



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Statement of Quality Service Standards

incorporating Scéim Teanga 2014-2017 extracts

Tá an doiciméad seo le fáil i gcló mór chomh maith

This document is also available in large print

Tá leagan Gaeilge den Doiciméad seo ar fáil ach í a iarraidh

**This statement outlines what Service Standards you can expect from Galway County Council.
This Statement is based on our Customer Charter and our Scéim Teanga.**

Our Customer Charter is displayed at all our public points of service

Our Scéim Teanga-Language Scheme (Scéim Teanga Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe 2014-2017) is available at all our public points of service.

Copies of our Quality Customer Services Document including this Statement, Charter and Scéim Teanga are available on request at any public counter and available to view or download from our web-site.

www.gaillimh.ie or www.galway.ie

Who is this Statement for?

This Statement is for any person, business or organisation that Galway County Council provides a service to. If you have reason to contact us we consider you a customer.

Our objective is to foster a culture of excellence in the delivery of Customer Services. We will use our resources to the best of our ability to deliver and maintain a consistent and high standard of services.

We know that on occasion, services will not operate as we would hope. If we are unable to meet a standard in this statement, for any particular reason, we will make this known and explain the reasons.

Standard of Service you can expect from Galway County Council

In Person: If you visit one of our offices we will

- Provide a clean and safe office and all public signs will be in Irish and English.
- Meet you punctually if you have made an appointment.
- Respect your privacy and provide private meeting facilities if necessary.
- Deal with you in a polite, courteous and fair manner while recognising some customers preference for an Irish service and accept any customer's details accurately in Irish as required.
- Deal with your enquiry and provide relevant information as quickly as possible.
- Use our staff resources effectively to keep queuing times for services to a minimum. If on occasion queues are unavoidable we will make this known and explain the reasons;
- Facilitate access for people with disabilities.
- Provide an Irish language counter service at all public counters in Áras an Chontae & Centrepoint office locations as follows:
 - If the/an Irish speaker, able to provide the service requested in Irish, is available an Irish language service will be provided.
 - If the/an Irish speaker able to provide the service requested in Irish is not available, the person dealing with the customer will explain the situation courteously and inform the customer of when an

Irish speaker, will be available, (this will only be done if an Irish speaker will be available in a reasonable amount of time) or alternatively the customer will be offered the following options:

- To arrange a certain time when an Irish speaker will be present.
- The customer may, if they so wish, avail of the option of continuing the conversation in English.
The option to continue the conversation in English, will only be offered in the event that all of the options as detailed above, have been offered and declined by the customer.

- Ensure that any correspondence, consequent to a counter transaction where you indicate your preference to use Irish will continue to be in that language even if the transaction may have transpired in English.

If you visit one of our Libraries we will

- Provide a clean and safe library space and all public signs will be in Irish and English.
- Respect our readers' needs and make everybody feel welcome.
- Treat every reader with dignity and respect and offer a generous amount of attention.
- Provide additional support if it is your first time in the Library.
- Help you to access material in different formats to suit your requirements.
- Make each of our libraries a special place for children and make all our services open and accessible to all.
- Provide a full Irish language service in all of our Gaeltacht Libraries and in our Galway City and Westside Libraries on request.
- Ensure that the amount of Irish language books available in our branches and provided to schools is increased continually.

In Writing: When we write to or email customers or reply to correspondence we will

- Use clear and simple language and keep technical terms to a minimum.
- Acknowledge all correspondence (letter, fax, e-mail) in the language it was received (Irish/English) within 5 working days and endeavour to reply within 15 working days or less. When further correspondence is required it will continue in the same language (Irish/English).
- Continue to welcome correspondence in either Irish or English and will ensure that writing to us in Irish will not cause any undue delay.
- Ensure that, *where your language preference (Irish/English) has been established*, all correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Irish will continue to be in Irish even if that interaction took place in English.
- Include the writer's name, contact number, e-mail address and file reference number.
- Notify you by 'out of office' e-mail response if a staff member is absent for more than 3 working days and provide you with an alternative contact number.
- Ensure that general correspondence initiated by the Council with the public in a Gaeltacht area or an individual, group, school, Gaelscoil or an organisation that normally uses Irish or prefers to do so, where this is known, will generally be in Irish or may be bilingual if requested or deemed necessary.
- Compile a central listing of individuals, groups, schools, Gaelscoileanna and organisations that it is known to prefer to carry out communications in Irish will continue to be maintained as per current practice.
- Ensure that when we communicate in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information, that the communication is in the Irish language or in the Irish and English languages.

By Telephone

If you telephone us we will

- Be available to take your call 9.00am to 5.00pm (Monday to Friday),
- Answer calls as quickly as we can and respond with courtesy.
- Call you back if we cannot deal with your query immediately.

