



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Irish Language Strategy for the Courts Service

2025 – 2028

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Contents

Foreword	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Context and Background	7
3. The journey to becoming a genuinely bilingual organisation	8
4. Approach to Strategy Creation	9
4.1 Consultation	9
4.2 Data used to inform the creation of this strategy	10
4.3 Summary of key insights and findings from consultation	15
5. Key Challenges, Risks, Strengths and Opportunities	16
5.1 Challenges and Risks	16
5.2 Strengths and Opportunities	16
6. Mission, Vision and Values	17
6.1 Our Mission	17
6.2 Our Vision	17
6.3 Our Values	17
7. Irish Language Office - Who We Are, What We Do	18
7.1 Functions	18
7.2 Ambitions	18
7.3 Those who use and engage with our services	19
8. Strategic Priorities	20
8.1 Strategic Priority 1: Compliance with Legislation and Regulations	20
8.2 Strategic Priority 2: Training, Recruitment, Workforce Planning and Development	26
8.2 Strategic Priority 3: Supporting the Judiciary in relation to the Irish language	30
8.4 Strategic Priority 4: Supporting Courts Service services and functions ..	32
8.5 Strategic Priority 5: Facilitating the use of Irish language in court proceedings	39

8.6 Strategic Priority 6: Raising Awareness, Promotion of and Engagement with the Irish language in the Courts Service	41
9. Positive Outcomes	45
10. Monitoring Implementation, Evaluation and Measurement	47

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Summary of Key Actions	48
Appendix 2 - Legislative Background	58
Appendix 3 - Consultation Details and Research	62
Appendix 4 - Number of Irish speakers in the State	63

Foreword

As the person nominated by our Chief Executive Officer to be responsible for the implementation of the Courts Service's inaugural Irish Language Strategy, I am delighted to be asked to write this foreword.

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 has set a high bar for public service organisations to meet in the provision of services through Irish. This is both necessary and appropriate, especially given the record of providing services through our first official language. We in the Courts Service are interested in changing the culture around the Irish language in the service, from compliance to embracing its use as a vibrant means of engaging with our users. This strategy represents a significant and purposeful step towards ensuring that the Irish language holds a prominent and practical place within our justice system, reflecting both our cultural heritage and the rights of all individuals engaging with the Courts.

As a living language with a profound historical legacy, Irish connects us to our past while simultaneously shaping our contemporary society and future. It is incumbent upon public institutions, especially those as central as the Courts, to nurture and promote the use of Irish in their operations. This not only honours our heritage but also facilitates Irish speakers having improved access to justice in their preferred language.

The formulation of this strategy has been informed by extensive consultation with those who use and engage with our services, including members of the legal profession and of the Judiciary, courts staff and other public bodies. These consultations highlighted a clear demand for expanded and improved Irish language services, as well as practical insights into how best to achieve these aims.

Our vision is to create a courts environment where the Irish language is seamlessly integrated into everyday operations and service delivery. This means enhancing the availability of Irish-speaking staff, ensuring that court documentation and communication are accessible in Irish, and providing targeted training and resources. It also means fostering a culture within the Courts Service that values and actively promotes the use of Irish at all levels.

Implementing this strategy will require a collaborative effort. It demands strong leadership within the Courts Service, engagement with those who use and engage with our services, and ongoing dialogue with the Irish-speaking community. We are confident that these collective efforts will yield tangible improvements in service delivery and user experience. All actions detailed in this strategy are subject to funding.

Our commitment extends beyond mere compliance. It reflects a deep respect for the official language choice of all court users and an understanding that justice must be accessible to everyone on equal terms. The Courts Service is dedicated to ensuring that Irish speakers are not disadvantaged or excluded because of language, and that Irish language use is not seen as an obstacle but as an asset to the judicial process.

I look forward to working with everyone to implement this strategy effectively and to realising a courts system where the Irish language flourishes alongside English. In doing so, we contribute to a more inclusive, respectful, and culturally vibrant Ireland.

Tom Ward

Assistant Secretary, Head of Superior Courts Operations Directorate

1. Introduction

The Courts Service is a statutorily independent state agency which was established under the Courts Service Act 1998 and is a frontline service-focused organisation supporting the third branch of Government - the Courts and the Judiciary. We are responsible for the administration and management of the Courts in Ireland and are mandated to:

- Manage the Courts
- Provide support services to the Judiciary
- Provide information on the Courts system to the public
- Provide, manage and maintain Court buildings
- Provide facilities for users of the Courts

We are over 1,200 staff working across a nationwide network of offices and court venues, providing services in civil, criminal and family law to court users daily.

These offices, supported by directorates established as part of our management structure, work with the judiciary to administer the work of each jurisdiction across the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Circuit Court and District Court.

2. Context and Background

The Courts Service is a public body as provided for in the First Schedule of the Official Languages Act 2003 and is bound by the provisions of both the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

The appointment of an Irish Language Strategy Manager for the Courts Service in January 2024, the first role of its kind, signified a change in approach towards the Irish language.

A core part of the work of the Irish Language Strategy Manager is to develop and implement a multiannual Irish language strategy. The aim to develop the Irish language in the Courts Service to improve the quality of the service we provide and in time, increase the demand for the Irish language amongst court users.

There are specific provisions in both aforementioned Acts that relate to the administration of justice and therefore also the Courts Service.

3. The journey to becoming a genuinely bilingual organisation

The aim of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 is to bring about a change in the approach of public bodies towards the Irish language. This means that appreciation of the language and language requirements should be consistently present across all offices and units of the Courts Service.

The journey towards becoming a genuinely bilingual organisation will be realised when members of the public can interact with the Courts Service in Irish at the same level they do in English, without delay or difficulty, and when using the language by staff is actively welcomed and encouraged.

This strategy aligns with the Courts Service Strategic Vision to 2030 under the following key areas of reform:

- Taking a user-centric approach
- Supporting the Judiciary
- Better ways of working
- Provide a modern and improved estate and facilities

The aim of this strategy is to chart the path for this change and to inform the public and Courts Service staff members of what to expect in this changing environment, on the journey to becoming a genuinely bilingual organisation.

4. Approach to Strategy Creation

4.1 Consultation

As part of the consultation process to inform this strategy, submissions were sought from the following groups who use and engage with our services:

- Managers across the Courts Service
- Staff members in non-management positions in the Courts Service
- Members of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge of the Bar Council of Ireland
- Members of the Irish Language Register of the Law Society of Ireland
- Members of the Judiciary who are members of Coiste um Spreagadh na Gaeilge and who are competent in the Irish language

4.2 Data used to inform the creation of this strategy

Areas in need of attention

The internal consultation carried out among managers in the Courts Service provided some invaluable insights into the status of Irish language provision:

67% of Court Office / Unit Managers say they need more support in terms of awareness about Irish language obligations and requirements

59% of Court Office / Unit Managers say they need more support with translation of content into Irish

73% of Court Office / Unit Managers say they need more support with Irish language training and upskilling

78% percent of Court Office / Unit Managers say that their Office / Unit is currently not providing services in Irish at the most basic level

Challenging areas

The most challenging areas of work in Irish for Courts Service staff are as follows:



- Assisting with completing applications and documentation in Irish – 55% said was either very challenging or rather challenging



- Provision of court forms and other court documents in Irish – 49% said was either very challenging or rather challenging



- Facilitating members of the public who use Irish at the public counter – 49% said was either very challenging or rather challenging



- Managing and organising court hearings in Irish – 47% said was either very challenging or rather challenging



