

# Informing and Supporting Parents in GME

January 2016



# Contents Page

**Executive Summary**.....pg 2-6

## **Section 1: Evaluate the effectiveness of the PAS**

Method 1 PA Survey.....pg 7-9

Method 2 SWOT by CNP Committee .....pg 9-12

Method 3 P1 GME Parents Questionnaire .....pg 12-13

Method 4 Minority Report Review.....pg 13-14

Method 5 Stakeholder Interviews.....pg 14-16

## **Section 2: To provide recommendations for the PAS including; scope, remit, management, structure, resources, costs and partnership working with the BnaG early years' team, Iomairtean Gaidhlig, schools, Local authorities, Gaelic organisations, national initiatives and Gaelic language plans.**

Scope.....pg 16-18

Remit.....pg 18-20

Management.....pg 20-21

Structure.....pg 21

Resources and Costs.....pg 21

Operating partnership working.....pg 21-22

## **Section 3: How is it best to inform families of the advantages of Gaelic Medium Education and to increase the use of Gaelic in the home?**

PART 1 Recommendations for best practice in providing parents with information on the advantages of GME.....pg 22-28

PART 2 Recommendations on how best to support Gaelic learning for parents and to enhance their Gaelic skills.....pg 28-29

PART 3 Recommendations on how best to inform LA's and schools on GME.....pg 29-30

**Appendices:** A1- PA on-line survey, A2-Study SWOT & interview list, A3 GME Parent survey

## Executive Summary

The brief required the insight and analysis of 3 key areas (sections 1-3) as listed in the table. All of sections 1 -3 are closely linked to one another thus the evidence gathered under each section has been drawn from shared research sources and approaches.

### SECTION 1

**Evaluate the effectiveness of the Parental Advisory Scheme (PAS).**

### SECTION 2

**To provide recommendations for the PAS including; remit, scope, management, structure, resources, costs and partnership working with the BnaG early years' team, Iomairtean Gaidhlig, schools, Local authorities, Gaelic organisations, national initiatives and Gaelic language plans.**

### SECTION 3

**How is it best to inform families of the advantages of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and to increase the use of Gaelic in the home?**

## SECTION 1 & 2

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the current Parent Advisory Scheme (PAS) in its 6<sup>th</sup> year was undertaken via a range of methods that enabled a thorough analysis of its effectiveness. The study researched the views of the deliverer (parent advisor), the receiver (the parents of pupils in GME) and associated delivery stakeholder bodies (GME Head Teachers, LA's, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnaG), Comann nam Pàrant (CNP) and Comunn na Gàidhlig (CNG).

### What does the Parental Advisory Scheme (PAS) do?

In 2014/15 the aims and the priorities of the scheme were;

1. Encourage more parents to choose GME for their children
2. Raise awareness of the importance of the home and community in Gaelic medium activities for their children

### Profile of PAS activities

Each group of parental advisors plan a distinctive set of activities for their areas. Parental advisors (PA's) provide information on GME and on Gaelic medium activities in their local area. Parents interested in GME for their children receive information booklets and leaflets through the PAS. Further information for parents is then available through follow up websites led by CNP, Gaelic4parents and several others. Whilst some Local Authorities (LA's) carry out the best practice which involves the dissemination of information about GME, this is variable in some GME areas and non-existent in non GME areas.

It is important to acknowledge that the PAS operates within a 'tight fit' role within a large activity environment of GME marketing interventions and was never set up as an authoritative or formal advisory body.

PA's operate as a microcosm of the bigger 'whole', the bigger whole is the full plethora of policy and direct influencing and support activities via Gaelic organisational stakeholder organisations and volunteers. This operating space is fragmented, sometimes cluttered and often non-directed but where there's been good Gaelic marketing on the Isle of Skye, the Western Isles and parts of Highland region, the impact of co-ordinated GME marketing has been high.

Currently GME promotion and support for parents lacks a comprehensive road map, whilst much positive energy exists fragmentation of efforts is an ongoing challenge, as is a lack of responsiveness to the growth potential in GME. The fact that the PAS scheme was set up suggests there was a need for parental support and that levels of parental support were not satisfied via LA's or schools.

Given the already rich mixture of human resources and materials available to support GME marketing, it is now the 'co-ordination' of a successful parental journey into and through GME that is the missing link. The 2015 Education Act will have a major impact on requests for GME but to be successful structures need to be set up that best support parents in their GME choice and requesting process.

