

## 3(C) Gaeltacht Areas and Irish Speakers

The Gaeltacht is a legally defined area under Irish Legislation, made by order under Section 2 of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act, 1956. In the Gaeltacht Irish is the main spoken language of the population. The Gaeltacht consists of less than 7% of the land area of the Republic. The areas comprising the Gaeltacht are among the most peripheral rural and coastal regions in Europe. The Gaeltacht covers 5,600 km<sup>2</sup> and has some 80,000 inhabitants. It has a low population density of 14 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. Geographically, the Gaeltacht encompasses a broad area, but is fragmented administratively across Counties Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Cork, Kerry, Meath and Waterford.

Linguistically and culturally, the Gaeltacht is a unique and homogenous unit, with Irish being the living language of the people in everyday life and in legal, executive and judicial terms. The Irish language is intrinsically linked to the heritage and culture of the Gaeltacht.

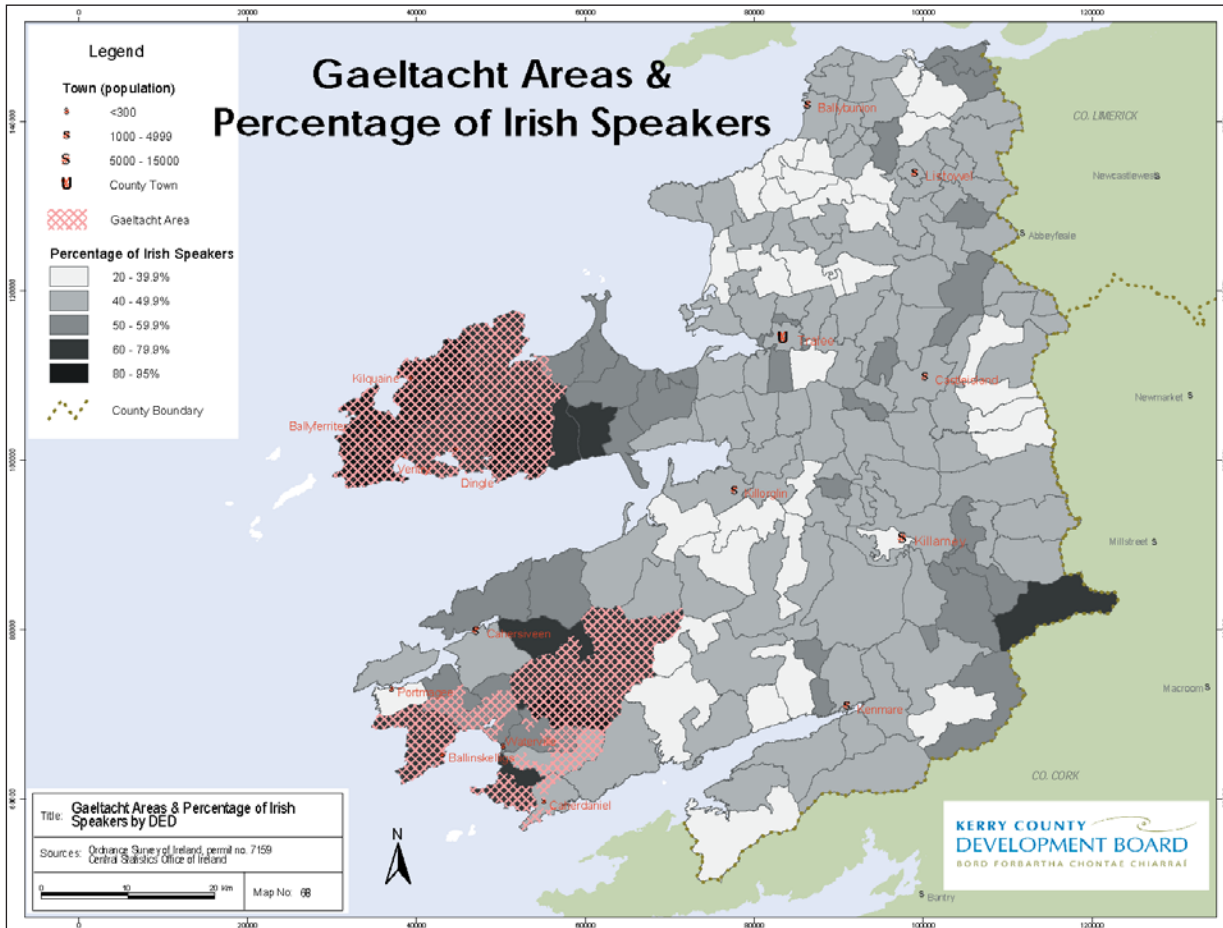
In 1996 Co. Kerry had a population of 126,130, of which 57,204 people over the age of 3 years claimed that they could speak Irish, 15,763 claimed to speak Irish on a daily basis.

Table 26 (Table 66 of Kerry Atlas)

### THE ABILITY TO SPEAK IRISH AND THOSE WHO SPEAK IT DAILY BY LEA IN 1996

LEA	Ability to speak Irish 3+ years	Numbers who speak Irish daily
Dingle	8,126	3,921
Killarney Rural	9,321	2,392
Killarney Urban	3,388	642
Killorglin	9,450	2,282
Listowel Rural	9,907	2,494
Listowel Urban	1,397	269
Tralee Rural	7,640	2,131
Tralee Urban	7,975	1,632
<b>Co. Kerry</b>	<b>57,204</b>	<b>15,763</b>

Source: Central Statistics Office. Website: [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)



## Summary

- There is one modern purpose-built arts venue in the County.
- There are 13 blue flag beaches.
- There are 63 sites designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NAHs) and 7 Special Protection Areas (SPA'S)
- 57,204 of the County's population claim the ability to speak Irish.