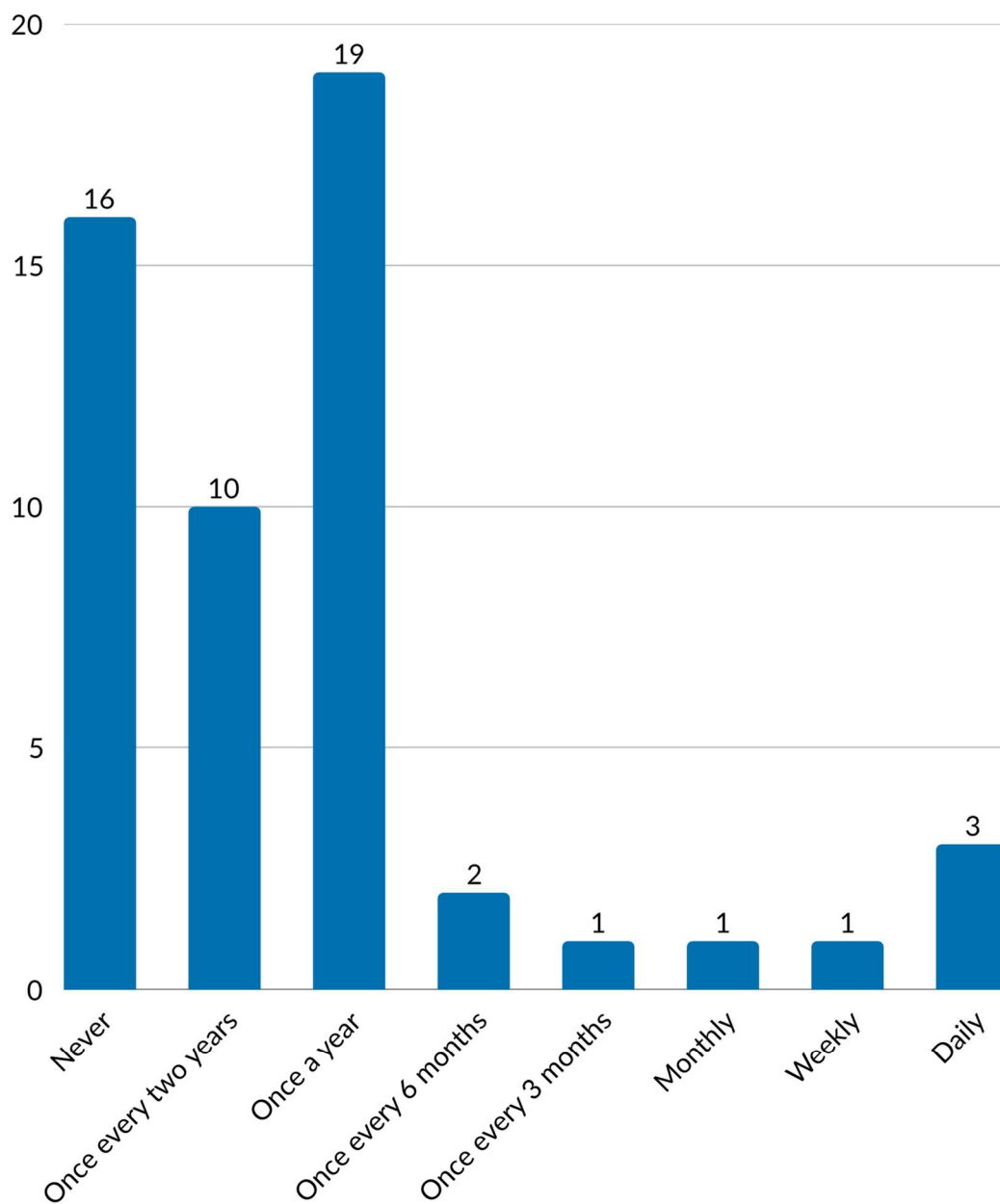
- Processing submissions in Irish – 46% said was either very challenging or rather challenging



- Interacting with members of the public over the phone in Irish – 42% said was either very challenging or rather challenging

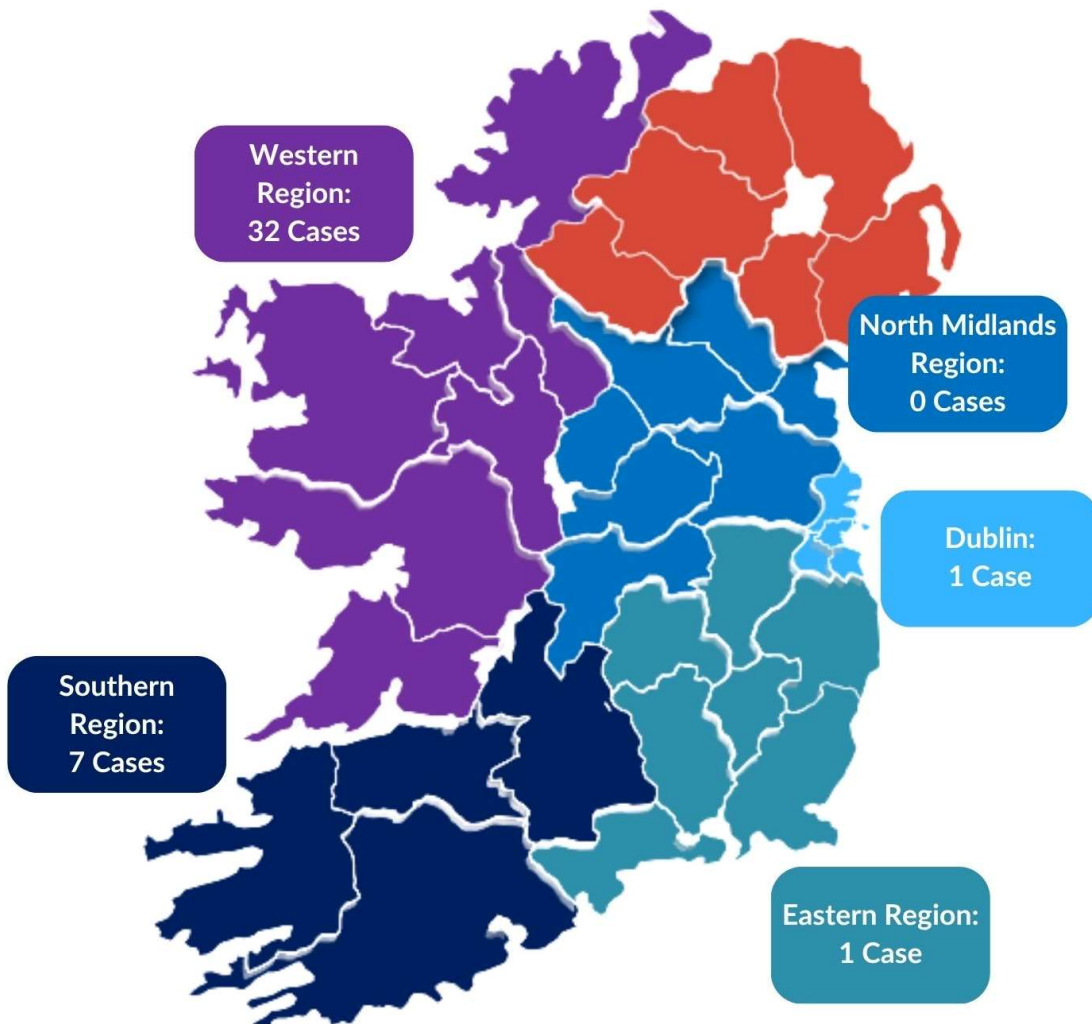
Interaction with the public in Irish

Out of a total of fifty-four court offices / units that have a public facing function, the volume of their interactions with the public in Irish are as follows:



Geographic spread of Irish cases

Between August 2023 and August 2024, 48 court cases were held in Irish across the Courts Service as a whole:



Insights from external consultation

Many of those who use and engage with the Courts Service responded, providing detailed insights into areas in need of attention:

“I have often been in court with an Irish language matter and a hearing in Irish could not be facilitated. There is a widespread lack of understanding of language rights when dealing with the Courts in Irish.”

Member of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge

“A translation service and support is most important for me, especially when writing judgments ”

Member of the Judiciary

“Courts staff always try to help but more often than not there is no one with Irish available”

Member of Clár na Gaeilge, Law Society of Ireland

“Lots of courts staff have Irish but struggle to use it. They should be encouraged to use it more”

Member of the Judiciary

“Probate services in Irish are in need of improvement ”

Member of Clár na Gaeilge, Law Society of Ireland

“Generally speaking, the staff who are delivering the services that are available do not have sufficient Irish.”

Member of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge

“There is a real lack of Irish among Courts Service staff. We should have our own translation service ”

Member of the Judiciary

“It would be great if judges and or registrars could include a notice saying ‘Irish is welcome in this court’ as a practice in the Courts Service .”

