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**Derry City & Strabane**  
District Council

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Comhairle  
**Chathair Dhoire &  
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

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**Derry Cittie & Stràbane**  
Destrìck Cooncil

## **A Guide for Staff**

# **Courtesy Code for Irish**

### **Introduction**

This courtesy code is designed to guide staff members in dealing with enquiries from the public in Irish.

### **Personal Names**

A person is legally entitled to assume any name he or she wishes – in English or in any other language. If he or she is generally known by that name, it is valid for purposes of legal identification.

Unless it appears that he or she is not generally known by that name, you must respect the wishes of anyone who wants to be known by the Irish version of their name and should use only that name in official business.

Care should be taken to avoid confusion and duplication if an individual is known by both Irish and English names. It may be useful to record both versions of the person's name on file.

### **Spelling and Pronouncing Names in Irish**

If you have difficulty writing or pronouncing a person's name ask the person to help you spell and pronounce their name. If the name includes an accent on a

vowel this must be used. To apply an accent hold down the *AltGr* key and then type the vowel; accents are only applied to vowels and never to consonants. In the case of capital letters with accents the *Shift* key and *AltGr* key should be pressed together.

### **Interviews and Meetings**

If someone starts speaking in Irish you should, if able, respond in Irish. If you are unable to speak Irish you should explain this to the person and offer the person the choice of making an appointment for a meeting when an Irish speaker can be present. In some cases, you may proceed with the business in English provided the person is happy with this.

If you can speak Irish you may wish to display a card or sign on your desk stating that you can conduct business with the public in Irish. A list of officers who can deliver an Irish language service will be maintained and updated.

If a person gives notice that they want to conduct their business with Council in Irish a suitably skilled officer should facilitate.

### **Telephone Calls**

If a caller comes through to your extension and speaks in Irish you may respond in Irish (if known) or in English. If you do not speak Irish you should explain this and offer an alternative to dealing with the call:

- Offer to refer the caller to the Irish Language Officer or offer to refer the caller to the Irish Language Officer's voicemail where a message can be left in Irish
- Refer the caller to another Irish-speaking staff member
- Offer to continue the call in English if acceptable to the caller

## **Correspondence**

All Councils are obliged to accept written applications and correspondence in Irish. Council policy requires that you reply in Irish; for short correspondence a translation service can be provided by the Irish Language Officer, but for larger translations please seek approval to use a translator from the approved select list available from the Equality Officer.

An English translation of the original Irish correspondence and response should be filed together.

## **Electronic Mail**

E-mails received in Irish may be forwarded to the Irish Language Officer for translation. You should reply in Irish. For translation issues please see above.

## **Addresses**

Members of the public are entitled to use the Irish language version of their street name. Information of non-English street names can be found at [http://www.osni.gov.uk/paper/dual\\_lang.html](http://www.osni.gov.uk/paper/dual_lang.html).

When a person has used an Irish language street name staff should use the Irish form in replying to correspondence or when processing applications. Both Irish and English versions of the name can be noted for records.

Where third parties are involved (licences, planning applications) the English form of the street address should be shown as well as the Irish version. There are no restrictions on using Irish versions of the other parts of the address e.g. townland, town, county or country. It is always useful to include the postcode to guarantee delivery.

## **Enquiries and Monitoring**

Enquiries about these guidelines should be made to:

**Irish Language Officer**

**T: 028 71 376 579**

**[pol.ofrighil@derrystrabane.com](mailto:pol.ofrighil@derrystrabane.com)**