- Be helpful and clear and direct you to most appropriate person to deal with your query without delay.
- Make every effort to return your call within 24 hours.
- Update messages recorded on our phones to let you know that the staff member is absent.
- Always provide you with a contact number and a suitable alternative number for the Irish language service, if you need to call us back.
- Provide an Irish language telephone service as follows;
 - If the/an Irish speaker, within the relevant service area is not available, the person receiving the call will explain the situation courteously and take the caller's name, number and details of the query and will ensure that an Irish speaker from the Council returns the call. This will only be done if it can be ensured that calls will be returned within two hours where an Irish speaker is available on the premises or, at most, within one working day.
 - Otherwise the caller will be offered the choice of being called back in Irish by another member of staff or continuing the conversation in English along the same timelines.
- Over the coming years, establish to the greatest extent possible, a dedicated Irish Language telephone number/service for those who wish to conduct their business in Irish, as part of our upgraded telephone service.
- Ensure that calls to Gaeltacht offices will be answered using greetings in Irish only and the call can continue in the customer's preferred language thereafter.

By Application Form If you apply for one of our services we will:

- Explain precisely what is required to avail of a service.
- Make the application form easy to find and provide accurate and precise instructions on how to fill it up.
- Only ask you for information that, is essential to a fair and prompt assessment of your application.
- The Council will make every effort to ensure that the Irish used in the application forms it produces is legible and easily understood while having regard to accuracy of standard spelling and grammar.
- Ensure that personal data acquired by us is used only for the purpose for which it was sought.
- Ensure that all application forms and associated explanatory material produced by the Council will be in Irish only or in Irish and in English within the one document wherever possible.
- Ensure that where application forms and associated explanatory material are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version.
- Acknowledge, in your preferred language (Irish/English), that we received your application and deal with your application within agreed time limits.
- Write to you, in your preferred language (Irish/English), with a decision on your application or your appeal and give reasons if it was unsuccessful.
- Make customers aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the Council deems appropriate.
- Ensure that all bilingual application forms produced by the Council itself will include a clear statement welcoming the completion of the form in Irish.

On- line If you wish to use our online services we will:

- Give you information on Services and on how to find out more about our Services.
- Ensure that our website, www.gaillimh.ie / www.galway.ie, will be fully bilingual, have equal functionality and will be fully interchangeable between languages (Irish/English).
- Publish copies of our Annual Reports and Major Plans and Budgets in Irish and English as required.
- Let you pay for as many services as feasible on-line.
- Have a copy of all our application forms in Irish/English.

- Offer alternate accessible formats of our publications on request. (e.g.: Large Print)
- Make it easy to submit a comment and promptly update our site in Irish and English.
- If you contact via **our Social Media** we will respond in line with our Social Media Policy.
- Ensure that static content will be bilingual on any new website, which pertains to the local authorities specific functions and on which the Council have full control of the website and its content.
- Ensure that any new interactive services developed by the Council in-house will be fully bilingual and introduced simultaneously and that any similar existing interactive services will be made fully bilingual on the next scheduled upgrade.
- Ensure that any new systems or programmes developed by the Council in-house or bought directly will have a fully bilingual customer interface, be introduced simultaneously and capable of handling the Irish language.
- Continue to promote and administer gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie as a generic email address for all queries in the Irish Language.
- Continue to actively use technology to improve the provision of bilingual services.

Gaeltacht **If you wish to use our Gaeltacht services we will:**

- Ensure that general correspondence initiated by us with the public in a Gaeltacht area will be in Irish only or bilingual.
- Issue all press releases relating to Gaeltacht areas, Gaeltacht issues or Irish Language issues bilingually.
- Publish documents pertaining specifically to a Gaeltacht area in Irish only or bilingually using Irish that is legible and easily understood while having regard to accuracy of standard spelling and grammar. This will apply to application forms also.
- Answer calls in Gaeltacht offices using greetings in Irish only and be fully competent in dealing with fluent Irish speakers.
- Ensure that public announcement systems used by or on behalf of the Council on its premises or elsewhere in a Gaeltacht area will function in Irish only.
- Ensure that the client's preferred language will be established before a meeting in the home is arranged. In a Gaeltacht area it will automatically be assumed to be Irish.
- Ensure that officers attending meetings, with individuals whose preferred language is known to be Irish, will be Irish speakers unless the presence of a particular officer is required.
- Conduct any public meetings held, by the Council or on the Council's behalf by a third party, in the Gaeltacht, or dealing with specific Gaeltacht issues through Irish.
- Facilitate and encourage any town/village/community inside or outside the Gaeltacht who wish to have signage in their area in Irish only. Any signage which requires permission from the Council to be erected in the Gaeltacht will be in Irish only.
- Use the Irish version only of Gaeltacht placenames for official purposes and use them as a default in all of the Council's databases and correspondence.
- Ensure that Irish will be the working language of any Council offices located in the Gaeltacht not currently functioning in this manner by 2020.
- Actively ensure that every aspect of our work directly or indirectly affecting the Gaeltacht will be in Irish and have cognisance of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Gaeltacht and will not have a detrimental effect on the use of Irish as a community language but will promote and encourage it.
- We will assess the linguistic consequences of any new policies, strategies or initiatives of its ownership during the process of formulation, and their effect on the Irish language within a service and communities in the Gaeltacht and in the County as a whole with a view to informing the preparation of further language schemes.
- Ensure that new policies and initiatives will not be to the detriment of the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Gaeltacht and will have a promotional aspect wherever possible.