

Code of Courtesy for Irish and Ulster Scots

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This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

Equality Manager
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
2nd Floor
80-90 North Street
Belfast
BT1 1LD
Telephone number: 028 90262400
Textphone: 028 90262490
E-mail: info@pbni.gsi.gov.uk

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Document Control Sheet

Document Amendment History

Version Number	Date	Description
0.1	December 2016	First Draft
0.2	June 2017	Change made to Section 5 following PPC.

1. Background

The European Charter is an international convention designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages. The Charter does not establish any individual or collective rights for speakers of regional or minority languages. The Charter's overriding purpose is cultural. It is designed to protect and promote regional or minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage.

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages came into force in July 2001, bringing with it certain obligations regarding the use of Irish and Ulster Scots in official business. Under the Charter, government organisations including PBNi are obliged to make provisions for the use of Irish and Ulster Scots, and to treat the English, Irish and Ulster Scots language on a basis of equality wherever it is possible and practical to do so.

2. Introduction

Linguistic diversity must be regarded as a common cultural wealth. Everyone is entitled to respect and courtesy, which extends to their language. Every effort should be made to convey this respect even if it is not possible to deal with the person in the language of his/her choice.

The Code sets out how the Board will implement the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages that apply to Irish and Ulster Scots.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to staff in the use of Irish/Ulster Scots in official business and to assist staff in fulfilling our obligations under the Charter.

3. 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, staff must respect the wishes of anyone who wants to be known by the Irish or Ulster Scots 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/Ulster Scots and English names. It may be useful to put a record of both versions on file.

If an officer believes that the person in question may also have been using an English form of their name, they might ask, *“Is this the form of your name you always use? I have to ensure that all your records are together”*.

If a person gives his/her name in Irish or Ulster Scots, and the officer dealing with the person has difficulty in writing or even pronouncing it, they should ask the person to help them spell it.

If the name includes an accent/fada, this should present no problem. Practically all computer software packages cater for this.¹

In short, a person may use whatever form of their name they choose. This right should never be questioned. Every effort should be made to write and/or pronounce a person’s name correctly. Don’t be embarrassed to seek that person’s help.

4. Face-to-Face Interviews and Meetings

Irish

If someone starts speaking in Irish to staff who do not speak Irish the staff member should explain this and offer the person the choice of:

¹ Vowels in Irish may have long accents, similar to the *accent aigu* in French. However, unlike French, the accent in Irish is also used in the case of capitals. Some Ulster-Scots spelling systems use accents to represent inflexion. When using Microsoft Word, the accent can be keyed in by pressing the *Alt Gr* key and then the vowel in question. In the case of capitals the *Shift* key should also be pressed. All such letters can also be accessed by using the *Insert–Symbol* facility.

- continuing the interview/meeting in English;
- giving written views in Irish
- making an appointment for a meeting when an interpreter is present.

If in doubt, clarify that the language in question is Irish.

If a person gives advance notice that they want to speak Irish, an interpreter should generally be arranged. This can be done through Flex Language Services by using the Face to Face booking form. No other provider should be used. Staff should refer to the Face to Face Interpretation Guidance which can be found on the PBNI intranet - Resources/Equality and Diversity/Translation Services. The booking form is also available in this section. An exception to the general requirement to provide an interpreter might be recruitment interviews, where necessary testing of communication skills in English could not be carried out properly unless English was the working medium.

If no notice is given, the person should be offered the choice of -

- making their point in English
- giving written views in Irish.
- making an appointment for a meeting when an interpreter is present.

If a meeting is arranged, double-check beforehand that the interpreter is available.
Never promise a service on which you cannot deliver.

Ulster-Scots

In the spirit of the Charter PBNI, as with other public bodies, is encouraged to make provision for Ulster-Scots interviews and meetings. However at present it is not normally possible to facilitate face-to-face meetings in the Ulster-Scots language due to difficulty in ensuring appropriate quality assurance for interpreters. Further advice can be sought via Flex Language Services, telephone 028 9072 7878.

5. Telephone Calls

If a caller begins the conversation in Irish or Ulster-Scots the officer may respond in Irish/Ulster-Scots (if they speak it) or English. If the officer does not speak Irish/Ulster-Scots they should explain this and offer alternatives for dealing with the call. The following form of words may be helpful:

"I am sorry I cannot answer you in Irish/Ulster-Scots. But I can offer you the following options for dealing with your call.

