

Provision of services in Irish

Part 37-00-38

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1. Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 (OLA) places obligations on Revenue and other public bodies in relation to the provision of services through Irish. Regulations have been made under the Act regarding the use of Irish on stationery, signage and recorded oral announcements. The Official Languages Act 2003 has been amended with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, which was signed into law in December 2021.

The new amended Act will bring about changes to the way government bodies implement the provision of services as Gaeilge and Revenue will endeavour to adhere to any and all changes that affect our organisation.

Among the amendments is the abolition of the existing Language Schemes. These will be replaced by Language Standards governed by a newly incorporated Advisory Committee. Until the Language Standards are advised to government organisations, the existing Language Schemes remain in force.

Two Irish Language Schemes have been approved for Revenue under the OLA. The first covered the period 2005-08 and the second covered 2013-16. The [schemes](#) are available on the [Revenue website](#). A new scheme has been developed and is awaiting approval by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. These schemes will cease to exist with the introduction of the Language Standards, to be established in conjunction with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

Responsibility for the co-ordination of Irish language services in Revenue is in Rannóg na Gaeilge in our Galway office.

This Unit has national responsibility for managing compliance with the provisions of the Official Languages Act 2003 and the related Regulations for implementation of commitments in our Language Schemes, for monitoring the demand for Irish services and for dealing with enquiries/complaints regarding our Irish language services.

2. Revenue's commitment to the provision of an Irish service

Revenue fully supports the entitlement of taxpayers to be dealt with in Irish and offers a comprehensive range of services through Irish to any person or business that wishes to conduct their affairs with us exclusively through the Irish language, once they elect to do so.

Our Customer Service Standards include a commitment to provide a service to any customer who wishes to conduct their business through the medium of Irish. The same standards apply to the delivery of services in the Irish language as apply to English language services.

The following material is either exempt from or not required to be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

[...]

3. Notification of customers' language preference

Revenue offers a comprehensive range of services in Irish to any person or business that wishes to conduct their tax affairs **exclusively** through the Irish language. Note: customers cannot choose to operate certain taxes through Irish and others through English.

In order for Revenue to provide these services we need to be aware of a customer's language preference and customers must notify Revenue of their preference. New customers are advised of the availability of a service through Irish at the point of first contact with Revenue. This generally occurs when an individual is registering as a PAYE employee or setting up a business.

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[...]

Customers can also advise us of their language preference by contacting their local Revenue office. When customers have indicated their language preference, all future correspondence and output will be issued in the language of choice.

Currently, some 4,672 customers have elected to deal with their tax affairs exclusively in Irish.

Staff should note the following.

- Information regarding '[Conducting your Business with Revenue through Irish](#)' is available on the Revenue website. This webpage includes links to Revenue's Irish language schemes for [2005 -2008](#) and [2013 – 2016](#).
- Revenue's tax processing system (ITS) produces Irish versions of the vast majority of forms and letters to customers who have indicated their preference for Irish versions.

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[...]

4. Identifying Irish cases on Revenue's systems

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[...]

5. Legal requirements under the Official Languages Act 2003

There are specific legal requirements relating to the following:

- correspondence and communication by post, fax or email
- stationery and signage
- recorded oral announcements
- corporate publications, press releases and advertising campaigns
- service through Irish for telephone callers
- service for personal callers to public offices
- provision of a range of forms and leaflets in the Irish language
- information on the website
- online services.

5.1. Correspondence and Communications by post, fax or email

There are specific legal obligations regarding correspondence received from and information issued to customers.

5.1.1. Correspondence/communication initiated by customers

Communication **initiated** by the public in an official language must be replied to in the same language. This means that:

- all correspondence received from a person in Irish, either by post, fax or e-mail, must be replied to in Irish regardless of whether they are received from an Irish marked case;
- all correspondence received from a person in English, either by post, fax or e-mail, must be replied to in English even if it is received from an Irish marked case.

Out-of-office messages or automated replies to emails are 'replies'. Where email correspondence is expected to be received in Irish as well as in English, a bilingual out-of-office message should be used. A sample, standard out-of-office bilingual reply which can be easily amended is provided.

<p>Beidh mé as láthair ón oifig ar na dátaí seo a leanas: ¶</p> <p>I will be out of the office on the following dates: ¶</p> <p>¶</p> <p>01/07/2016—07/07/2016 ¶</p> <p>¶</p> <p>Is féidir teagmháil a dhéanamh leis an duine thíosluaite má tá ceist phráinneach agat: ¶</p> <p>If you have an urgent query, please contact: ¶</p> <p>¶</p> <p>Name ¶</p> <p>54321 ¶</p> <p>name@revenue.ie ¶</p>
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Figure 1: Standard out-of-office bilingual reply

5.1.2. Correspondence/communication issued by Revenue

Information **issued** by Revenue by post or by email to the general public (e.g. all customers registered for any tax) or a class of the general public (e.g. all customers registered for Income Tax or customers in a particular geographical area) must be either in Irish **or** Irish and English. Information in this context is defined as generic information.

This means that:

- any information leaflets and/or booklets (e.g. generic information on Budget changes) that are issued in bulk to our customers must be either bilingual or in the Irish language.
- In cases where personalised written correspondence (e.g. tax credits certificates or notices of assessment) is issued to our customers, such correspondence will be in Irish where the customer has indicated that they wish their affairs to be dealt with through Irish; or in English where the customer has not made such a request.
- In cases where both written personal and general information are issued together, the personal information will be in Irish where the customer has indicated that they wish their affairs to be dealt with through Irish or in English where the customer has not made such a request and the general information will be either bilingual or in Irish.

5.2. Stationery Headings and Signage

Revenue is required to ensure that our stationery headings and signage are provided in Irish only, or in Irish and English.