#### Overall evaluation of the effectiveness of PAS:

- **The effectiveness of PAS is high in terms of its focused remit of supporting parents in GME.** Any changes to the PAS (without significant resources and training) could harm the very valuable role it currently provides.
- **The PAS has medium effectiveness in working in partnership with LA's and for the delivery of area based GME action plans, input into formal community planning, equal attainment strategies, early years strategies, GLP's (Gaelic Language Plans) and the curricular delivery environment.** However it was never planned that the PAS would address any of the above and therefore PAS doesn't provide much assistance in these areas, but the current issue is that there is a *need* for a professional body to be supporting LA's to ensure that these aspects are fully addressed constructively and opportunistically (at a macro and micro level) via guiding and supporting LA'S. In particular the concept of addressing latent demand in GME needs a robust approach that works within the concept of GMPE geographical zones and ensures the matching of human resources to GME promotional requirements. The PAS (as it exists) is not in a position to provide any of this support unless the PAS is set up as an upskilled professional resource to guide LA's.
- **The effectiveness of PAS could be increased if upskilled professional Development Officers are employed and networked to deliver area based GME support and action plans whilst also guiding, supporting and managing voluntary PA's.** However managing voluntary PA's is risky and unpredictable because they are volunteers who aren't held account to GME targets and any action plan delivery and some may resist.
- **Development Officers would have the knowledge and skills to optimise GME profile and delivery but its unsure if all PA's would want to operate in a more formal strategy led environment.** However there are plenty examples where volunteers are managed constructively including many NGO's, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Care in the

Community. If the PAS is Development Officer led then PA's would need to accept job descriptions with specific tasks and targets and an agreed code of conduct. Also volunteer PA's could be recruited from the wider local community via a local recruitment process that defined both 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria for the PA role. The PA's who'd want to continue only to work with parents on a one to one basis could do so (as this is the original and most vital role that PA's play).

- **Given that the Development Officers would have a professional overview of plans, actions and opportunities then they would be able to define the volunteer support needs for a particular location.** This could mean that the role of the PAS be extended out with only parent to parent communications to address wider Gaelic planning issues around the strategic priorities in the BnaG National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17 and Education Strategy 2012-16 (which are intertwined with GME development locally) plus the new GMPE assessment areas defined by LA's via the 2015 Education Act. PA's could even support various aspects of Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) marketing to schools who are unfamiliar and under confident about Gaelic learning.
- **If the PAS cannot change its remit to help deliver various strategic objectives and GME 'gap' issues then it is best to continue with the 'needed' role it delivers very effectively within informal parental support and GME promotion.** In summary the alternative is that the PAS develops its remit to advance Gaelic growth within and out with GME areas and optimises LA delivery.

The **key recommendation** is that BnaG prepare a report and tool-kit on good practice delivery structures for GME marketing via LA's and that this directs good practice nationally. A strategic steer is required in order that every input by Gaelic practitioners is optimised for more successful outcomes. The models are likely to involve; principle setting, planning strategies, ways of working (integration), optimising existing resources, upskilling, practical tool-kits, key messaging, communications medium selection, resource sharing. LA's should imbed these delivery methodologies for GME marketing into their GLP's.

The **key issues** for the future development of PAS are:

-The PAS works best as an informal network unless it is upskilled with a paid workforce that work in partnership and agreement with LA delivery plans for GME marketing.

-The PAS could develop a greater focus on the needs of 0-3 years' parents and optimise engagement and GME learning journeys.

-The PAS should carry-on supporting the social learning of Gaelic and utilising the school as a supportive hub point for Gaelic learning.

-The PAS should engage with parents to develop learning pathways that provide them with the flexibility to learn Gaelic (as a positive experience) within their busy lives.

-Without the PAS upskilling and setting up paid work contracts it is not in a position to influence the critical aspects of GME promotional support like setting up cròileagain, delivering area wide action plans and dealing with childcare issues.

-Each PA from the PAS could work more successfully if they have a work outputs plan that is delivered as part of a full area action plan that is supported by other human resources in local authorities.

### SECTION3

**PART 1** Addressing how to best inform families of the **advantages** of GME and to increase Gaelic in the home has been addressed through interviews, surveys and desk-based research. Also best practice models, one applied in 'real life' and one theoretical have been applied and analysed. The findings reflect what is largely already known about current good practice via the report for BnaG on the Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority Language (Nov. 2012). The key recommendations take account of the opportunities afforded by the 2015 Education Bill.

