



Irish Language Services Advisory Committee

Minutes - Meeting 9 – 29 September 2023

LOCATION: Foras na Gaeilge, 63-66 Amiens Street, Dublin 1

DATE: Friday, 29 September 2023

TIME: 10:00 – 12:45

PRESENT:

Name	Organisation	Role	Means
Dr. Aodhán Mac Cormaic	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Chairperson	On Site
Sandra Cairns (on behalf of Sinéad Coleman)	Public Appointments Service	Member	On Site
John Howlin	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform	Member	On Site
Superintendent Seán Glynn	An Garda Síochána	Member	On Site
Breandán Mac Craith	Foras na Gaeilge	Member	On Site
John Prendergast	Gaeltacht Communities	Member	On Site
Mairéad Ní Ghabháin	Irish Speaking Communities Outside of the Gaeltacht	Member	Via Remote Connection
Niamh Kenny	Department of Social Protection	Member	On Site
Emily Maloney	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Secretary	On Site
Sadhbh Ó Cinnseala	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Acting Principal Officer of the Unit	On Site
Máire Seó Breathnach	Waterford City & County Council	Representative of Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge	On Site (item 4 only)
Éamonn DeBarra	Dundalk Institute of Technology	Representative of Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge	On Site (item 4 only)
Emmet Ó Fatharta	Central Statistics Office	Representative of Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge	On Site (item 4 only)

Siobhán Seoighe	Dublin City University	Representative of Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge	On Site (item 4 only)
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ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES:

- Eithne Fox, representative of the Health Service Executive, and Mags Campbell, representative of the Department of Education, were unable to attend the meeting.

KEY DECISIONS MADE:

- The minutes of the previous meeting, on 30 June 2023, were agreed;
- It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Friday, 27 October 2023, in the Foras na Gaeilge building 63-66 Amiens Street, Dublin 1;
- It was agreed that the Department would organise a meeting between Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge and Dr. Kerron Ó Luain so that they could present their views and recommendations on how best to successfully implement the legislation;
- It was agreed that Dr. Kerron Ó Luain would attend the next meeting of the Committee to present the current status of the research for the National Plan.

FULL AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED:

1. Welcome from the Chairperson:

- The meeting began with an opening from the Chairperson of the Committee, Dr. Aodhán Mac Cormaic;
- He apologised on behalf of both Eithne Fox and Mags Campbell who were unable to attend the meeting;
- A special welcome was given to Sandra Cairns who was standing in at the meeting for Sinéad Coleman.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

- The minutes of the previous Committee meeting held on Friday, 30 June 2023 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising:

3.1. Section 9A of the amended Act:

- The Chairperson thanked the members for completing the Department's templates in relation to that provision, and asked those who did not send it back, to do so without delay;
- The individual obstacles of the members' organisations as a result of the additional duties of the provision were discussed;

- It was mentioned that there was an opportunity to raise awareness on the rights of the public as a result of the implementation of this provision.

3.2. Communications Roles with Irish:

- It was mentioned that discussions are ongoing between the Department and the Department of the Taoiseach regarding the business case, and that approval for the competition would be sought shortly from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

3.3. Work Experience with Irish Scheme:

- It was mentioned that there were discussions with representatives of the *Ionad Bairr Feabhais* (Centre of Excellence) regarding the establishment of a formal work experience scheme for third level students;
- It was stated that it was intended to roll out the scheme in Government Departments initially and then to the wider public bodies.

3.4. Higher Options Event:

- It was mentioned that a "mini-Gaeltacht" had been set up at this year's fair, which was dedicated to careers with Irish and third level courses through Irish, and that the Irish Times had done an excellent job of raising awareness in this regard.

3.5. Apprenticeship Scheme:

- It was mentioned that a commitment has been made in the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025 that a *Speisialtóir Gaeilge* (Irish Language Specialist) apprenticeship will be developed at Executive Officer level in Q3 2025;
- That the development of third-level courses is being examined under the Advanced Irish Language Skills Initiative to support the teaching needs of these students.

