



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

**SCHEME OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
AFFAIRS
UNDER SECTION 11 OF THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
2013-2016**

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Background

The Official Languages Act 2003 was signed into law on 14 July 2003. The Act is the first piece of legislation to provide a comprehensive statutory framework for the delivery of services through the Irish Language.

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish.

Section 11 of the Act provides for the preparation of a statutory scheme by public bodies detailing the services they will provide

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

Preparation and Consultation

This scheme has been prepared in accordance with the *Guidelines under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003*.

The Department published a notice under Section 13(1)(a) of the Act on 30th November, 2011 inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from any interested parties. Five submissions were received from a range of Irish language organisations and from private individuals.

All Members of the Department's staff were surveyed for their views and suggestions in relation to the scheme and their views and suggestions which were largely informally given have also informed the scheme

The Content of the Scheme

This scheme is designed to ensure that customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so. It sets out the extent to which services are currently available through Irish, and identifies areas for future enhancement.

Commencement Date of the Scheme

The scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from 14th October 2013 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 later.

Chapter 2 - Overview of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs

The Role of the Department

Mission Statement

To lead the effort to improve the outcomes for children and young people in Ireland.

Mandate

The Departmental responsibilities encompass a wide range of policy and service activity, both direct and indirect, for children and young people in Ireland. The Department has a complex mandate, comprised of a number of separate but interrelated strands:

- the direct provision of a range of universal and targeted services,
- ensuring high quality arrangements are in place for focussed interventions dealing with child welfare and protection, family support, adoption, school attendance and reducing youth crime,
- the harmonisation of policy and provision across Government and with a wide range of stakeholders to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Structure

The current organisation chart for the Department and its agencies is at Appendix 1 and 2. In adopting this structure, the aim has been to ensure that the resources available are directed to meet the priorities of the Minister and Government and to allow the staff of the Department to focus on the achievement of their goals and objectives within a strong management and governance framework. Given the short time since the establishment of the Department, this structure will be kept under review to ensure that it proves effective in supporting the organisation to achieve its mission and mandate.

A unique feature of the Departmental architecture is the co-location at the Department's headquarters of the Early Years Education Unit of the Department of Education and Skills and the sections of the Irish Youth Justice Service responsible for community programmes which remain under the Department of Justice and Equality. This physical proximity facilitates close working relationships on key issues of mutual concern and common purpose.

Statement of Strategy

The Department's Statement of Strategy 2011-2014 sets out the High Level Objectives and how it proposes to deliver these objectives.

Strategic Objectives

- Develop, strengthen and align policies, legislation and resources in order to achieve better outcomes for children, and young people and provide support for parents and families.
- Monitor and evaluate performance through strong governance and accountability systems in respect of the responsibilities of the Department and its agencies.
- Support the Department and key stakeholders in accessing better evidence and facilitating the active participation of children and young people in decisions that affect their individual and collective lives.
- Improve systems for supporting families, safeguarding and protecting children, providing alternative care and assisting those young people whose behaviour poses a risk to themselves or others.
- Support children and young people so that they can fully engage in active learning, including through the provision of high quality early childhood care and education, youth services and addressing issues of school attendance and participation.
- Collaborate with stakeholders, including across Government, in monitoring and promoting the physical, emotional and economic well being of children and young people and reducing inequalities.
- Be recognised as an organisation where, on an ongoing basis, high performance is achieved and personal development is supported.

Working with key external partners and stakeholders

In order to achieve its goals, the Department works in close partnership with other Government Departments, statutory agencies and non-Governmental organisations on a range of cross-cutting issues in relation to both policy and provision as they relate to children and young people. The scope of this collaboration with Government Department and statutory agencies includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Department of Education and Skills (e.g. Early childhood education, numeracy/literacy and skills development);
- Department of Justice and Equality (e.g. Crime prevention, community sanction, detention, diversion and equality);
- Department of Health (e.g. Disability, Health Promotion – including nutrition and Drugs Policy);
- Health Service Executive (e.g. child welfare and protection, care and social services)
- Department of Social Protection (e.g. social inclusion, income support and the activation agenda);
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (e.g. employment creation and youth entrepreneurship);
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (e.g. UN Committee on Rights of the Child and Council of Europe Measures), and
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (e.g. initiatives involving sustainable development and communities).