#### **Key recommendations are;**

- Share GMPE assessment zones across LA' boundaries to optimise the facilitation, cost saving, and social sharing for pre-school experiences of GME via cròileagain, nurseries and events.
- The dissemination of bilingualism and GME promotional information and providing learning options through parent and child engagement experiences, from anti-natal through to pre-school.
- Bilingualism benefits marketing messages to be the key message to support GME marketing.
- BnaG to lead and supply best practice tool-kits for LA promotion of GME.

**PART 2 & 3** How to **increase Gaelic in the home** has been addressed through interviews, surveys and desk-based research. The findings reflect what is largely already known about current good practice via the report for BnaG on the Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority Language (Nov. 2012). The key recommendations take account of the opportunities afforded by the 2015 Education Bill.

The practical and accessibility elements that parents most felt would aid their Gaelic learning were; local classes being run at convenient times, free weekend and family days, the chance for regular informal Gaelic conversation via the school ( as an interaction hub), one central point/place to find out about all Gaelic learning options via an exclusive web-page.

#### **Key recommendations are;**

- Flexibility of opportunities to learn Gaelic via differing learning mediums.
- Accessible learning that is affordable and convenient.
- The need to offer the sharing of the Gaelic language through the outlet of the school and localised events.
- The need for parental journey pathways for Gaelic learning that sustain parental attention and engagement.

-The need to build a Gaelic ethos and confidence in language speaking via ensuring the social sharing of Gaelic through family days and events.

### **Building a Gaelic 'know how' in Local Authorities**

LA's are required by statute to fully deliver the requirements of the 2015 Education Bill, and are obliged to proceed with the GME considerations and guidance as stated. There are elements of support, advice and direction that could be offered to LA's via BnaG (as the initial contact point). The types of support are;

- Advice on bilingualism messaging, content, communications tools (web/flyers/articles/PR).
- Advice on offering one direct parent experience of GME via a nursery or toddler group.
- Advice on communicating bilingual opportunities through formal information contact points for parents including; leaflets at enrolment, embedding of GME messaging at forefront on priority information pages on LA schools information websites, parent newsletters.
- Strongly promoting any Gaelic support staff as contact points for parents.
- Provision of advice on possible GMPE catchment scenarios based on previous data.
- Advice on new data capture required to inform GMPE areas.

### **Building a Gaelic 'know how' in non GME schools**

The guidance on the Education Bill is likely to state that Local authorities must promote GME and GLE and provide support for pupils and teachers in Gaelic education. The impact of this is that non-GME schools will have to plan for the potential delivery of GLE in their school.

An underlying challenge amongst schools is that most primary teachers speak no Gaelic and have no knowledge of teaching Gaelic. However every primary school needs to potentially offer GLE. GLE training opportunities are being provided for teachers via Education Scotland resources being delivered by training providers. This package of training and associated classroom resources is enough to support teachers and pupils to deliver GLE as part of 1+2 languages and to fully prepare and deliver coherent language experiences.

The requirements are;

The need to mainstream the expectation of Gaelic as language available as a 1+2 option via GLE (Gaelic Learner Education) ensuring teachers are able to teach the Education Scotland/Storlann Gaelic learners packs and therefore to motivate parents to take an interest in Gaelic speaking in the home.

-To change the positioning of Gaelic amongst non-Gaelic speaking teachers to Gaelic being perceived as a relevant contemporary minority language.

-To build a Gaelic ethos including signage, simple and transferable cultural programmes and conversation sharing via the arts, with wider and improved community access.

-To increase the transferability of Gaelic delivery through demonstrating the simplicity of use of existing learning resources for new users.

## **Main Report**

### **Section 1**

#### **Evaluate the effectiveness of the Parental Advisory Scheme (PAS)**

**The 2014/15 activities of PA's were as follows:**

- Providing parents and families with information on GME
- Providing support for Gaelic medium pre-school activities and parents
- Ensure all parents are informed on the availability of Gaelic resources and learning opportunities.

In 2014/15 the aims and the priorities of the scheme were;

1. Encourage more parents to choose GME for their children
2. Raise awareness of the importance of the home and community in Gaelic medium activities for their children

#### **Analysis of the PAS scheme**

##### **METHOD 1**

#### **1.1 A questionnaire was run in 2014 to ascertain the views of PA's about the effectiveness of PAS and their role within it.**

The on-line questionnaire was run in early June 2015 with responses from 19 Parental Advisors.

