



## Code of Courtesy for the Irish Language

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## **Code of Courtesy for the Irish Language**

### ***European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages***

#### **1. Background**

1.1 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (The Charter) came into force in July 2001 and is an international agreement designed to protect and promote regional or minority languages. Linguistic diversity must be regarded as a common cultural wealth and in keeping with both Equality legislation and The Charter, Libraries NI is committed to treating all customers with respect and courtesy, and this extends to their language.

#### **2. Introduction**

2.1 All customers will be treated with courtesy and respect even if it is not possible to communicate with the person in the language of their choice.

2.2 To ensure compliance with Part III of The Charter, Libraries NI has developed the following Code of Courtesy for staff in everyday situations where they interact with customers who wish to do business in Irish.

2.3 More detailed information can be found at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/european-charter-regional-and-minority-languages#toc-0>

#### **3. Personal Names**

3.1 A person is legally entitled to assume any name they wish – in English or in any other language.

3.2 Libraries NI staff must respect the wishes of anyone who wants to be known by the Irish version of their name, and use only that name on Libraries NI business.

3.3 Staff who do not speak Irish may ask for assistance with spelling and pronunciation.

#### **4. Face-to-Face Communication**

4.1 If Irish is spoken to a member of staff who does not speak Irish they will:

- a. Clarify with you that the language being spoken is Irish
- b. Apologise to you that no one is available to speak Irish
- c. Offer you the choice of -

- *continuing in English*
- *giving your enquiry to us in writing (letter, email or fax)*
- *passing your contact details to an Irish speaking colleague who can deal with your enquiry in Irish*

## **5. Telephone Calls**

5.1 When a telephone call from someone speaking Irish is received by staff who do not speak Irish they will:

- a. Clarify with you that the language being spoken is Irish
- b. Apologise to you that no one is available to speak Irish
- c. Offer you the choice of -
  - *continuing the call in English*
  - *writing to us in Irish (letter, email or fax)*
  - *passing your contact details to a staff member who can deal with your enquiry in Irish.*

## **6. Correspondence (letter, email or fax)**

6.1 Libraries NI will accept correspondence in Irish and respond in Irish. When correspondence is received in Irish a written acknowledgement using Appendix 1 will be issued.

## **7. Addresses**

7.1 When a person uses an Irish street name Libraries NI will respond to this address.

## **8. Enquiries and Monitoring**

8.1 Enquiries about this guidance and further advice on communicating with Libraries NI in Irish should be addressed to:

Desi Miskelly  
Director of Business Support  
Libraries NI  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Portadown Library  
24-26 Church Street  
Portadown BT62 3LQ  
e:desi.miskelly@librariesni.org.uk:  
t:028 3839 9442

## Appendix 1

### Letter of acknowledgement for correspondence in Irish

(Addressee)  
(Address)  
(Address)  
(Address)

(Date)

*(name of addressee)*, a chara,

Go raibh maith agat as do litir chuig *(name of person correspondence is addressed to)* dar dáta *(date on letter)*.

Táthar ag plé leis an ábhar agus éiseofar freagra iomlán roimh *(insert date 15 working days from date of receipt of letter by Libraries NI)*.

Is mise le meas

Desi Miskelly

(Stiúrthóir Tacaíochta Gnó)

English Version

Dear

Thank you for your letter to ..... dated .....

The matter is being dealt with and a full reply should be sent to you by no later than *[insert date 15 working days from date of receipt of letter by Libraries NI]*.

Yours sincerely

Desi Miskelly  
(Director of Business Support)