

An Coimisinéir Teanga - Annual Report 2025

Missed statutory deadlines are causing a stasis in the Government's efforts to improve public services in Irish.

In his 2025 annual report, An Coimisinéir Teanga, Séamas Ó Concheanainn, has highlighted significant delays in implementing national legislation that are infringing the language rights of Irish speakers. The Official Languages Act 2003, as amended, aims to significantly improve public services in Irish. However, more than four years after the Act's enactment, key components of the legislation remain unimplemented, and respective statutory deadlines have elapsed. The outstanding statutory provisions include a new language standards system, which will set out the new services that public bodies will be obliged to provide in Irish. The language standards system will also establish the Irish-language proficiency levels required of public-sector employees who deliver those services.

Responsibility for implementing the Official Languages Act 2003, as amended, now rests with the Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht. This follows the transfer of duties for the Irish Language and the Gaeltacht from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in early 2025, following the formation of the new Government.

An Coimisinéir Teanga, Séamas Ó Concheanainn commented:

“The significant delay in establishing the language standards system means that the cornerstone of the Government's 2024 National Plan to improve public services in Irish remains outstanding. December 2024 marked the statutory deadline for implementing the system according to the amended 2021 Act. Consequently, essential public services in Irish remain unavailable across the public sector. It is essential that the language standards system be fully implemented without further delay.”

In addition to the language standards that remain unimplemented, statutory guidelines are also awaiting publication. A statutory investigation of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) emphasised the urgent need for the Minister to publish the statutory guidelines, which would mandate that public bodies like the SEAI—those offering extensive public services and supports—provide official application forms in Irish or bilingual formats. These statutory guidelines were expected to be published by March 2025 at the latest. The same statutory investigation found that the SEAI had breached section 9(2) of the Official Language Act 2003, as amended, by replying to written correspondence in Irish from a member of the public in [writing in](#) English.

A separate statutory investigation determined that the Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETb) breached section 18(1) of the Act. The breach occurred because of the GRETb's failure to implement a formal language proficiency assessment and assurance system for the Irish language when recruiting for a senior management position [as a director](#), as required by a commitment in its Official Language Scheme.

An Coimisinéir Teanga also highlighted in his report the lack of national coordination to meet the 20% recruitment target for staff proficient in the Irish language. The report cites little evidence of ongoing supervision and progress reporting, both of which should be priorities for the Advisory Committee for Public Services in Irish, established by the Minister to oversee the implementation of the National Plan. The shortage of staff proficient in Irish is a significant roadblock to improving public services in Irish at present and is a common thread in many of the 600 complaints my Office receives annually.

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