See **appendix 1** for the full analytics from the survey and qualitative feedback for questions 6 and 8. Summary results were as follows;

#### **1.2 Findings**

- Responses were provided from 19 PA's from GME localities throughout Scotland.
- Q2 reflected that most PA's are confident about their skills, knowledge and ability to carry out their role and all show a high level of motivation, commitment and belief in the PA approach.
- Q2 showed that nearly three quarters of PA's felt confident about feeding back levels of interest and demand for GME in their operational area to the Local Authority Gaelic Officer, school and nursery, with the same amount of PA's feeling that LA Gaelic Officers recognise the role of PA's and are willing to engage with them.

- The PA's had mixed views on additional staff based approaches that would help support the promotion of GME locally but above 50% felt that paid support workers (of one form or another) would be an asset.
- The PA's had mixed opinions and no clear views about how to take forward the concept of paid development staff. 44% said 'yes' to having dedicated and employed GME officers, 56% were not sure.
- 67% believed that Council support workers (with a foothold in nurseries) should be trained to champion GME in their local work area where they use a direct feedback system to the LA Gaelic Officer. 28% were not sure, 5% were no's.
- 56% felt that BnaG Regional Support Officers should be employed to work in liaison with LA Gaelic Development Officers, 44% were not sure.
- Having time available to do PA work is a challenge for 29% of PA's.
- Only 44% felt they could 'fully' promote all GME related opportunities and properly direct parents to where their queries will be answered
- 61% engage with parents over many years to support their decision to progress GME, 16% were not sure.
- Over 80% of PA's felt confident about being able to support 0-3 years engagement in GME (amongst interested parents). There was a lower score for those feeling they could set up nursery/toddler groups, only 67% felt they could help set these up.
- 28% of PA's said there have been situations where they have felt unable to promote GME due to concerns about the quality of the product they are promoting.
- 82% of PA's said that they advise parents on increasing the usage of Gaelic in the home.
- 90% of PA's say that GME promotion is best done locally by dedicated PA 's who are passionate and who have direct experience of the GME system.

See **appendix 1** for the full analytics from the survey and qualitative feedback for questions 6 and 8.

### **1.3 Key Points relating to the 'effectiveness of the PAS'**

- PA's are very motivated, operate independently and are confident about carrying out their role. In areas where their confidence to undertake their role falls to around 75% then further training and support is required for these individuals.

- Amongst PA's there is little agreement on support structures that would best facilitate a strategic marketing plan for GME locally.

-Over 70% of LA's are perceived to recognise the role of PA's but to achieve GME promotion effectiveness it would be good to have 100% of LA's to be recognising and making use of the PA resource.

-Given that pre-school GME promotion to new parents is fundamental it would be good to see above 66% of PA's feeling that they have adequate time to deal with this.

-Question 3 revealed that additional paid staff based approaches to promoting GME were given mixed views by PA's, however 68% did feel that Council support workers (already working with playgroups and nurseries) should be trained to champion GME in their local work area, employing direct feedback systems to LA Gaelic development officers. Given that only 66% of PA's felt they could help to set up baby and toddler groups it is clear that support workers with a GME development mandate are important to ensure pre-school GME experiences. It is shown that PA's feel there is a need for them to have a greater follow up relationship with officers who can strengthen GME development in their local area.

-The PAS is more important in some areas than others but strongly compliments existing promotional work especially in providing re-assurance to parents' and one to one information to aid GME decision-making. In some areas (like Glasgow and Edinburgh) GME demand outstrips supply so PA's now have a lower profile as there is less need for their pre-school influencing work. Where the PAS works more closely in partnership with LA's and BnaG better promotional outcomes are achievable.

-Currently there are some paid PA's and others unpaid, all PA's undertake a minimal 1-2 days training. The scheme provides a variation in levels of success as its run mainly on the voluntary principle of a parents' time and motivation rather than a particular skill-set. Without a level of professionalism attached to PA's via paid roles it would be difficult to attach any level of responsibility to achieve conversion targets or to deal with other GME challenges.

-PA's operate as a microcosm of the bigger 'whole', the bigger whole is the full plethora of policy and direct influencing and support activities via Gaelic organisational stakeholder organisations and volunteers. This operating space is fragmented, sometimes cluttered and often non-directed but where there's been good Gaelic marketing on the Isle of Skye, the Western Isles and parts of Highland region, the impact of co-ordinated GME marketing has been high.

## **METHOD 2**

### **2.1 The Comann nam Pàrant (CNP) National Committee SWOT Analysis**

CNP runs the PAS scheme and we felt it important to assess what CNP committee members felt about PAS, the following results were gained via a SWOT analysis ran via phone interviews. The full CNP committee were interviewed (other than two who were unavailable, apologising that they could not take part).

