

**Circular Title: Arrangements for the recording and utilisation of Eircodes within the Public Service**

**File Reference: DPE035-049-2017**

I am directed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to refer to Government Decision S180/20/10/0382A of 20 June 2017, which sets out new arrangements for the use of Eircodes across the public service, and to say that the following will apply in regards to recording and utilisation of Eircodes.

**Circular Number:** 19/2017

**Purpose:** To advise staff of their obligations in regards to ICT systems and processes currently being developed or upgraded, or those being planned for development. Such systems and processes that include an address should also include an Eircode field as part of the address in order to facilitate its recording and utilisation.

**Circular Application:** To all Departments and Offices, and all public bodies coming under their aegis. Each Department and Office is required to implement this Circular and to bring it to the attention of all bodies and authorities operating under their aegis, and to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to implement it.

**Effective From:** 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Barry Lowry  
Government Chief Information Officer  
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

Eircodes were introduced in order to facilitate better provisioning of services to people and businesses and to resolve the problem of non-unique addresses in the state. An Eircode is added to the last line of an address, providing a unique location identifier for every property. This negates the requirement to change and re-address existing properties throughout the state. Eircodes can also be used to support improved policy analysis, targeting and monitoring through data linking and geo-spatial referencing. This circular sets out measures to increase the usage of Eircodes by public bodies. This will allow the public service to benefit from their utility potential, and will also contribute to raising public awareness of Eircodes and an increase in their public use.

## 2. eGovernment

As part of the Civil Service Renewal Plan and Public Service ICT Strategy, the National Data Infrastructure (NDI) is being developed as part of a suite of measures that will allow sharing and aggregation of data within the public service based on trusted identifiers. These identifiers can be used to link associated data in a manner that protects personal data while being used to deliver improvements to service efficacy and efficiency, for example, via increased online service delivery and improved data driven policymaking. The NDI consists of a core set of authoritative and trusted unique identifiers, the Eircode being used for address identification.

The recognition of Eircodes as the unique address identifier that provides the geo-location for each address within the state for use by public service bodies means that ICT systems across the public service should be capable of capturing the Eircode, as part of an address. This will ensure full coverage of unique property identifiers across public service databases, thereby facilitating better sharing of linked data on a whole-of-government basis while being fully aligned to the new General Data Protection Regulations and the European eGovernment Action Plan.

## 3. Arrangements

### **Increase Eircode Capability**

All public bodies should store and integrate Eircodes as part of an address whenever it is relevant to the transactions between the Public Service Body (PSB) and their customers.

The following apply:-

- i. All new information technology systems and processes currently being developed should include Eircodes in the address field (where an address field is part of the system or process);
- ii. All existing information technology systems and processes currently being upgraded should include Eircodes in the address field (where an address field is part of the system or process); and

- iii. All information technology systems and processes planned for development should include Eircodes in the address field (where an address field is part of the system or process).

### **Increase Eircode Use**

In conjunction with the aforementioned measures to increase the public service's Eircode ICT infrastructural capability, public bodies are obliged to consider the following actions in relation to Eircode processing.

- i. Encode active databases containing addresses with Eircodes by matching existing addresses to the correct Eircode. Where matching the correct Eircode is not possible, the relevant Eircodes should be captured through other means in order to ensure all addresses in the active databases have a corresponding Eircode;
- ii. The Eircode field, as part of an address in a database, should be searchable in all Information Technology Systems and processes;
- iii. Incoming Eircodes for a corresponding address should in real-time be validated against the latest Eircode address file and/or database;
- iv. Request an Eircode as part of an address from customers (where an address is required); and
- v. All outgoing correspondence shall include Eircode, where available, as part of the customers address.

## **4. Reporting Arrangements**

To facilitate the recording and utilisation of Eircodes as set out in section 4 the Accounting Officer of each organisation must report, for information, on the progress being made implementing their Action Plans for integrating Eircodes as part of existing arrangements under the Public Service ICT Strategy.

## **5. Data Protection**

The postcode project has been given legal underpinning in Section 66 of the Postal Services Act 2011 and Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Act, 2015. The matching of an existing address to an Eircode necessary to encode existing address databases with an Eircode is a legitimate postcode activity and has a lawful legal basis under the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Act, 2015. Where an Eircode is matched to other data, which would lead to it being considered 'personal data', the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 apply.

## **6. Enquiries**

Enquiries concerning this Circular should be made to:

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

3A Mayor Street Upper, Spencer Dock, Dublin 1, D01 WP44.