreters for the majority of clients. It is proposed to continue to provide this service in this way. If a client of this service requests that it be provided in Irish this will be achieved with the aid of interpretation.

3.5 Communications

The Board's communications framework will include measures to increase awareness of its Irish language service largely through advertising in national and Irish language media.

3.6 Resources

3.6.1 Staff

The Board currently depends on one member of solicitor staff to provide legal service through Irish. Training will be provided to other solicitor staff with the necessary language competence to enable them also to provide a professional legal service in Irish. This will be achieved within the lifetime of this scheme.

The Board will ensure that there is sufficient staff with the necessary skills to meet demand for service in Irish.

All staff providing service through Irish will be within the Board's existing approved complement.

3.7 Quality Assurance

The quality assurance measures applied to the Board's services do not distinguish between those services provided in Irish and those provided in English. This will continue to be the case during the lifetime of this scheme.

3.8 Public Interface

3.8.1 Forms and Leaflets:

It is Board policy that all of its forms and leaflets should be available in Irish. To this end all of the forms and leaflets relating to its law centre service will continue to be made available in Irish and in English. These forms and leaflets will be available in law centres. Where written/phone/email requests are received for information about the Board's services, a copy of both the Irish and the English language version of the relevant leaflet will be provided in response. All forms will be made available bilingually within one cover from the commencement of this scheme – apart from forms for the Refugee Legal Service. Forms and leaflets will continue to be distributed through a number of other outlets for example – the Citizen's Information Centres. They may be requested directly by contacting the Board's Head Office in Cahirciveen, Locall 1890 – 615 200 or by email from info@legallaidboard.ie.

3.8.2 Telephones

- The Board will ensure that switchboard operators in all locations, including its Head Office in Caherciveen, are fully briefed and trained to be able to direct callers in Irish to the appropriate location to receive service in Irish. This training will ensure that by 26 May 2008 reception/switchboard staff are able to give the name of the body in Irish,
- that they are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and
- that they can put members of the public in touch, without delay, with the office or officer responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where available.

3.8.3 Public Offices

The Board provides service to clients through its network of 33 law centres, many of which are quite small. Personal callers to law centres who wish to conduct their business in Irish will be referred to offices where such service can be provided and will be facilitated in making contact with that centre.

The Board will have a fully bilingual counter and support service available in its Galway Law Centre within two years of the start of this scheme ie by 25 May 2009. A fully bilingual legal service is already available in this office.

3.8.4 Board Website

The revised version of the Board's website currently under preparation will include an Irish language option – which will be a full mirror image of the English version. All web pages will be made available in both languages. Users will be able to choose the language version they wish to access at all web pages. Board publications and policy

documents being placed on the site will be made available in the languages in which they are published. The revised website will be available in both language options from the date of its relaunch (Summer 2007).

The website does not currently provide for interactive services. Where such services are developed they will be provided in both Irish and English.

3.9 Staff Development

The Board has identified a number of staff members with the ability to provide service through Irish. It will also seek to identify the offices most likely to require such staff, and aim to provide the competence in those offices through a combination of recruitment and training. Staff in relevant areas will be particularly encouraged to avail of Irish language training courses.

3.10 Supports to service provision in Irish

The Board will provide the necessary facilities and support to staff responsible for providing service in Irish. This will include training, necessary IT supports (Irish language word processing, availability of standard documents etc), dictionaries, glossaries of technical terms and the other support materials necessary to enable provision of service in Irish to the Board's quality standard. In addition, any new computer systems which are initiated after the commencement of this scheme, will, where necessary, take account of the need to be fully capable of handling the Irish language. Existing systems will, where necessary, be adapted to handle the Irish language at the next suitable upgrade.

The Board will ensure that 25% of press releases are provided in both Irish and English from the date of commencement of this scheme.

CHAPTER 4 - COMMENCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Commencement

The scheme is commenced with effect from 28 May 2007 and shall remain in force for a period of three 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 earlier.

4.2 Implementation

The Director of Operations in the Board's Head Office, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this scheme in the Board.

APPENDIX 1

LOCATION OF BOARD OFFICES AND LAW CENTRES

BOARD OFFICES

Head Office

Quay Street
Caherciveen,
Co. Kerry
Phone: 066 947 1000
Locall: 1890 615 200
Fax: 066 947 1035

Dublin Office

47 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2
Phone: 01 6441 900
Fax: 01 662 3661

Web site: www.legalaidboard.ie

LAW CENTRES

FULL TIME LAW CENTRES

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
CAVAN Newcourt Shopping Centre, Church Street, Cavan Tel: (049) 433 1110 Fax: (049) 433 1304	Mary Pat Ahern
CLARE Unit 6A, Merchant's Square, Ennis, Co Clare Tel: (065) 682 1929 Fax: (065) 682 1939	Mary Cuffe
CORK North Quay House, Popes Quay, Cork Tel: (021) 455 1686 Fax: (021) 455 1690 1A South Mall, Cork Tel: (021) 427 5998 Fax: (021) 427 6927	Betty Dineen Shane Dooley
DONEGAL Houston House, Main Street, Letterkenny Co Donegal Tel: (074) 912 6177 Fax: (074) 912 6086	Ray Finucane
DUBLIN	

45 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1 Tel: (01) 874 5440 Fax: (01) 874 6896	Kevin Liston
9 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1 Tel: (01) 872 4133 Fax: (01) 872 4937	Gerard Kirwan
Tower Centre, Clondalkin Village, Dublin 22 Tel: (01) 457 6011 Fax: (01) 457 6007	Tom Nally
Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Tel: (01) 451 1519 Fax: (01) 451 7989	Pauline Corcoran
44/49 Main Street, Finglas, Dublin 11 Tel: (01) 864 0314 Fax: (01) 864 0362	Marie Quirke
48/49 North Brunswick Street, Georges Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9700 Fax: (01) 646 9799	Hugh Cunniam
Unit 6-8, Business Centre, Clonsilla Road Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 Tel: (01) 820 0455 Fax: (01) 820 0450	Joan Crawford
Private Practitioner Centre 7 – 11 Montague Court, Montague St Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 4776200 Fax: (01) 4776241	