"SWOT" stands for 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats'. We asked what the Executive Committee members saw are the **main ones that apply to the PAS?** (Strengths

and Weaknesses usually refer to internal factors within the control of the organisation while Opportunities and Threats are usually external factors, often outside the direct control of the organisation.)The interview list is in **appendix 2**:

## 2.2 Findings

The summary points are listed for all SWOT elements with more detail provided under **Full Detail**.

### Strengths

- Valuable for prospective parents to speak to other parents; providing trust, empathy and reassurance, as well as information, at a time of a big decision.
- Especially effective at nursery/primary level.
- Good support and training for Parental Advisors (PAs) by Magaidh/Comann nam Pàrant.

### Weaknesses

- Some individual Advisors can be a bit isolated.
- Some schools and councils could do more to support GME options.
- Transport and quality of GME can be problematic - in which case it may not be right to promote GME option to parents.

### Opportunities

- More local support for PA's.
- Wider promotion of benefits of GME.

### Threats

- Recruitment and retention of PA's.
- Increasingly difficult to involve busy (working) parents (in GME generally).
- Patchy council support.

### Other points

- A lot of geographic variation - 'horses for courses'. GME seen as thriving in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and Western Isles - more fragile elsewhere.

## Full Detail

### Strengths

- Connecting parents with each other - peer-to-peer support. Parents know that PAs can empathise with them. Good that parents' can go out and explain what's involved, using their personal experience. This is trusted and needed by parents considering GME.
- Good co-ordination by Comann nam Pàrant means that PAs understand the common issues, concerns, worries of parents. Magaidh very supportive and helpful.
- Local knowledge of PAs is valuable.
- Different in each area - GME reportedly thriving in Glasgow and Edinburgh, so less need of PA support there. Equally, PA service is less critical where GME is the norm (Western Isles).
- PAs (or rather, Comann nam Pàrant) can help parents to lobby locally - eg on transport provision. Needs to balance lobbying with support for council/school staff.

- Strength in past 5-6 years has been in nursery-primary GME - some of this likely to be due to PA service (eg two full Primary 1 GME intakes in Edinburgh).

### Weaknesses

- Lack of support for individual Advisors in some areas - depends on the level of local support (eg if a Gaelic Development Officer is available).
- More structure and support from councils and schools - again this is patchy. Some PAs get trained but don't go on to actually work owing to lack of support.
- Transition from primary to secondary a possible weakness (nursery to primary generally works quite well).
- PAs tend to focus on primary "with a full force" (very well). Also lots of good nursery/playgroup activity. By the end of P7, many parents wonder if GME is right for secondary. Not sure if parents get enough support and info at this stage - balancing both pro's and con's honestly (choosing GME at secondary is not for everyone).
- Some schools not very good at promoting/informing parents on GME.
- Can feel that you are part of a small isolated group with little local support.
- Important that PAs are consistent in their messages - some individuals have gone a bit overboard in what they tell parents.
- Nationally speaking, there's a shortage of Gaelic teachers. In some areas, GME is not extensive, or good enough. Don't think that GME should be promoted in these areas, until the quality of service is there (suspects that this may happen in some places through the PA service).

### Opportunities

- Provide more support at primary to secondary transition.
- More co-ordinated national structure to support PAs - eg at regional level? (Magaidh can't do this nationally).
- More support for parents who already have children in GME? (as opposed to trying to encourage more into GME).
- Gaelic play schemes work well - builds confidence of parents and helps them learn Gaelic/build confidence that they can use with children at home and also with homework.
- Role of Head teachers is important - they can help a lot with promoting GME.
- Generally with GME - opportunity to sell the benefits of bilingualism from an early age "catch them young"...more young parents thinking this way
- More local support.
- Would like to see Bòrd na Gàidhlig establish network of area/region officers that could engage with schools, councils, parents (eg as SNH does as environment regulator).
- Would like to see small pools of PAs developed in local areas, to provide better local support networks.

### Threats

- Some concerned if there was a move for PA support to come from non-parents...[but on the other hand...]
- Some see merit in well-informed and authoritative people from outside local communities advising parents.