Member of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge

“Irish classes for courts staff are needed. Advertisements and signage in Irish, in particular welcome signs would be beneficial”

Member of Clár na Gaeilge, Law Society of Ireland

“More registrars and courts staff with Irish are needed”

Member of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge

“Perhaps the Courts Service could publicise the fact that the public are able to use Irish when dealing with the Courts”

Member of the Judiciary

“More interpreters and registrars with Irish are required in the Courts”

Member of the Judiciary

4.3 Summary of key insights and findings from consultation

The primary findings from the consultation and fact-finding process are as follows:

- Staff at all levels are lacking awareness about Irish language obligations and requirements.
- An Irish language training programme tailored to the needs of Courts Service staff is required to improve the number of staff who can deliver services in Irish.
- There is a lack of court registrars with competency in the Irish language who can facilitate hearings in Irish.
- Customer facing staff feel ill-prepared to interact with members of the public at the counter, on the phone or online who choose to deal with the Courts Service in Irish.
- Staff members who have Irish lack the confidence to deliver the same service they do in English in Irish and this confidence needs to be nurtured.
- The recruitment of additional staff members would be beneficial to assist with improving and developing the services in the Irish language that the Courts Service provides.
- Staff and members of the Judiciary require more support with the translation and proofreading of written materials in Irish.

These key insights and findings provide important context which highlight the areas that require specific actions, as detailed in chapter eight of this strategy.

5. Key Challenges, Risks, Strengths and Opportunities informing this strategy

5.1 Challenges and Risks

- Non-compliance with legislation and reputational damage
- Lack of staff with competency in the Irish language to provide services, including across designated Gaeltacht areas
- Increased administrative burden and time spent on Irish language processes
- Lack of time and availability of staff to take part in training to improve their competency
- Loss of confidence in courts system due to lack of service in Irish

5.2 Strengths and Opportunities

- Evolution into a public body that is regarded as having excellent service in Irish
- Become the go-to place for information about the courts system in the Irish language
- Increase access to justice for Irish language speakers and their communities
- Increase confidence in the courts system
- Evolve into a genuinely bilingual public body

6. Mission, Vision and Values

6.1 Our Mission

To become a genuinely bilingual organisation by providing services to all users of the Courts in both Irish and English. To support the judiciary and to empower and support our staff to build their capabilities.

6.2 Our Vision

To meet the needs of court users in both official languages of the state, by ensuring members of the public can access justice in Irish as they do in English, at the same level and without being disadvantaged by doing so.

6.3 Our Values

Service: Customer Focused; Timely; Friendly; Professional; Collaborative; Delivered to a high standard.

Integrity: Honest; Objective; Fair; Impartial; Ethical; Accountable.

Respect: Courteous; Considered.

7. Irish Language Office - Who We Are, What We Do

7.1 Functions

The Irish Language Strategy Manager has various functions; developing a multiannual strategy for the Irish Language in the Courts Service, ensuring that the Courts Service is compliant with relevant provisions of the Official Languages Act 2003 and Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 and translation of all required materials into Irish.

As well as these functions the Office has a role in:

- providing oversight of all translated materials, both new and old, to ensure a high standard throughout
- supporting an increased number of Courts Service staff who can perform their duties through the medium of Irish
- supporting members of the Judiciary in relation to the Irish language

7.2 Ambitions

There are various ambitions for the Irish language in the Courts Service that this strategy aims to achieve;

- the development of a centralised Irish Language Office which can provide support services to any court office in the country
- improving the quality and availability of Irish language service provided to court offices and units
- bringing about parity between English and Irish in all service provision in the Courts Service

These ambitions all form a foundation for the Courts Service to evolve into a genuinely bilingual public body, where members of the public can interact with the Courts Service in Irish at the same level they do in English, without delay or difficulty, and where we all actively welcome and encourage the use of the language.

7.3 Those who use and engage with our services

Those who use and engage with our services span all areas of law across all Courts from the District to the Supreme Court and those who support the Courts, both internal and external to the organisation. In other words, we have a diverse and dynamic range of people and organisations with whom we need to engage.



Members of the public
and Courts Service users



Staff members at all
levels of the Courts
Service, including office
and unit managers



Members of the
Judiciary, in particular
those who are members
of Coiste um Spreagadh
na Gaeilge



Legal representative
organisations



Litigants in person



Nongovernmental
organisations



The wider justice sector



Government

8. Strategic Priorities

8.1 Strategic Priority 1: Compliance with Legislation and Regulations

Context to action

The Courts Service is statutorily obliged to comply with the relevant provisions of both the Official Languages Act 2003 and Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 as a prescribed public body. The Courts Service commits to comply with the letter and spirit of both Official Languages Acts as far as possible with current resources.

8.1.1 Continue with development of record-keeping and reporting procedures to track compliance

- Record of number of placed advertisements in Irish.
- Record of number of placed advertisements on Irish language media.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

Context to actions

Complaints about provision of Irish language services are made to Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga by members of the public. The Courts Service is required to reply to and address any complaint made in a timely manner.

8.1.2 Expand complaints tracking system with addition of more detailed data

- Yearly statistical and categorical analysis of complaints received.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.1.3 Develop a knowledge bank of responses to complaints

- Each reply to a complaint will be logged and saved to a knowledge bank that can be used as a reference for future correspondence.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.1.4 Attend an annual meeting with Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga

- Attend a meeting once a year to discuss in detail any outstanding complaints and gain an insight into the Office's outlook on service provision and the public service at large.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing yearly

Context to actions

The fourth language scheme of the Courts Service is currently in place however the system of language schemes is due to be replaced with a new system of Language Standards as provided for in the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

Whilst there is little published detailed information about the upcoming Language Standards to date, the National Plan for Irish Language Public Services 2024–2030 provides some detail. It states that these language standards will be based on a similar system that is already in use in Wales and that higher standards will be achieved by sectors that have greater interaction with the public.¹ Officials in the Department of the Gaeltacht have said that a consultation on Language Standards will take place in Autumn of 2025.²

¹ [National Plan for Irish Language Public Services 2024–2030](#)

² [‘Níor thuig muid an méid oibre a bheadh i gceist’ – míniú tugtha ag Roinn na Gaeltachta ar spriocanna cailte, Tuairisc.ie, 11 June 2025](#)

8.1.5 Critically analyse current Language Scheme to identify gaps and unfulfilled commitments and research on Welsh language standards system

- A strong focus will be put on identifying actions in the language scheme that were not achieved or that are now obsolete.
- Research will be conducted on the system of Welsh language standards to gain an understanding of how the system operates and of the responsibilities of public bodies they require. The Welsh language is thriving and is considered to be a model for language revival and revitalisation. Their language standards play a central role in ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in Wales, a goal that aligns with that of the upcoming language standards in Ireland.

Timeline for delivery: Q1, 2027

8.1.6 Consult with officials in the Department the Gaeltacht to ensure understanding, knowledge and timeline of upcoming Language Standards

- Attendance of webinars, information sessions and other events for public service bodies to gain comprehensive insights into the requirements of language standards.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

Context to actions

A core part of raising awareness of the Irish language and its development is normalising usage in day-to-day settings and to enable service users to access the Courts in a bilingual way by respecting their language choice. This strategy will set out an ambitious and inclusive approach to normalise the use of Irish in all court buildings, which will inform the ongoing Customer Experience Project currently underway as part of the Courts Service Modernisation Programme.

8.1.7 Deliver new signage template pilot project

- In Balbriggan and Tallaght courthouses, and in partnership with the Communications and Media Unit and the Estates and Climate Operations Unit, a pilot is underway of a new template for bilingual non-permanent signage.
- This template aims to guarantee consistency across the Courts Service and standardise signage which at the moment is a mix of many different varieties.

Timeline for delivery: Q1, 2026

8.1.8 Conduct audit of signage currently in place

- Across the expansive courts estate is a wide variety of signage ranging from old to new, some bilingual and some not. A comprehensive audit will be carried out in every court building across the estate and new signage will be recommended where needed, in collaboration with the Estates and Climate Operations Unit
- Signs with errors in Irish spelling or signs that appear in English only will be flagged to the relevant court office. The Irish Language Strategy Manager will support offices in correcting and replacing signs where needed.
- This audit will be conducted in coordination with the Customer Experience Project and will inform the work of the project throughout its life span.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2026

Context to actions

To understand the level, depth and quality of provision in Irish across the Courts Service there is a need to conduct detailed data gathering to capture a picture of the current Irish language competency in the organisation. The following two mechanisms will successfully capture the required data to gauge current and predicted competency into the future.