In relation to the community, voluntary and not for profit sector, the Department has a very wide range of interactions with key organisations.

Assessment of the extent to which services are already available through Irish

The Department is committed to ensuring that customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so, to the greatest extent possible, in so far as existing staff resources will allow. Staff who are competent and willing to deal with customers or clients in Irish have been identified on the internal Staff Directory.

Speeches

Speeches or statements, including those in the Houses of the Oireachtas by Ministers, or speeches by senior officials, are made available in the language in which they were delivered.

Correspondence

Correspondence is responded to in the language in which it is written in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act.

E-Mail

A bilingual disclaimer notice has been devised and is currently appended to outgoing e-mails.

Stationery

Headed paper contains contact details in Irish and English

Telephone

There are currently no pre-recorded telephone announcements and messages in the Department. However should same be introduced they will be in compliance with the provisions of regulations made by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under section 9(1) of the Official Languages Act 2003. Individual members of staff may leave messages in Irish or English or both languages.

Chapter 3 - Enhancement of bilingual services

Press Releases

Press releases are currently issued in English only. In general, the final text of a release or statement is only finalised and approved very close to issue. The Department often has to issue statements quickly in response to unforeseen events.

- The Department undertakes to have 10% of its Press Releases issued to the media in Irish and English by the end of the lifetime of the Scheme.

Speeches

Speeches or statements, given by the Minister in the Oireachtas or elsewhere, as well as speeches made by senior officials, will continue to be made available in the language(s) which they are delivered.

Information leaflets/Application forms/Brochures

The Department commits to making information leaflets, application forms and brochures provided by the Department, available bilingually within the one cover, except where this is not practicable because of the size or nature of the document on renewal of stock. This commitment takes effect from the beginning of the scheme with respect to new information leaflets and application forms and on renewal of stock with respect to existing leaflets and forms.

Website, Interactive Services and IT Systems

Website

The Department's Website is used for on-line application and consultation processes and these are always provided in both languages. For example, the Childcare Programmes require an online return from funded services and this online form is available either in Irish or in English. Similarly, when the Department held a public consultation for the Children & Young People's Policy Framework online, there were both Irish and English versions of the forms and instructions.

The Department will continue to progressively increase the percentage of static text translated into Irish on its website.

Interactive Services

Any new interactive services which allow the general public to make applications online from the outset of this scheme will be introduced bilingually where technically feasible. Where on-line interactive services are currently available in English only and under the control of the Department, they will be upgraded where technically feasible.

Computer Systems:

Existing computer systems are fully capable of handling the Irish language. Any new computer systems being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language.

Emails:

Standard messages on the Department's email, such as disclaimers of responsibility, will be in both Irish and English. Individual staff members will be encouraged to create 'out of office' replies in both Irish and in English.

Reception/Switchboard

Receptionists/switchboard operators are the first points of contact with the public. The policy of the Department is to ensure that standard Quality Customer Service (QCS) practice applies in this area, so that at the commencement of the scheme:

- Reception/switchboard staff are able to give the name of the public body in Irish.
- They are at least familiar with the basic greetings in Irish.
- Suitable arrangements are in place so 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.

Face to face

Largely, the Department has limited direct contact with the general public. The Department does not currently provide a one to one counter service and there are no plans to introduce such a service in the foreseeable future.

The Gaeltacht /Placenames

The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the Department. Official Irish language versions of placenames, both inside and outside the Gaeltacht, are available online to public bodies and to the public generally at www.logainm.ie.

Training & Development

There is an ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for all staff, including language training as required, to develop the full potential of staff during their careers in this Department,

The following steps will be taken throughout the duration of the scheme to enhance the level of Irish among staff in the DYCA.

- To facilitate extended Irish language service delivery, identify those claiming proficiency on telephone databases and organization charts.
- Facilitate staff attending Irish language classes during office hours;
- Provide guidance to individual staff members who wish to leave bilingual telephone voice mail announcements on their personal handsets;

The Department will provide all staff with easy access to information and language resources, e.g. dictionaries, advice on written Irish and lists of common phrases, etc. The use of online resources such as spellcheckers and www.focal.ie and www.foclóir.ie will be actively promoted.