- Not enough parents coming through? Can be hard getting parents involved (eg in committees, as well as PAs).
- Can be difficult to retain PAs, e.g. if they get a job with more hours. Danger of attrition if low numbers of PAs threat to sustainability of service...the service can be too dependent on maybe a single person who may give it up for one reason or another (thinks this happened in Argyll/Dunoon) .
- Funding worries?
- “continually disappointed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig” - not open to or receptive to criticism; won’t support parents who are battling with reluctant councils.
- PA Service sometimes feels like an excuse for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to not do any more.
- Sees a change in demographics and expectations of parents in 10+ years experience; more parents are now working (increase in nursery provision), and they expect services to be delivered to them (rather than they participate). Getting harder to reach parents - may have less time to mix with each other than before...
- (lack of) transport an issue in many places (W Dunbartonshire, Perth and Kinross)- parents face a fight persuading council to provide it.
- Councils could do more to promote and inform on GME - even just a little Gaelic on the website, kept up to date would encourage people to investigate - E Ayrshire’s GME info was v out of date.

### 2.3 Key Points relating to the ‘effectiveness of the PAS’

- Rather than PA’s being a complimentary service it is expressed that there is a ‘need’ for PA’s as a trusted source of re-assurance for parents considering GME due to them having real life experiences of GME to draw upon.
- In order to work well with LA’s the PAS needs to carefully consider it’s positioning either that it lobby’s LA’s or guides LA’s, the latter is a better approach to achieve better partnership working.
- PA’s could do wider geographical promotion of GME out with their local area but it’s unsure if PA’s would have the capacity to take this on.
- Due to PA’s being voluntary (mainly) they can say what they want and they don’t have to follow any sort of message consistency, PA’s have no employment contract.
- PA’s have to be careful not to be promoting Gaelic where the quality of the GME isn’t good enough.

## METHOD 3

### 3.1 GME Parent Questionnaire

The parental questionnaire was sent to P1 parents at Edinburgh’s GME Primary school Bunsgoil Taobh na Pairce, 22 were returned. The copy of the self-completion questionnaire is in **appendix 2.**

The questions that are relevant to analysing the 'effectiveness of the PAS' are questions 1, 3, 4 & 9.

### 3.2 Findings

- It was found that 86% of parents did not speak Gaelic before putting their children into GME.
- Bilingualism was the top reason for choosing GME.
- Word of mouth and social media were cited as the most common way of finding out about GME in the local area with cròileagain experiences and the Councils website second and third places respectively.
- Less than 5% of parents found out about GME through a Parent Advisor directly.

### 3.3 Key Points relating to the 'effectiveness of the PAS'

- The questionnaire results tell us that the formal LA provider of GME still plays a very important GME information role (via formal website information imbedded in official parent information about schools and catchments) above that of printed material, events stands, flyers and posters.
- There is a very important role for LA's to have pro-active, formal and accessible parent information sources on GME opportunities embedded and mainstreamed across the nursery and primary school enrolment and NHS touch-posts for anti-natal and onwards care. Utilising formal communication systems will mean that no parents are left out and /or uninformed about bilingualism and GME.
- The PAS had little profile for parents at the Gaelic school because Edinburgh already has a higher demand than it can supply thus pre-school parents are not being strongly targeted by PAS efforts.
- The PAS has shown to currently have a very low profile in Edinburgh but cannot operate where there is higher need because PA's only operate in their immediate area. See *scope* section.

## METHOD 4

### 4.1 Review of report titled: Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority language

This report has gathered findings about good practice for promoting minority languages and for supporting parents and families through the language learning process for several minority languages in Europe. However the report points out that these languages have been given more funding for their development. In considering the effectiveness of PAS within the context of good practice elsewhere the following point is pertinent to this study;

Acknowledging that 86% of parents don't have any Gaelic is a major reason why it's been found that parents of children who are considering GME have concerns typical of those parents of children receiving education through the medium of other minority languages, viz. "doubts about their ability to support their children's learning through the language. There is also anecdotal evidence that such concerns have caused parents to opt for English-medium education for their children after Gaelic –medium pre-school, or to transfer them to English-medium during the primary years. There is a need therefore to provide such parents with the confidence, tools and knowledge of practices which will reassure them. The obstacles which parents face were confirmed in the report: Gaelic Education: *Building on the successes, addressing the barriers* (HMIe, 2011)

The report is a core resource for the development of good practice guidelines for promoting GME, reference to the key recommendations on pages 3&4 (best practice references), 56-62 (what parents need and best practice) are very informative based on considerable research. The report forms a full analysis of the subjects around this study with its findings guiding this work.

## **METHOD 5**

### **5.1 Interviews with Local Authority Gaelic Development officers, BnaG (Education, Strategic and Early Years staff), TWF, CNG, CNP, Gaelic school Head teachers, LA Head of languages.**

This important stakeholder strategic and practitioner grouping were interviewed. In every case the discussion was about the role and activities of PAS and how PAS could be an asset to their work and the success of GME. In every case these stakeholders were familiar with the PAS, understood its role and were able to comment on the capacity to develop PAS to assist with the ongoing challenges and developments of their work. See **appendix 3** for the list of people interviewed.