3.6. Irish Language Network:

- It was mentioned that the business unit had a meeting with a specific organisation about the business case they submitted to develop an Irish language network for the public sector;
- That there were a few questions about the business case, but that these were discussed in the interim period;
- That it is expected that a finalised business case, together with the appropriate internal approvals for the network, would be obtained soon;
- That the University of Limerick was to hold an information session for its new course - Language Coaching in the Workplace - on Thursday, 5 October 2023, at which representatives from the Department would be present.

3.7. COGG Pack Launch:

- It was mentioned that a pack on *Career Opportunities with Irish* was launched at the Options West event in Galway on 26 September 2023, aimed at young people and career guidance teachers.

4. Presentation - Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge:

- The Chairperson welcomed representatives of Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge who presented their views and recommendations to the Committee on how best to successfully implement the legislation;
- Following the presentation there was a questions and answers session, and it was agreed that it would be beneficial for Dr. Kerron Ó Luain to meet the delegation from COFG in the context of the research underway for the National Plan;
- It was agreed that the Department would make those arrangements.

5. Development of the National Plan:

- It was mentioned that the University of Galway had recently run a recruitment process for a second Research Fellow, and that process was currently ongoing;
- It was agreed that the research team would present to the Committee again at the next meeting, on 27 October 2023.

6. Commentary regarding the Committee in the Media:

- It was stated that there were various relevant articles in the media since the last meeting, as follows:
 - An article dated 7 July 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) regarding the legislation's 20% target and the difficulties in recruiting Irish-speaking individuals for the Civil Service;
 - An article dated 27 July 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) regarding the work the Department is undertaking to recruit communications officials with Irish for the public sector;
 - An article dated 28 July 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) regarding the work that the Department is undertaking to develop further third level courses through Irish to meet the additional demand that will exist in recruiting Irish speaking individuals for the public service in the future;
 - An article dated 5 September 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) regarding the "lack of progress" that has been made in relation to the legislation's 20% recruitment target, according to Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív;
 - Various articles and programmes in relation to Higher Options and the legislation's 20% recruitment target:
 - Éanna Ó Caollaí, Irish Language Editor, Irish Times on RTÉ RnG's [Adhmhaidin](https://www.rte.ie/rng/) on 13 September 2023;
 - Dated 14 September 2023 on the [Irish Times](https://www.irishtimes.com);
 - Dated 18 September 2023 on the [Irish Times](https://www.irishtimes.com);
 - Dated 19 September 2023 on the [Irish Times](https://www.irishtimes.com);
 - Dated 19 September 2023 on the [Irish times](https://www.irishtimes.com);
 - Dated 19 September 2023 on the [Irish times](https://www.irishtimes.com) - ask Brian - about career choices with Irish.

- An article dated 22 September 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) regarding the Ministers' priorities for the new term of the Dáil, including the publication of the National Plan for Irish Language Public Services in mid-2024, and the publication of Language Standards for certain sectors;
- An article dated 27 September 2023 on the Irish Independent regarding the reestablishment of a translation unit for the needs of the State in regard to high quality advertising in Irish, according to Éamon Ó Cuív;
- An article dated 29 September 2023 on [Tuairisc.ie](https://www.tuairisc.ie) stating that the Department did not intend to publish the research report being carried out by the University of Galway for the National Plan;
 - It was mentioned that the Department had since taken a decision to publish that report once it has been approved by the Minister.

7. Date of Next Meeting:

- It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Friday, 27 October 2023, in the Foras na Gaeilge building 63-66 Amiens Street, Dublin 1.

8. Any Other Business:

- It was mentioned that a new TEG scheme for school teachers was under development;
- It was mentioned that the business case for the awareness campaign is being approved internally and that the campaign may be rolled out in the new year;
- It was suggested that, in the context of the public's language rights, it would be worthwhile to provide a code of practice to accompany the language standards.

Emily Moloney.

Secretary

27 October 2023

Date of Approval