Chapter 4 - Monitoring and Revision

Ongoing monitoring of service provision and of the level of demand for services through Irish will be carried out by the Customer Service function in the Business Support Unit and updates will be presented to the Management Advisory Committee of the Department at least once a year.

Future customer surveys will continue to include questions in relation to satisfaction with the provision of services in Irish, and the demand for these services.

The Department's Management Advisory Committee (MAC) will keep the effective operation of the Scheme under review, while ongoing monitoring and annual assessment of the implementation of the Scheme will be undertaken by the Policy, Strategy and Business Support Unit of the Department.

Chapter 5 - Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme, together with its commitments and provisions, will be publicised both internally and externally.

Internally

A copy of the scheme will be circulated to all staff as soon as possible after completion.

Externally

In addition to a press release, a bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on the Department's website www.dcy.gov.ie and circulated to appropriate agencies.

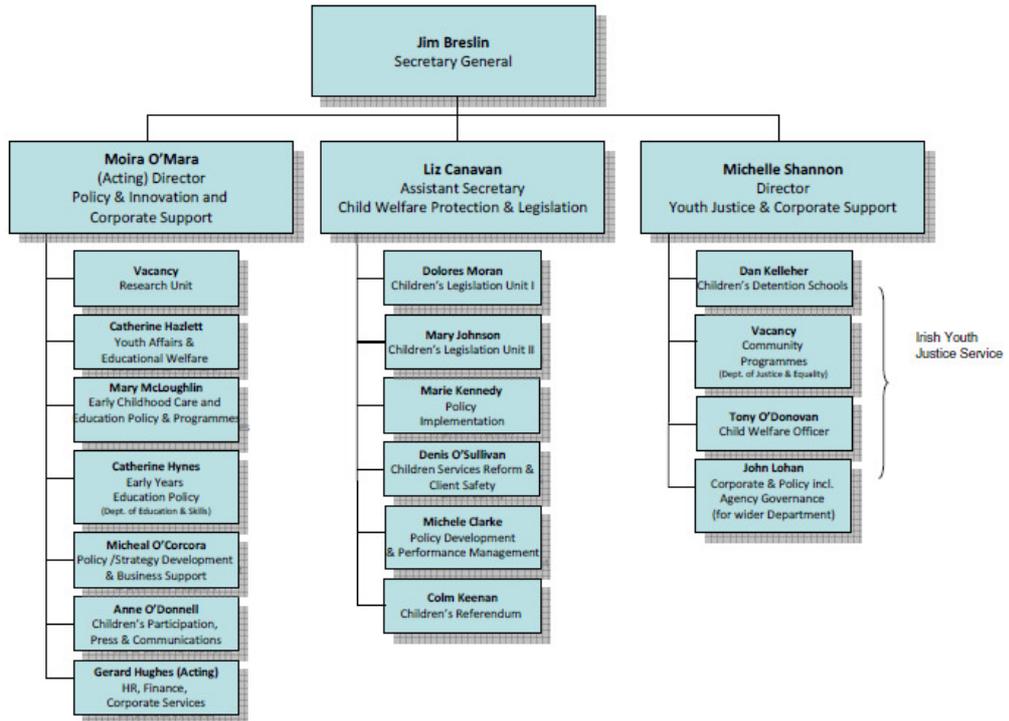
A copy of this scheme will be forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla on approval.

Copies will be made available to any member of the general public on request.

The English language version is the original text of this scheme.

APPENDIX 1 - Organisation Chart

Management Advisory Committee & Principal Officer Level Responsibilities



Appendix 2

Bodies under the aegis of the Department

All bodies listed are statutorily independent bodies

Family Support Agency
Mr Bill O'Dea Acting CEO
4th Floor, St. Stephens Green House
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2.

Adoption Authority of Ireland
Mr Pat Bennett, CEO
Shelbourne House
Shelbourne House
Dublin 4.

National Educational Welfare Board
Ms. Clare Ryan, CEO
16-22 Green Street
Dublin 7

**Office of the
Ombudsman for Children**
Mr Frank Honan, Office Manager
Millennium House
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1.

Children Detention Schools
Mr. Joe Horan
Chairperson of the Board of Management
Oberstown Campus
Lusk
Co. Dublin