8.1.9 Gather data on Irish competency of new staff members using a survey

- All new Courts Service staff will be invited to complete a survey which will provide a comprehensive insight into the status of Irish their competency.
- The completion of this survey will be regarded as mandatory for all new staff members and will be included in the induction pack.
- This survey will ask new staff members about their level of competency, training record and outlook on taking part in Irish training in the future.
- For new staff members who are unsure about their level of competency, they will be invited to complete an Online Irish Test administered by TEG which is free to access and takes 15 minutes on average to complete.³

Timeline for delivery: Q2, 2026

8.1.10 Commence and maintain an active register of all Courts Service staff with Irish language competency in collaboration with Managers

- To appropriately assess and understand the quality and spread of our Irish service provision, an active register of all Courts Service staff with Irish language competency will be developed, in partnership with the Human Resources Unit and Data Unit.
- Working with managers across the organisation we will develop a register of their staff with Irish competency. With ongoing support from the Irish Language Strategy Manager, managers will report on the competency in their office(s) twice each year.
- For staff members who are unsure about their level of competency, they will be invited to complete an Online Irish Assessment administered by TEG which is free to access and takes 15 minutes on

³ [Test Your Irish Assessment, TEG \(Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge\)](#)

average to complete⁴. Staff will only be required to complete the assessment on a needs basis to gauge their level of competency.

- When reporting, managers will update the competency of all staff who have completed Irish language training throughout the previous 6 month period and add competency of any new staff members to the register.
- This register will function as an aid in identifying areas with lacking competency among staff and through that will shed light areas of the organisation that might need attention/support in terms of training and upskilling initiatives.

Timeline for delivery: Q2, 2026

⁴ [Test Your Irish Assessment, TEG \(Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge\)](#)

8.2 Strategic Priority 2: Training, Recruitment, Workforce Planning and Development

Context to action

One of the core pillars of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 is to ‘increase the number of staff in public bodies who are competent in the Irish language so that...no later than 31 December 2030, at least 20 per cent of staff recruited to public bodies are so competent.’⁵

This provision of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 is being interpreted to mean all staff recruited to roles, both internally and externally, in a given calendar year.

This ambitious provision aims to bring about change in public bodies, including the Courts Service, to encourage employees with Irish language competency. The previously mentioned active register of staff competency will play a key role in tracking progress in meeting this goal, as will the training initiatives and programmes.

8.2.1 Prepare and plan for implementation of a structured approach to recruitment of staff with Irish competency in collaboration with the Human Resources Unit

- A central aspect of achieving this recruitment goal will be to provide a new approach to recruitment of staff with proven Irish competency
- The establishment of a practice such as this, working closely with the Human Resources Unit will provide clarity to the Courts Service and to Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga that processes are in place to meet this target by 2030.
- Preparation and planning will be carried out to build towards meeting this 20% goal with an emphasis on developing an approach that suits the needs of the Courts Service given the diverse types of roles in the organisation and the complex vocabulary needed to deliver our services in Irish.

⁵ [Section 18C, Official Languages \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#)

- The first step on this journey is to develop a pool of staff members in the Courts Service who can interview bilingually in Irish and English before the end of 2026.
- A detailed communications plan will form a central part of this planning to ensure staff are informed of upcoming developments and of the opportunity they have to access Irish language training.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2027

Context to action

A central pillar in the ambition of increasing the number of staff in the Courts Service with Irish language competency relates to training.

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 requires that by 2030, 20% of new recruits to the public sector and the Civil Service be proficient in Irish. A detailed training programme, open to all staff but with an initial focus on registrars, customer facing staff and Gaeltacht areas will assist in improving the overall service in Irish the Courts Service provides.

This training programme will focus on building the capabilities of members of staff and on ensuring they are prepared and competent to perform their duties in both English and Irish.

8.2.2 Organise and administer a comprehensive tailored Irish language training programme, called Legally Líofo

- An external provider of Irish language training will be procured who will draw up a tailor-made training programme for Courts Service staff. This programme will aim to prepare staff to be able to perform their duties in Irish in a confident and assured manner.
- This training will take place twice every year with classes taking place during normal work hours with emphasis on training staff in specialist roles, namely registrars and customer facing staff, to carry out their duties through Irish.
- Members of staff who take part and successfully complete Irish language training will have their achievements recognised through Courts Service internal communications, namely in The Brief, with a certificate of competency presentation ceremony.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

Context to action

In order to conduct proceedings in Irish at the expected level there is a requirement that Courts Service staff members be able to facilitate hearings in both Irish and English. At the moment there is a lack of competency amongst registrars, and this will be addressed with a goal of improving their competency Irish in a structured way.

8.2.3 Identification of and collaboration with court registrars in areas with largest Irish speaking populations for Irish language training

- In collaboration with Office Managers and with consideration of their limited availability during the legal term, court registrars will be invited to take part in the in-house training programme, Legally Líoifa.
- The goal will be to improve competency to the level that they are able to facilitate hearings in Irish confidently and independently, supported by the Irish Language Strategy Manager.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

Context to action

Courts Service staff can avail of Irish language training provided via the OneLearning Learning Management System. Whilst this training is general in nature and has its limitations, it can play a role in improving competency across the Courts Service.

8.2.4 Promote Irish language training provided via OneLearning

- Courts Service staff at all levels and in all offices will be encouraged to register and take part in Irish language training provided via OneLearning as a positive first step in their Irish language learning journey.

- The initial focus for this training of this will be for staff with an interest in learning Irish that are not located in a Gaeltacht area or in an area with a high population of Irish speakers.
- Emphasis will be put on encouraging staff with a low level of Irish competency to take part in this training to prepare them for more role-focused training in the future provided by the Legally Líofo programme.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

Context to action

Despite all Courts Service staff having access to Irish language training provided via OneLearning, the number of staff taking part in this training is low. In order to adequately inform staff of the training available, both Legally Líofo and OneLearning, an agreed detailed communications plan is required.

8.2.5 Develop and implement a multiannual communications plan for promotion of Irish language training

- In partnership with the Communications and Media Unit and the Learning and Development Unit, a comprehensive multiannual communications plan will be drawn up to publicise and inform Courts Service staff of the training in a structured and systematic way.
- This plan will include meetings with managers, information sessions, webinars, Q&As and other methods to raise awareness and interest in the training before registration opens each term. The aim will be to inform staff of the benefits and advantages of undertaking Irish language training for both professional and personal reasons.
- Staff will be informed of the opportunity Irish language competency can provide and will highlight the fact that they are able to access that advantage free of charge through training provided by the Courts Service.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2026

8.3 Strategic Priority 3: Supporting the Judiciary in relation to the Irish language

Context to action

The Judiciary play a vital role in administering justice in both Irish and English. Support of their work with the Irish language is a key pillar of the work of the Irish Language Strategy Manager.

8.3.1 Provide a support and request structure between members of the Judiciary and the Courts Service in relation to the Irish language, particularly in relation to translation and proofreading of judgments

- In keeping with the results of the consultation, translation support for judgments from English to Irish will be made available to all members of the Judiciary, subject to available resources. Assistance will also be provided with proofreading of Irish language texts.
- Attend meetings with the Coiste um Spreagadh na Gaeilge of the Judiciary on a quarterly basis.
- Consult and correspond with chair of Coiste um Spreagadh na Gaeilge on a continuous basis.
- Oversee an open-door policy and dedicated contact point for any questions, advice, difficulties or challenges relating to the Irish language.
- Investigate requests and asks from members of the Judiciary in relation to Irish language training and other related matters in cooperation with the Judicial Council.
- Collaborate with staff in the Judicial Appointments Commission to provide guidance with recruitment of members of the Judiciary with Irish language competency.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2025

Context to action

Legal Research and Library Services (LRLS) are responsible for providing legal research and library services to support the judiciary. There is a section on their Knowledge Hub titled Acmhainní Gaeilge (Irish Language Resources) in which a comprehensive collection of Irish Language supports and materials can be found.

8.3.2 Collaborate with Legal Research and Library Services (LRLS) on a continuous basis to ensure materials on Knowledge Hub are up to date and new supports are added when applicable

- Contact will be made with staff in the LRLS on a regular basis with updates to be made to the Acmhainní Gaeilge page on the Knowledge Hub.
- Direction will be given where required to amend or remove certain resources that are out of date or obsolete.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.4 Strategic Priority 4: Supporting Courts Service services and functions

Context to action

To realise the actions detailed in this strategy, the possibility of recruiting an additional staff member with Irish competency for the Irish Language Office will be investigated, with an aim to achieve the goal of providing a seamless bilingual experience for users of the Courts Service.