5.2.1. Stationery Headings

The pre-printed headings and information (e.g. title of the organisation, contact details) on particular stationery items are required to be provided in Irish or bilingually.

Stationery is defined as:

- Notepaper
- Compliment slips
- Fax cover sheets
- Labels
- File covers and other folders, and
- Envelopes, including stamped addressed envelopes.

Revenue's Print Centre and Information, Communications Technology & Logistics Division are responsible for ensuring that Revenue complies with these legal requirements.

5.2.2. Signage

Signs placed by Revenue or on our behalf, at any location in the State or outside the State are required to be either in Irish or bilingual.

The provisions apply to:

- Signs which are visible to the public and those which are not (i.e. public and internal signs)
- Permanent and temporary signs
- Electronic and non-electronic signs
- Signs used on stands at conferences, seminars and other events held in public places.

Revenue's Accommodation Unit, Logistics Branch in ICTL Division has responsibility for signage.

5.2.3. Provisions regarding bilingual text on Stationery and Signage

The Regulations regarding stationery using bilingual text provide that:

- Irish text should appear first
- Irish text should be as prominent, visible and legible as the English text
- The letters in the text shall be the same size in both Irish and English
- No word shall be abbreviated in Irish unless the translated word in English is also abbreviated
- Both texts should communicate the same information
- Irish text should be correct

5.3. Recorded Oral Announcements

The legal requirements apply to recorded oral announcements only and include the following:

- oral announcements provided on the telephone when the office is closed;
- oral announcements transmitted by a public address system, e.g. security warning; and
- oral announcements transmitted by means of a computerised telephone answering system (for example, “Press 1 for assistance”).

The provision does not apply to personal oral messages recorded by staff (i.e. telephone messages). However, staff that are likely to receive calls from customers who wish to conduct business through Irish should ensure their telephone message is recorded in both Irish and English. Any staff who feel comfortable doing so are welcome to record bilingual telephone messages.

5.4. Corporate publications

Since 2004, all major Revenue corporate publications have been published bilingually. This includes Annual Reports, Statements of Strategy, Audited Accounts and the Corporate Governance document.

5.4.1. Press Releases

Revenue is committed to the publication of at least 20% of Press Releases bilingually, simultaneously.

5.4.2. Advertising

Revenue advertising campaigns include Irish language advertising. We are committed to a minimum 2:10 ratio for Irish language advertisements. The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 includes a regulation whereby at least 5% of any money expended by the body on advertising in any year shall be used to place advertising in the Irish language through Irish language media.

5.5. Telephone service

Revenue provides an Irish language service on the majority of our telephone services. There is an option for customers wishing to conduct their business with us in Irish. Customers who select this option are put through to an Irish-speaking member of staff with whom they can transact their business. It should be noted that complex queries might require an input from non-Irish speaking Revenue personnel and in such cases, the required information will be provided through English.

The Collector-General's Division provides an Irish language service on its Help phonelines that deal with:

- Business and Income Tax Enquiries;
- Tax Relief at Source; and
- Employers' Services

The ROS Helpdesk provides support for customers wishing to conduct their business through Irish. This Helpdesk provides support to ROS users on technical issues only, for example, how to register for ROS, renewal of digital certificates, how to download the ROS offline applications.

5.6. Forms and leaflets

Revenue provides a very significant number of our most popular forms and leaflets in Irish and English, both online or hard copy versions. Many forms are annual forms and are updated in both languages to accommodate changes made in the Budget, etc.

5.7. Revenue website

The Revenue website is now fully bilingual following the relaunch of the website in 2017. The Irish version of webpages can be accessed by selecting the "Gaeilge" tab at the top of the homepage.

Amendments to documents that are currently available in Irish must be provided in both official languages simultaneously. In general, new material added to the website is provided in Irish and English.

5.8. Online services

Revenue provides a wide range of online services in Irish.

- The Revenue Online Service (ROS) is the means by which Revenue delivers its interactive customer services electronically to business customers. The vast bulk of ROS screens and functionality is available bilingually.
- myAccount is a secure online service for non-ROS customers and is fully bilingual.
- Our PAYE Services in [myAccount](#) is fully bilingual. Customers can view information on the Revenue record, claim tax credits, declare additional income, submit an annual tax return (Form 12), add a job or pension and update their personal information, etc.
- An Irish version of the online Contact Locator facility is also available.
- Tax Relief at Source - Mortgage Interest Relief. This online facility is fully bilingual.
- A number of other online Revenue services are available in Irish to taxpayers and businesses, such as the annual Budget calculator

5.9. Requirement to use correct Irish versions of Placenames

The official Placenames of Gaeltacht areas as declared in Placenames Orders are used by Revenue as the default for corporate purposes. Details of all such Orders are available at www.coimisineir.ie.

6. Dedicated email address

An email service to deal with customer feedback and enquiries/complaints regarding our Irish language services is available at rannognagaeilge@revenue.ie.

7. Translation services

The following material is either exempt from or not required to be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

[...]

8. Resources for Revenue staff

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[...]

As per [paragraph 5.8](#) above, a range of Irish content is available on the website. This is accessed by selecting the Gaeilge tab at the top of all pages.

Figure 2: Revenue website Gaeilge Tab

9. Complaints regarding the provision of services in Irish

Any customer feedback or complaints received in relation to Revenue's provision of services in Irish should be emailed to our Personal Division at rannognagaeilge@revenue.ie.

10. Monitoring of provision of services in Irish by Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga (OaCT)

Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga (OaCT) monitor Revenue's provision of services in Irish on a regular basis. Customers can make complaints to the OaCT regarding Irish services provided by Revenue, which are referred to Revenue for investigation and response. If the OaCT is dissatisfied with Revenue's response it may initiate a formal investigation of the matter.