### **5.2 Findings**

Below are key points of consensus from these interviews:

- Overall it was felt that the PAS plays a very valuable role within its current remit but that extending its remit would require changing the voluntary role of PA's to being paid and upskilled to deliver a package of works of best practice strategic tools to strengthen GME promotion (where it's needed most).
- The needs for promotion and GME experiences are identified as higher within the 0-3 sector, it's unsure if the PAS can fully support this age group without more training and financial support.

- It was felt that any investment in the PAS should be directed by area plans and the need for PA provision where most required, for example the PAS could have a more fundamental volunteer role in dissemination work in low uptake GME locations.
- It is recognised that the PAS has a successful informal role in supporting parents with children in GME but sometimes has patchy links with LA staff which means that operating together for maximum impact isn't addressed and is therefore lost.
- It was felt that PAS should fit into an overall area support plan and strategy (led by either the LA or BnaG) that works within the plethora of parental touch points including the LA's Gaelic Language Plans, SOA's, equal attainment government strategies, ongoing nursery activities, schools' enrolment and ongoing school parental communications and NHS (pre and post-natal) services to school age.
- There was little clarity on how the PAS goes about supporting the parents already in GME out with basic sign-posting to gaelic learner websites and using the GME schools building for communications.
- It was felt that the approach of PAS brings significant benefit within parental communities but that often these benefits are not formally recognised as they're achieved through one to one conversations, social media sharing and below the line informal events. The PAS works out with the formal structures and thus therefore complimentary activities are not optimised.
- The fact that the PAS is a local and semi-permanent force in communities was strongly supported with the approach of building the school and nurseries as communication and information sharing points.
- The PAS is fragmented, there's not a PA in all GME areas. Some areas would benefit from the PAS more than others but the PAS cannot account for this as it would take mobile parent volunteers coming forward.
- The PAS does not exist out with GME areas which means it does little to develop latent demand where there is not already established GME, in this way it provides no structure to support the Education Bill which aims to provide the opportunity to request GME in all parts of Scotland. As it is the PAS provides no responsiveness and/or support to non GME areas.
- The PAS does nothing to support Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) as currently it's not part of the PAS remit.
- It is felt that PAS being attached to CNP (who provides parental lobbying support) means that the PAS can be perceived as being in conflict with LA's- this is seen as a slightly negative starting point.
- There was a feeling that unpaid PA's come in with mixed skills (although always enthusiastic and passionate) but that they can say and do as they want and are unlikely to have a background in community planning and language planning or an early learning background. In contrast a formal paid PAS Development Officer would be well trained with work targets, work closely with delivery stakeholders, community planning, SOA's and GLE (maybe).

- PAS only works with the status quo and has no authority to resolve local GME issues like childcare cover for cròileagain sessions or funding to increase local participation. Also the PAS are not necessarily educationalists and may not know how to achieve the backing of staff within the LA's operational structure.
- Some PA's are paid and others aren't- the model is confused. Some parents don't want to be paid as they feel they'd be under pressure to deliver and would have to take care about what they say.
- It is felt that PAS shouldn't be a substitute for LA's lack of activity because the PAS is operating in a very fluid policy environment where opportunities are there to be grabbed via community capacity building for GME and strategic development for the 0-3 year old sector (supported by government ambition for raising attainment and 1 +2 languages).
- PA's are useful within their current remit but do nothing to promote GME and GLE out with their direct GME area so their remit is constrained in terms of aiding Gaelic growth amongst new parent audiences.
- The PAS should be part of an overall local action plan.

### 5.3 Key Points relating to the 'effectiveness of the PAS'

The recommendations from an analysis of findings are discussed under 'Scope' in Section 2

## Section 2

**To provide recommendations for the PAS including; remit, scope, management, structure, resources, costs and partnership working with the BnaG early years' team, Iomairtean Gaidhlig, schools, Local authorities, Gaelic organisations, national initiatives and Gaelic language plans.**

To provide recommendations for the PAS including; remit, scope, management, structure, resources, costs and partnership working with the BnaG early years' team, Iomairtean Gaidhlig, schools. Local authorities, Gaelic organisations, national initiatives and Gaelic language plans.

### 2.1 Scope

A review of section 1 reflects that the PAS continues to do what it was set up to do which is a network of enthusiastic parents who already have children in GME supporting potential, new and existing GME parents. The PAS is very effective within its current remit (where it has chosen to operate geographically) acknowledging the in-built constraints of informality and lack of any authority and professional stakeholder influencing that it entails.