8.4.1 Investigate the possibility of recruiting an additional staff member with Irish competency for the Irish Language Office

- To support court offices in dealing with Irish speaking service users, the possibility of recruiting an additional staff member with Irish competency will be investigated.
- This staff member can play a vital role in supporting court offices upon request and attending hearings to interpret proceedings where required.
- They can also play a role in assisting with translation projects, conducting outreach and audits with court offices in relation to the Irish and acting as a representative of the Irish Language Office, passing on advice and recommendations for improvement or efficiencies.
- This recruitment action will be subject to business case submission and funding.

Timeline for delivery: 2027 - 2028

Context to actions

One of the primary functions of the Courts Service is to provide information on the courts system to the public. In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative that information on the courts system is provided in both official languages, Irish and English, on a consistent basis.

8.4.2 Translation on an ongoing basis of all website content, reports, strategies, news updates, press releases and all other published materials that are accessible by members of the public.

- Supporting all offices and units with translation services in a timely manner.
- Consulting with support offices and directorates about their translation requirements and pipelines of work.
- Informing and advising all offices and units of publication requirements and best practices.
- Translation support for judgments for members of the Judiciary will be available upon request.
- The usage of specialist translation software, called Trados, guarantees consistency and efficiency in translation practices. Usage of this software will be consistent and continuous for all materials translated into Irish into the future.
- Working with the ICT Directorate, research will be carried out to investigate potential applications of novel technologies, namely Artificial Intelligence (AI), to improve translation quality and efficiency.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.4.3 Translation of legacy materials not available in Irish to date, partially in partnership with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

- Court forms – Superior, Circuit, District Court Forms as well as new forms created by court offices. The translation of these materials will be done partnership with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.
- Court rules - Superior, Circuit, District Court Rules will receive the same treatment as the forms, with guidance provided by Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.
- Staff in the ICT Directorate of the Courts Service will be consulted throughout the translation process of legacy materials.

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.4.4 Examination of the development of an awareness campaign encouraging the public to think about their preferred language choice when dealing with the Courts Service

- The prospect of developing a poster, online and social campaign reminding members of the public of their right to conduct proceedings in either Irish or English will be examined, subject to funding.
- This campaign will be considered as progress is made in developing the service provided in Irish in court offices.

Timeline for delivery: Q1, 2027

8.4.5 Official attendance of Oireachtas na Gaeilge on an annual basis

- Oireachtas na Gaeilge takes place every year in November and provides public sector bodies like the Courts Service an opportunity to meet and engage with Irish speaking members of the public.
- Starting in 2025 and on an annual basis thereafter, the Courts Service will attend Oireachtas na Gaeilge and have a stand in the 'Aonach' area from which information about the courts system will be provided to members of the public in attendance.

Timeline for delivery: Q4 annually

8.4.6 Identification and addressing of information and systems not available in Irish due to technological constraints

- Legal Diary – a new system for the Legal Diary was launched in 2025. The ICT Directorate will ensure that the new system is fully bilingual and provides the same quality of service in both Irish and English.
- Human Resources Portal – currently the Courts Service HR Portal is available in English only with no Irish option available. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy options will be examined by the ICT Directorate to ensure that the portal is available in both English and Irish in its entirety.
- Appointment Booking System – the Irish language is not available in the current system. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy options will be examined by the ICT Directorate to ensure that the portal is available in both English and Irish in its entirety.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2027

Context to actions

The Courts Service is required to facilitate any member of the public who wishes to be dealt with in Irish.

A framework for the handling of contacts in Irish will be drawn up to ensure availability and quality of service provision to compliment the Customer Experience Project that is currently underway. The Irish Language Strategy Manager will play a central advisory role as a member of the Customer Experience Project team and in developing this framework.

Working with the ICT Directorate, potential applications of novel technologies, namely Artificial Intelligence (AI), will be examined as potential supports to staff when interacting with the public in Irish.

The framework detailed below will closely reflect the changes the project proposes to ensure constructive collaboration in service across both Irish and English.

8.4.7 Framework Pillar 1: Online organisation of appointments with Irish speaking staff

- The current appointment booking system in use to organise appointments for the Courts Service is not available in the Irish language. The ICT Directorate will assess options for the provision of the service in Irish as a matter of high importance.
- The framework will provide guidance for staff when an online appointment is made in which the requester wishes to use Irish.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2027

8.4.8 Framework Pillar 2: Organisation of appointments and requests over the phone in Irish

- The framework will provide practical guidance for staff when a caller requests the usage of Irish in their interaction over the phone.
- Direction will be given in the framework to ensure the language choice of the caller is respected at all times.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

8.4.9 Framework Pillar 3: Organisation of appointments and requests at the public counter in Irish

- The framework will provide guidance for staff about what to do when a member of the public presents at a public counter and requests the usage of Irish in their interaction.
- Direction will be given in the framework to ensure the language choice of the member of the public at the counter is respected at all times.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

8.4.10 Promotion of dedicated inbox for public queries in Irish

- The availability of a dedicated inbox for members of the public to contact the Courts Service in relation to any Irish language matter named fiosruithe@courts.ie will be promoted and publicised in court buildings and online.
- This inbox function as a centralised contact point for all general queries about matters related to the Irish language for any member of the public.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

Context to actions

Before 2025 there had been no mention of the Irish language in any strategy published by the Courts Service and consideration of language requirements have been absent across the organisation. To address this fact, all projects, strategies and policy statements that are public facing, and not for internal circulation only, will require an Evaluation of Language Requirements going forward.

The introduction of this new process will ensure that appropriate resources are made available to meet the requirements of the Courts Service under the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 and to improve the overall quality of service provided to the public in the Irish language.

8.4.11 Amendment of the Single Approach to Change Framework to include Evaluation of Language Requirements process

- The Single Approach to Change Framework in place in the Courts Service, which brings consistency to the way change projects are managed and delivered, will be amended to include an Evaluation of Language Requirements.
- An Evaluation of Language Requirements will require meeting with the Irish Language Strategy Manager in which requirements, obligations, guidance and best practice are discussed to ensure that costs and the time required to develop English and Irish materials are highlighted and resourced appropriately.
- The standard business case template will be amended to include a section relating to Evaluations of Language Requirements. If a project is public facing, an Evaluation of Language Requirements meeting will be required with the Irish Strategy Manager. After the meeting they will be consulted if required in keeping with agile workflows.
- An Evaluation of Language Requirements will not be required for projects that are for internal circulation and or use only.

Timeline for delivery: Q1, 2026

8.4.12 Development of suite of resources to prompt consideration in advance of Evaluation of Language Requirements meeting

- A suite of checklists and other supporting materials and will be developed to prompt areas of consideration and reflection for staff members in advance of attending an Evaluation of Language Requirements meeting with the Irish Language Strategy Manager.
- Resources will be made available on the Knowledge Hub of the Courts Service Intranet and will be updated on a regular basis.

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2025

8.5 Strategic Priority 5: Facilitating the use of Irish language in court proceedings

Context to action

As provided for in Section 8 of the Official Languages Act 2003, any person who appears in court has the right to use Irish or English in their interactions. To ensure the seamless and proper operation of Courts, interpreters are procured when needed to provide Irish to English or English to Irish interpretation.

The Courts Service has encountered a number of difficulties in recent times with the availability and provision of interpreters. By the end of the lifetime of this plan, there will be clarity and commitment as far as is possible that an interpreter will be available for any hearing in Irish that needs one.

8.5.1 Investigate the possibility of providing a guarantee of availability of Irish language court interpreters for all hearings where required

- The Irish Language Strategy manager will work with court offices to ensure interpreters are booked in a timely manner when and where required and provide guidance about best practice.
- As mentioned previously, the the possibility of recruiting an additional staff member with Irish competency will be investigated who can support court offices in dealing with Irish speaking service users upon request and who can attend hearings in Irish to interpret proceedings where required.
- Due to the low demand for Irish language interpreters of this nature, this additional staff member would have other duties in supporting the Irish Language Office and the Irish Language Strategy Manager relating to translation and outreach to court offices. The recruitment of this additional staff member will be dependent on funding.
- Working with the ICT Directorate, research will be carried out to investigate potential applications of novel technologies, namely Artificial Intelligence (AI), as a support to ensure availability of interpretation services where required.

