

Gaelic Policy Lead Group – Education.

Draft National Plan

Cànain Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2017-2022 - Draft Response

Plana Cànain Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2017-2022 The National Gaelic Language Plan 2017-22 is currently going through a public consultation process that concludes on 17th May 2017. It is important that as many people as possible use this opportunity to make their views known about the contents of the Plan. On page 32 of the Plan (Appendix 1) you will find a list of questions that may be used to guide responses. The questions listed appear below along with draft responses for submission by the Gaelic Policy Lead Group – Education.

Please feel free to add, amend or comment on these responses.

Appendix 1 Consultation Questions:

Question 1

The structure for the Plan consists of an aim, priority areas and commitments. Do you have any comments on how we structured the Plan and the overall aim we have selected?

- The language register of the Draft National Gaelic Language Plan is good and easy to understand.
- It is useful to have Government manifesto commitments listed as evidence of continuing political support. Careful planning and a significant increase of skilled Gaelic pre-school practitioners will be required to ensure that the stated 'huge opportunity' offered by an increase in childcare hours is capitalised on. There also exists a threat in that failure to resource the additional places with Gaelic could lead to increased use of English medium childcare providers. Urgent action is required to ensure that a positive outcome is achieved.

Question 2

We believe that the promotion of a positive image for Gaelic is essential and we think that the areas above (being priority areas) are the key areas that can make a contribution to this. Do you have any comments on the areas we have selected or alternative suggestions?

- Argyll and Bute Education Services fully supports that the promotion of a positive image for Gaelic is essential. As it stands the purpose of this aim should be expanded to include the encouragement and support for children and adults to use Gaelic within communities – such as Comunn na Gàidhlig Development Officers, Furan Gaelic Language Centre etc.
- Particular attention should be given to encouraging teenagers and those in further education to engage with opportunities to be involved with Youth Work through access to training and qualifications.
- Educational organisations require increased funding to produce additional resources for the expansion of GME numbers and doubling of childcare hours.

Question 3

We believe education and Gaelic learning are central to this Plan. We have also listed the priority areas that we believe should be a focus for ongoing activity. Do you have any comments on this emphasis and on the priority areas selected for learning Gaelic?

- The priority areas as listed in the Learning Gaelic section of the document covers most of the key areas. It is of concern that the Parents and Home are omitted from the Priority Areas for learning Gaelic in 'section 7' of the document. The future of Gaelic Medium Education depends on parents and carers engaging with Early Years education and choosing to enrol their children in the service and supporting progression of acquisition within the family and home.
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig should develop and promote a clear and cohesive strategy for all stakeholders that engage with the Gaelic Learning domain.
- The level of available funding for Gaelic learning resource production requires to be increased in line with the rate of growth within the sector.

Question 4

We believe the (priority) areas selected are important for promoting the increased use of Gaelic. Do you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to make in relation to promoting the increased use of Gaelic?

- The omission of GM schools as an area of priority is of major concern. School communities provide an ideal platform from which to promote the language.
- The identification of areas and sectors that the stated promotion aims to reach requires to be strengthened, with targets being further defined.

Question 5

In questions 2, 3 and 4, you were asked about your views on the priority areas identified. In this question, we would like to hear any views or suggestions you may have on the key commitments we have identified and views on any key commitments you think should be included in order to make progress with the aim of increasing the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used?

- Key commitments within the documents provide comprehensive coverage of most of the areas that are key to language promotion, development, usage and acquisition.
- Extending the collaborative reach to strengthen links with domains such as Canada and Ireland is welcomed.

Question 6

The earlier consultation questions have been fairly specific. If there are any other points you would like to make and feel you have not had the opportunity to do so, please write them below. •

- The draft plan fails to define how the increased resource implications, as relative to the stated developments, are to be met. It is inevitable that increased activity on the scale suggested in the plan will bring increased financial demands to bear. An additional section that outlines the national approach to the funding, resourcing and sustaining of stated growth ambitions, within the draft plan, requires to be added.