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
GALWAY 9 Francis Street, Galway Tel: (091) 561650 Fax: (091) 563825	Mary Griffin
KERRY 1 Day Place, Tralee, Co Kerry Tel: (066) 712 6900 Fax: (066) 712 3631	Carol Anne Coolican
KILDARE Canning Place, Newbridge, Co Kildare Tel: (045) 435777 Fax: (045) 435766	Edel Poole
KILKENNY/CARLOW 86 Maudlin Street, Kilkenny Tel: (056) 776 1611 Fax: (056) 776 1562	Niall Murphy
LAOIS Unit 6A, Bridge Street, Portlaoise, Co Laois Tel: (0502)8661366 Fax: (0502) 8661362	Catherine Martin
LIMERICK Unit F, Lock Quay, Limerick Tel: (061) 314599 Fax: (061) 318330	Fergal Rooney

<p>LONGFORD/LEITRIM Credit Union Courtyard, 50A Main Street, Longford Tel: (043) 47590 Fax: (043) 47594</p>	<p>Eugene Kelly</p>
<p>LOUTH Condil House, Roden Place, Dundalk, Co Louth Tel: (042) 933 0448 Fax: (042) 933 0991</p>	<p>Deirdre McMichael</p>
<p>MAYO Humbert Hall, Main Street, Castlebar, Co Mayo Tel: (094) 902 4334 Fax: (094) 902 3721</p>	<p>Thomas O' Mahony</p>
<p>MEATH Kennedy Road, Navan, Co Meath Tel: (046) 907 2515 Fax: (046) 907 2519</p>	<p>Vivienne Crowe</p>
<p>MONAGHAN Alma House, The Diamond, Monaghan Tel: (047) 84888 Fax: (047) 84879</p>	<p>Stephanie Coggans</p>
<p>OFFALY Harbour Street, Tullamore Tel: (0506) 9351177 Fax: (0506) 9351544</p>	<p>Helen O'Reilly</p>
<p>SLIGO/ROSCOMMON Bridgewater House, Rockwood Parade, Thomas Street, Sligo Tel: (071) 9161670 Fax: (071) 9161681</p>	<p>Fiona McGuire</p>
<p>TIPPERARY Friars Court, Abbey Street, Nenagh, Co Tipperary Tel: (067) 34181 Fax: (067) 34083</p>	<p>Josephine Fair</p>
<p>WATERFORD Canada House, Canada Street, Waterford Tel: (051) 855814 Fax: (051) 871237</p>	<p>Aidan Lynch</p>
<p>WESTMEATH Paynes Lane, Irishtown, Athlone, Co Westmeath Tel: (090) 647 4694 Fax: (090) 647 2160</p>	<p>Phil O'Laoide</p>
<p>WEXFORD Unit 8, Redmond Square, Wexford Tel: (053) 9122622 Fax: (053)9124927</p>	<p>Niamh Murran</p>

WICKLOW

Bridge Street, Wicklow
Tel: (0404) 66166 Fax: (0404) 66197

Barbara Smyth

REFUGEE LEGAL SERVICE (RLS)

48/49 North Brunswick Street,
George's Lane, Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 646 9600 Fax: (01) 671 0200

**Frank Caffrey
Grainne Brophy**

Timberlay House,
79/83 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 631 0800 Fax: (01) 661 5011

North Quay House, Popes Quay, Cork
Tel: (021) 4554634 Fax: 021 4557622

Bernadette Mc Gonigle

Seville House, New Dock Road, Galway
Tel: (091) 562480 Fax: (091)562599

Cormac Faherty

Registration Office for the RLS
Timberlay House 79/83 Lower Mount Street
Dublin 2
Tel (01) 631 0800. fax (01) 661 5011

PART-TIME LAW CENTRES

Location and telephone	Open	Law Centre
CARLOW		
St. Catherine's Citizens Info. Bureau, St. Joseph's Road, Carlow. Tel: (059) 9138700	First and last Friday of every month	Kilkenny
DONEGAL		
The Courthouse, Donegal Town. Tel: (074) 9126177	Once a month	Donegal
KERRY		
52 High Street, Killarney Tel: (066) 7126900	Every Friday morning	Kerry
LEITRIM		
The Health Centre, Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon. Tel: (043) 47590	Once a month	Longford
LOUTH		
Drogheda Community Services Centre, Fair Street, Drogheda Tel: (041) 9836084/9833490	First and Second Tuesday of every month	Dublin (Ormond Quay)
MAYO		
The Pastoral Centre (Cathedral Grounds) Ballina, Co. Mayo Tel: (094) 9024334	Once a month	Mayo
Health Centre, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis Tel: (094) 9024334	Fourth Tuesday of every month	Galway
ROSCOMMON		

Citizens Information Centre, 7 Elphin Street, Boyle Tel: (071) 9161670	Once a month	Sligo
TIPPERARY		
Thurles Community Social Services, Rossa Street, Thurles. Tel: (067) 3418	Second Tuesday of every month	Tipperary
Citizens' Information Centre, 14 Wellington Street, Clonmel. Tel: (052) 22267	Three or four times a month	Tipperary

WESTMEATH		
Enterprise Centre, Bishopgate Street, Mullingar Tel: (090) 6474694	Once a month	Westmeath