Timeline for delivery: 2027 - 2028

Context to action

There are four court venues located in Gaeltacht areas, Doire an Fhéich and Cill Rónáin in Galway and An Clochán Liath and An Fál Carrach in Donegal. Each of these venues hold hearings in Irish on a regular basis. Gaeltacht areas are regions in Ireland in which the Irish language is, or was until recently, the primary spoken language of the majority of the community.⁶

It is paramount that these court venues operate in a seamless bilingual manner, as is provided for in the Official Languages Act 2003 and Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

8.5.2 Provide additional support and conduct continuous workforce analysis and planning to ensure Gaeltacht venues can always operate fully in Irish and English

- In collaboration with Office Managers, Gaeltacht court venues will be given extra support, care, attention and consideration to guarantee that staff with competency in Irish are always present and available when court hearing take place at these venues. The additional staff member will support this increased level of care and consideration.
- The Irish Language Strategy Manager will meet with Managers and staff of each venue to assess their needs and gather feedback in relation to their operation in Irish.
- Similar attention will be given to other areas with a high percentage of Irish speakers according to the 2022 Census data and data captured internally by the Courts Service, namely counties Waterford, Cork, Clare and Kerry.

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

⁶ [What is The Gaeltacht? Údarás na Gaeltachta](#)

8.6 Strategic Priority 6: Raising Awareness, Promotion of and Engagement with the Irish language in the Courts Service

Part 1 – Improving internal understanding of Irish language requirements in the Courts Service

Context to actions

The appointment of the Irish language Strategy Manager for the Courts Service in January 2024 marked a new departure for the organisation in terms of the Irish language. A key part of the role of the Irish language Strategy Manager relates to the internal awareness and development of the Irish language.

8.6.1 Develop and share an information flyer explaining the work of the Irish Language Unit of the Courts Service

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2025

8.6.2 Promote dedicated inbox for staff queries about the Irish language - gaeilge@courts.ie

Timeline for delivery: Q4, 2025

8.6.3 Develop and conduct an awareness campaign about obligations and regulations

Timeline for delivery: Q1, 2026

8.6.4 Include presentation about Irish language requirements and supports in Induction for new starters, in collaboration with the Learning and Development Unit

Timeline for delivery: Q2, 2026

Part 2 – Fostering growth of the Irish language and of a positive language culture in the Courts Service

Context to actions

A core aspect of promoting and engaging with the Irish language relates to providing members of staff for regular opportunities to use, practice and communicate with their Irish.

8.6.5 Continue with facilitation of monthly Ciorcal Comhrá in Áras Uí Dhálaigh

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.6 Continue with facilitation of online monthly Ciorcal Comhrá

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.7 Organisation of annual Irish language half day conference, starting in 2027

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2027

8.6.8 Commence a 'Take your coffee break As Gaeilge' initiative

Timeline for delivery: Q3, 2026

8.6.9 Organisation of annual Seachtain na Gaeilge event for Courts Service staff

Timeline for delivery: Q1, annually

8.6.10 Promotion of membership of Gréasán Gaeilge na hEarnála Poiblí

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.11 Promotion of other Irish Language events

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.12 Continue with Cúpla Focal Poster Series

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.13 Include an Irish language update in regular edition of The Brief

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

8.6.14 Collaborate with members of staff to encourage usage and visibility of the Irish language throughout events, projects and initiatives

Timeline for delivery: Ongoing

9. Positive Outcomes

Group who use and engage with our services	Benefits
<p>9.1 Members of the public and Courts Service users, including litigants in person</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Better and more inclusive services ✓ Increased confidence in Courts Service ✓ Parity of esteem and quality between service in English and Irish ✓ Choice of official language offered and respected
<p>9.2 Members of the Judiciary, in particular those who are members of Coiste um Spreagadh na Gaeilge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased confidence and responsiveness in Courts Service staff relating to Irish language matters ✓ Ability to avail of support when requiring translation or proofreading of judgments
<p>9.4 Staff members at all levels of the Courts Service, including office and unit managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ability to deliver a higher quality of service ✓ Increased accountability ✓ Greater cultural and linguistic sensitivity
<p>9.5 Government, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht & Department of Public Expenditure,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Compliance with Official Languages Act legislation ✓ Compliance with current language scheme and upcoming language standards ✓ Synergy with the National Plan for Irish Language Public Services 2024-2030 ✓ Better quality of performance in both official languages ✓ Demonstrating openness to reform and transformation

<p>Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation</p>	
<p>9.6 Legal representative organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Easier and more seamless operations in Irish ✓ Increased confidence and efficiency ✓ Improved public image and respect
<p>9.7 Nongovernmental organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Roadmap for improvement in Irish language service provision ✓ Improved public image and respect ✓ Increased confidence and efficiency ✓ Access to justice in Irish language improved

10. Monitoring Implementation, Evaluation and Measurement

10.1 Key to successful implementation of this strategy will be:

- Support from offices and units across the Courts Service, particularly from the Senior Management Team
- Collaboration with all units and offices, particularly with the Communications and Media Unit, Human Resources Unit, Learning and Development Unit, Estate Management Unit and the Customer Experience Project Team

10.2 Reporting on implementation with the achievement of key milestones will be by way of:

- Annual Office Report to the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service
- Quarterly reports to the Senior Management Team of the Courts Service on the implementation of this strategy.
- Ongoing monitoring of delivery by Head of Communications, with Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga and Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Summary of Key Actions

Strategic Priority 1: Ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act 2003, Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 and other relevant legislation	
Priority Actions	Key Outcomes
1. Continue with development of record-keeping and reporting procedures to track compliance Timeline: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate understanding of compliance status on a continuous basis • Deeper and more detailed understanding of complaints made and of outlook of Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga on compliance measures • Detailed understanding of best practice in use in Ireland and abroad that relates to language standards and their requirements • Detailed report on signage pilot will be obtained with feedback from managers on their usage • Comprehensive understanding of the status of signage across the Courts Service and of the amount of work needed to deliver a new signage approach • Comprehensive understanding of Irish language competency of new staff members and of each office or unit in the Courts Service on a continuous basis
2. Expand complaints tracking system with addition of more detailed data Timeline: Ongoing	
3. Develop a knowledge bank of responses to complaints Timeline: Ongoing	
4. Attend annual meetings with Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga Timeline: Ongoing	
5. Critically analyse current Language Scheme to identify gaps and unfulfilled commitments and research on	

<p>Welsh language standards system</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2027</p>	
<p>6. Consult with officials in the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht to ensure understanding, knowledge and timeline of upcoming Language Standards</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>7. Deliver new signage template pilot project</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2026</p>	
<p>8. Conduct audit of signage currently in place</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2026</p>	
<p>9. Gather data on competency of new staff members using a survey</p> <p>Timeline: Q2, 2026</p>	
<p>10. Commence and maintain an active register of all Courts Service staff with Irish language competency</p> <p>Timeline: Q2, 2026</p>	

<p>Strategic Priority 2: Provide a high quality Irish language training offering to staff to increase Irish language competency with an aim to achieving the requirement that by 2030, 20% of new recruits to the Courts Service be proficient in Irish, whilst planning for changes in hiring practices to lay a foundation for achieving this goal</p>	
Priority Actions	Key Outcomes
<p>1. Prepare and plan for implementation of a structured approach to recruitment of staff with Irish competency in collaboration with the Human Resources Unit</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of staff who are competent in Irish will be increased across the organisation by twenty-five each year • The number of court registrars who are competent in Irish to a level where they can perform their duties in the language will be increased by fifteen each year • Staff will better understand the benefits, requirements and advantages of taking part in Irish language training provided via OneLearning • Increased registrations and levels of staff taking part in Irish language training provided via OneLearning, particularly those starting their learning journey • Increased registrations and levels of staff taking part in all forms of Irish language training • All staff are kept up to date about availability, advantages and enjoyment of Irish language training • Staff who demonstrate competency in the Irish language will be given the opportunity to be part of the 20% of staff recruited with
<p>2. Organise and administer a comprehensive tailored Irish language training programme, called Legally Líofo</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>3. Identification of and collaboration with court registrars in areas with largest Irish speaking populations for Irish language training</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>4. Promote Irish language training provided via OneLearning</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	