- *We can continue the call in English*
- *You can write to us in Irish/Ulster-Scots*
- *I can contact our telephone interpretation service to book an appointment with an interpreter.*

The telephone interpretation service is provided TheBigWord. No other provider should be used. Please note that TheBigWord have indicated that they do not provide Irish interpreters on stand-by. Staff will therefore have to pre-book if a telephone interpretation is required. Staff should refer to the Telephone Interpretation Guidance which can be found on the PBNi Intranet –Resources/DiversityandEquality/Translation Services.

The Charter only requires acceptance of oral requests and applications in Irish. There is no obligation to respond in Irish but Irish-speaking staff may do so. Whilst the Charter does not require acceptance of oral applications in Ulster-Scots, this offers the opportunity to encourage and promote the language in line with Part II of the Charter.

6. Correspondence (Including emails)

The Charter obliges public bodies to accept written correspondence in Irish and, although the Charter does not oblige departments to accept written correspondence in Ulster-Scots, it would be in the spirit of the Charter to do so. If it seems that, taking translation into account, it will not be possible to provide a substantive reply by the relevant deadline, an acknowledgement should be issued in the normal way, explaining that the letter is being translated and that a substantive reply will follow. A positive

gesture might be to issue at least the acknowledgment in Irish/Ulster-Scots using the attached drafts (Appendices 1-3 below).

The Charter does not oblige public bodies to acknowledge or reply in Irish to correspondence received in Irish, but staff are encouraged to do so, using Flex Language Services where necessary. No other provider should be used. English translations of the original letter and response should be filed. For the avoidance of doubt staff issuing responses in Irish who have no Irish themselves may wish to sign the English translation of a response and attach a copy to the unsigned Irish version.

Staff should refer to the Guidance on Written Translations which can be found on the PBNi internet – Resources/Equality and Diversity/Translation Services. A request form for written translation can also be found in this section.

7. Addresses

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 provides that a District Council may place a version of a street name in another language alongside the English name. For up to date information on non-English street names adopted by District Councils go to http://www.osni.gov.uk/paper/dual_lang.html or contact the Ordnance Survey (info@pointer-ni.gov.uk). When a person has used a lawful Irish/Ulster-Scots language street name staff should use the Irish/Ulster-Scots form in replying to correspondence or while processing applications. **Both Irish/Ulster-Scots and English versions should be noted on the official record.**

Where third parties may be involved i.e. where a document may need to be scrutinised (e.g. driving licence) or publicised (e.g. planning application) the English form of the street address should be shown as well as the Irish/Ulster-Scots version. There are no restrictions on using Irish/Ulster-Scots versions of other parts of an address e.g. townland, town, county, country.

When contact is being initiated, it would be in keeping with the spirit of the Charter to use both versions initially, and then continue using whichever language was used in the reply. Public bodies are encouraged to use both versions in their documents and publications.

8. Linkages to this Code

This Code links to the following:

[Face to Face Interpretation Guidance](#)

[Telephone Interpretation Guidance](#)

[Written Translations Guidance](#)

9. Enquiries and Monitoring

Enquiries about this Guidance and further advice on requests to do business (oral or written) in Irish/Ulster-Scots should be addressed to the:

Equality Manager,

80/90 North Street

BELFAST BT1 1LD

Telephone number: 028 90262400

Textphone: 028 90262410.



Human Resources
PBNI
80/90 North Street
Belfast
BT1 1LD

Tel: 028 9026 2400
Web: www.pbni.org.uk

Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive

Date

(Name)
(Address)
(Address)
(Address)

Dear

Thank you for your letter to dated

The matter is being dealt with and a reply will issue in due course.

Yours sincerely

(NAME)
(Position/job title)



Human Resources
PBNI
80/90 North Street
Belfast
BT1 1LD

Date

Tel: 028 9026 2400

Web: www.pbni.org.uk

(Name)

Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive

(Address)

(Address)

(Address)

A _____, a chara,

Go raibh maith agat as do litir chuigdár dáta.....

Táthar ag plé leis an ábhar agus eiseofar freagra in am agus i dtráth.

Is mise le meas

(NAME)

(insert position/job title)



Human Resources
PBNI
80/90 North Street
Belfast
BT1 1LD

Date

Tel: 028 9026 2400
Web: www.pbni.org.uk

Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive

(Name)
(Address)
(Address)
(Address)

..... , guid freen,

Monie thanks fur yer lettèr tae o tha date

Tha mettèrs noo in haun an ye shud hae an answer afore owre lang.

Wi an aefauld hairt,

(NAME)
(insert position/job title)