<p>5. Develop and implement a multiannual communications plan for promotion of Irish language training</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2026</p>	<p>Irish competency and to be a recognised member of staff who can work in both English and Irish</p>
<p>Strategic Priority 3: Support members of the Judiciary with their work relating to the Irish language by assisting them in providing access to justice for Irish speakers</p>	
<p>Priority Actions</p>	<p>Key Outcomes</p>
<p>1. Provide a support and request structure between members of the Judiciary and the Courts Service in relation to the Irish language, particularly in relation to translation and proofreading of judgments</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number engagements between the Courts Service and the Judiciary relating to the Irish language • Improved understanding of Irish language provision across the Courts Service by the Judiciary
<p>2. Collaborate with Legal Research and Library Services (LRLS) on a continuous basis to ensure materials on Knowledge Hub are up to date and new supports are added when applicable</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judiciary can avail of support from the Courts Service when translating judgments from English to Irish • Irish language resources available to the judiciary on the Knowledge Hub will be more up to date and will include newly developed resources that are made available

<p>Strategic Priority 4: Provide information on the courts system in Irish whilst endeavouring to provide parity of esteem between the service provided in both English and Irish to the public</p>	
<p>Priority Actions</p>	<p>Key Outcomes</p>
<p>1. Investigate the possibility of recruitment of an additional staff member with Irish competency for the Irish Language Office , subject to business case submission and funding.</p> <p>Timeline: 2026 - 2028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved levels of service and support for court offices • Increased availability of Irish language interpreters when required subject to resources • Decreased burden on those few staff with Irish competency • Consistency with mandate of Courts Service • Compliance with Official Languages Act 2003 provisions relating to duty of public bodies to publish certain documents in both official languages • Increased visibility of the Courts Service Irish language service and its availability • Increased provision of Irish language content generated by the Courts Service • Greater understanding of digital service areas where no Irish equivalents are available • Staff members will be provided with a simple structured framework to follow when a member of the public requests to use Irish in their dealings with the Courts Service • Members of the public that have a query relating to the Irish language will contact the Courts Service using the dedicated inbox with increasing frequency
<p>2-3. Translation on an ongoing basis of all published materials and translation of legacy materials not available in Irish to date, some of which will be done in partnership with the Department of Justice.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>4. Examination of the development of an awareness campaign encouraging the public to think about their preferred language choice when dealing with the Courts Service.</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2027</p>	
<p>5. Official attendance of Oireachtas na Gaeilge on an annual basis.</p>	

<p>Timeline: Q4 each year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff on project, strategy and policy development teams will meet with the Irish Language Strategy Manager to carry out Evaluations of Language Requirements • Single Approach to Change Framework will be amended to include Evaluation of Language Requirements to ensure appropriate resources are made available to meet Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 requirements
<p>6. Identification and addressing of information and systems not available in Irish due to technological constraints.</p> <p>Timeline: Q4 2027</p>	
<p>7-9. Development of a Framework for providing Irish language service to the public.</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>10. Promotion of dedicated inbox for public queries in Irish.</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>11. Amendment of the Single Approach to Change Framework to include Evaluation of Language Requirements process</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2026</p>	
<p>12. Development of suite of resources to prompt consideration in advance of Evaluation of Language Requirements meeting</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2025</p>	

<p>Strategic Priority 5: Work to provide a guarantee that court proceedings in Irish are held at the expected level by endeavouring to ensure interpretation services are provided and competent staff are present where needed, with a special focus on Gaeltacht areas and other areas with a higher than average demand for Irish language services</p>	
<p>Priority Actions</p>	<p>Key Outcomes</p>
<p>1. Investigate the possibility to provide a guarantee of availability of Irish language court interpreters for all hearings where required</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2026 – Q4, 2028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court proceedings in Irish are conducted in a seamless and efficient manner on par with those held in English • Court proceedings in Gaeltacht areas held in Irish are conducted in a seamless and efficient manner without the need to resort to usage of English • Offices that have Gaeltacht regions within their geographic area have adequate number of staff with Irish competency to provide the services required of the office in English and Irish
<p>2. Provide additional support and conduct continuous workforce analysis and planning to ensure Gaeltacht venues can always operate fully in Irish and English</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <p>Priority 1: Develop awareness and understanding of expectations and requirements relating to the Irish language amongst members of staff</p> <p>Priority 2: Promote and encourage staff engagement with the Irish language by providing tangible opportunities to use and learn the language during and outside of work hours and by increasing visibility and normalisation of its usage</p>	
<p>Priority Actions</p>	<p>Key Outcomes</p>
<p>Part 1 – Improving internal understanding of Irish language requirements in the Courts Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in all offices and at all grades are informed about Irish language requirements,

<p>1. Develop and share an information flyer explaining the work of the Irish Language Unit of the Courts Service</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2025</p>	<p>supports, initiatives and guidance on a consistent basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be provided with dedicated contact point for any Irish language request or query • Members of staff across the Courts Service can avail of regular workplace opportunities to use and practice their Irish in social settings • Members of staff and members of the legal community will be provided with a formal Irish language professional event relating to their day-to-day work • Members of staff across the Courts Service will be invited to attend a social event held in the Irish language to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge each year • Members of staff will be informed in a consistent manner of the diversity of events and programmes delivered through the Irish language across the country • Members of staff learning the language will be provided with tangible opportunities to practice their Irish outside of the workplace • Members of staff will continue to be provided with a practical day-to-day vocabulary they can use to converse with one another in the workplace • Courts Service members of staff will be updated each fortnight with information about recent and upcoming initiatives, training schemes
<p>2. Promote dedicated inbox for staff queries about the Irish language</p> <p>Timeline: Q4, 2025</p>	
<p>3. Develop and conduct an awareness campaign about obligations and regulations</p> <p>Timeline: Q1, 2026</p>	
<p>4. Include presentation about Irish language requirements and supports in Induction for new starters, in collaboration with the Learning and Development Unit</p> <p>Timeline: Q2, 2026</p>	
<p>Part 2 – Fostering growth of the Irish language and of a positive language culture in the Courts Service</p>	
<p>5. Continue with facilitation of monthly Ciorcal Comhrá in Áras Uí Dhálaigh</p>	

<p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	<p>and other relevant projects relating to the Irish language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of the Irish language will be adopted and integrated into Courts Service events and initiatives that do not specifically relate to the Irish language in a natural and inherent manner
<p>6. Continue with facilitation of online monthly Ciorcal Comhrá</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>7. Organisation of annual Irish language half day conference, starting in 2026</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2027</p>	
<p>8. Commence a 'Take your coffee break As Gaeilge' initiative</p> <p>Timeline: Q3, 2026</p>	
<p>9. Organisation of annual Seachtain na Gaeilge event for Courts Service staff</p> <p>Timeline: Q1 each year</p>	
<p>10. Promotion of membership of Gréasán Gaeilge na hEarnála Poiblí</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>11. Promotion of other Irish Language events</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	

<p>12. Continue with Cúpla Focal Poster Series</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>13. Include an Irish language update in regular edition of The Brief</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	
<p>14. Collaborate with members of staff to encourage usage and visibility of the Irish language throughout events, projects and initiatives</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	

Appendix 2 – Legislative Background

2.1 Official Languages Act 2003

Part 3 of the Official Languages Act 2003 details the requirements on public bodies like the Courts Service in relation to the Irish Language and its various functions.⁷ These requirements related to:

- Duty of public bodies to use official languages
- Duty of public bodies to publish certain documents in both official languages simultaneously.
- Use of official languages by public bodies.
- Publication of guidelines by Minister.
- Preparation, confirmation, review, amendment and duty to conduct draft language scheme by public bodies.
- Prohibition on imposition of charges by public bodies for language choice.

The specific provisions that relate to the functions of the Courts Service are provided for in Section 8 of the Official Languages Act 2003.⁸ They are:

8.– (1) A person may use either of the official languages in, or in any pleading in or document issuing from, any court.

(2) Every court has, in any proceedings before it, the duty to ensure that any person appearing in or giving evidence before it may be heard in the official language of his or her choice, and that in being so heard the person will not be placed at a disadvantage by not being heard in the other official language.

(3) For the purposes of ensuring that no person is placed at a disadvantage as aforesaid, the court may cause such facilities to be made available, as it considers appropriate, for the simultaneous or consecutive interpretation of proceedings from one official language into the other.

⁷ [Part 3, Official Languages Act 2003](#)

⁸ [Section 8, Official Languages Act 2003](#)

(4) Where the State or a public body is a party to civil proceedings before a court—

(a) the State or the public body shall use in the proceedings, the official language chosen by the other party, and

(b) if two or more persons (other than the State or a public body) are party to the proceedings and they fail to choose or agree on the official language to be used in the proceedings, the State or, as appropriate, the public body shall use in the proceedings such official language as appears to it to be reasonable, having regard to the circumstances.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a person shall not be compelled to give evidence in a particular official language in any proceedings.

(6) In choosing to use a particular official language in any proceedings before a court, a person shall not be put by the court or a public body to any inconvenience or expense over and above that which would have been incurred had he or she chosen to use the other official language.

2.2 Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 became law on December 22, 2021, with an aim to strengthening the Official Languages Act 2003 and providing for new provisions for public bodies relating to the Irish language. The provisions that relate to the Courts Service and its functions are as follows:

Advertising by public bodies

6. The Principal Act is amended by the insertion of the following section after section 10:

“10A. (1) A public body shall ensure that—

(a) at least 20 per cent of any advertising placed by the body in any year shall be in the Irish language, and

(b) at least 5 per cent 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.

Duty of public bodies regarding official forms

9B. (1) For the purpose of prescribing the content and layout of official forms of a public body the Minister may, after consultation with such (if any) Minister of the Government as the Minister considers appropriate having regard to the functions of the public body, prescribe the body for the purposes of this section.

(2) The Minister may, in prescribing a public body under subsection (1), prescribe the contents and layout of official forms of the public body to be in the Irish language or in both the Irish and English languages and different provisions may be made in relation to different public bodies or official forms.

(3) In prescribing the content and layout of forms under subsection (2) the Minister shall have regard to the following matters where text, in the official form concerned, is in both the Irish and English languages:

(a) the order in which the text in each language shall appear in the official form;

(b) the prominence, visibility, legibility, size, font, overall appearance and style of the text, in the official form, of one language with respect to the text of the other language;

(c) the need for each official language to communicate the same message;

(d) the manner in which a title is to be used prior to or after a person's name in the official form, particularly with reference to acknowledging the different forms of such titles in each language;

(e) the manner in which abbreviated words may be used in each language.

(4) In prescribing the content and layout of forms under subsection (2) the Minister shall have regard to the following matters where text, in the official form concerned, is in the Irish language only:

(a) the manner in which a title is to be used prior to or after a person's name in the official form, particularly with reference to acknowledging the different forms of such titles in each language;

(b) the manner in which abbreviated words may be used in each language.

Amendment of section 12 of Juries Act 1976

16. Section 12 (as amended by section 56 of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008) of the Juries

Act 1976 is amended—

(a) in subsection (1), by the substitution of “a summons, in writing and in both the Irish and English

languages” for “a written summons”, and

(b) in subsection (2), by the substitution of “notice in writing and in both the Irish and English languages” for “notice”.

Functions of Advisory Committee

18C. (3) (b) increasing the number of staff of public bodies who are competent in the Irish language so that, as soon as practicable after the establishment day, but no later than 31 December 2030, at least 20 per cent of staff recruited to public bodies are so competent.

Appendix 3 – Consultation Details and Research

Meetings were held with members of the following units during the drafting stage of strategy creation to incorporate feedback and discuss approaches to implementation:

- Human Resources Unit of the Courts Service
- Learning and Development Unit of the Courts Service

Fact-finding meetings were held with the following organisations, both of which are considered to be among the public bodies who provide the best service to the public in Irish:

- The Irish Language Unit of the Department of Social Protection
- The Irish Language Unit of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners

The following resources were consulted and analysed as part of the research for this strategy:

- Results of Courts Service Irish Language Competency Survey, 2024
- 4th Language Scheme of the Courts Service under section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003
- Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027
- Courts Service Modernisation Programme
- Courts Service Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021 - 2025
- Courts Service Innovation Strategy 2024 - 2026
- Courts Service Long Term Strategic Vision to 2030
- National Plan for Irish Language Public Services 2024-2030⁹
- Welsh Language Scheme 2023 – 2026 of HM Courts & Tribunals Service¹⁰
- Welsh language standards, website of Welsh Language Commissioner¹¹
- Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015¹²

⁹ [National Plan for Irish Language Public Services 2024-2030, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht](#)

¹⁰ [Welsh Language Scheme 2023 – 2026, HM Courts & Tribunals Service](#)

¹¹ [Welsh language standards, Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

¹² [Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards \(No. 1\) Regulations 2015, Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

- Towards Irish Language Capability in Generative AI, Údarás na Gaeltachta¹³
- Bilingualism in Canada's Court System: The Role of the Federal Government¹⁴
- Céard é an Scéal? Public Opinions on the Irish Language 2023, Research by Ireland Thinks for Conradh na Gaeilge¹⁵

Appendix 4 – Number of Irish speakers in the State

The 2022 Census Results provide the best insight into the number of people who speak Irish in Ireland, and their geographical spread.¹⁶ This information is important to understand where the demand for service in Irish will come from. The relevant findings for the Courts Service are as follows:

- The total number of people aged fifteen or older who could speak Irish in April 2022 was **1,413,887**. This represents 34% of the population aged fifteen or older who completed the question on Irish language
- Out of the total number of people aged fifteen or older who could speak Irish, 142,828 said they can speak Irish very well and 395,453 said they can speak Irish well and 832,332 said they cannot speak Irish well
- The highest proportions of Irish speakers among the population aged three years and over were recorded in Galway County (50%) and Clare (47%).
- Dublin City (33%) and Louth (35%) had the lowest proportion of Irish speakers.
- Top ten towns with the highest proportion of Irish speakers according to the 2022 census are as follows:¹⁷

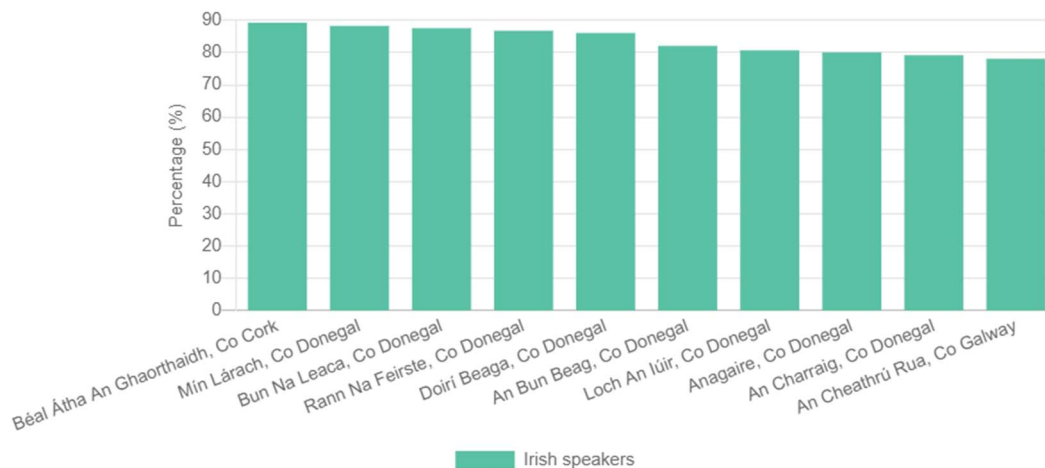
¹³ [Towards Irish Language Capability in Generative AI, Údarás na Gaeltachta](#)

¹⁴ [Bilingualism in Canada's Court System: The Role of the Federal Government, Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament](#)

¹⁵ [Céard é an Scéal? Public Opinions on the Irish Language 2023, Conradh na Gaeilge](#)

¹⁶ [Census of Population 2022 Profile 8 - The Irish Language and Education, Central Statistics Office](#)

¹⁷ [Frequency of Speaking Irish by Towns, Census 2022, Central Statistics Office](#)



- There were 102,973 people aged three years and over in the Gaeltacht areas; 65,156 of these indicated that they could speak Irish.
- Recognised Gaeltacht Service Towns¹⁸ and Irish Language Networks¹⁹ will also play a role in identifying areas with a higher than average population of Irish language speakers outside of Gaeltacht regions

¹⁸ [What is a Gaeltacht Service Town? Gaelphobal.ie](http://Gaelphobal.ie)

¹⁹ [What is an Irish Language Network? Gaelphobal.ie](http://Gaelphobal.ie)