The role of PAS could be developed but this would require a significant change to how it operates requiring more specialist employed staff, the setting of area work plans, targets, partnership working and co-ordination. To work closely with LA's the PAS would need to formalise and de-politicise. Also LA Gaelic Development Officers would have to up-skill in their abilities to work in partnership with PAS and others.

The PAS is best to operate in its current form (with more funding to expand the scheme) as it's delivered by well-meaning volunteers. Given the 2015 Education Bill and the Right to Request GME there is the clear need for a professional body of paid development officers to be supporting LA's or alternatively an arms-length professional advisory service, PAS is not able to provide such a service.

CnP who manage the PAS could have an important role in any professional advisory service within the fullest GME development environment (community planning, SOA's, early learning alliance, attainment issues, language acquisition, good practice strategies etc) however it would be a backwards step to substitute professional advisors in GME development with voluntary parents from the PAS. The worst outcome of the 'right to request GME' would be that volunteer parents end up taking the role of LA education departments on advising new parents on the 'right to request GME'.

### Overall evaluation of the effectiveness of PAS:

- **The effectiveness of PAS is high in terms of its focused remit of supporting parents in GME.** Any changes to the PAS (without significant resources and training) could harm the very valuable role it currently provides.
- **The PAS has a medium effectiveness in working in partnership with LA's and for the delivery of area based GME action plans, input into formal community planning, equal attainment strategies, early years strategies, GLP's and the curricular delivery environment.** However it was never planned that the PAS would address any of the above and therefore PAS doesn't provide assistance in these areas, but the current issue is that there is a *need* for a professional body to be supporting LA's to ensure that these aspects are fully addressed constructively and opportunistically (at a macro and micro level) via guiding and supporting LA'S. In particular the concept of addressing latent demand in GME needs a robust approach that works within the concept of GMPE geographical zones and ensures the matching of human resources to GME promotional requirements. The PAS (as it exists) is not in a position to provide any of this support unless the PAS is set up as an upskilled professional resource to guide LA's.
- **The effectiveness of PAS could be increased if upskilled professional Development Officer staff are employed and networked to deliver area based GME support and action plans whilst also guiding, supporting and managing voluntary PA's.**

However managing voluntary PA's is risky and unpredictable because they are volunteers who aren't held account to GME targets and any action plan delivery and some may resist.

- **Development Officers would have the knowledge and skills to optimise GME profile and delivery but its unsure if all PA's would want to operate in a more formal strategy led environment.** However there are plenty examples where volunteers are managed constructively including many NGO's, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Care in the Community. If the PAS is Development Officer led then PA's would need to accept job descriptions with specific tasks and targets and an agreed code of conduct. Also volunteer PA's could be recruited from the wider local community via a local recruitment process that defined both 'essential' and 'desirable' criteria for the PA role. The PA's who'd want to continue only to work with parents on a one to one basis could do so (as this is the original and most vital role that PA's play).
- **Given that the Development Officers would have a professional overview of plans, actions and opportunities then they would be able to define the volunteer support needs for a particular location.** This could mean that the role of the PAS be extended out with only parent to parent communications to address wider Gaelic planning issues around the strategic priorities in the BnaG National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17 and Education Strategy 2012-16 (which are intertwined with GME development locally) plus the new GMPE assessment areas defined by LA's via the 2015 Education Act. PA's could even support various aspects of GLE marketing to schools who are unfamiliar and under confident about GLE.
- **If the PAS cannot change its remit to help deliver various strategic objectives and GME 'gap' issues then it is best to continue with the 'needed' role it delivers very effectively within informal parental support and GME promotion.** In summary the alternative is that the PAS develops its remit to advance Gaelic growth in and out with GME areas and optimises LA delivery.

## 2.2 Remit

In essence the PAS has a *clear positioning* in its own right to be proud of which is 'supporting parents', beyond this, without significantly re-addressing the role of the PAS it is best to continue as it is.

The table below analyses the sorts of areas of activity that would usefully expand the outputs of the PAS but most changes are not recommended until there is a decision on the potential of the PAS and the flexibility of PA volunteers.

## Analysis Table

PAS Development Action	PROS	CONS	Recommended (yes/no)
PAS to work within strategic plans for the local area (led by CNP Development Officer knowledge)	This is a positive step which would mean that PA's would be recruited in areas where they are most needed and work within co-ordinated plans around 0-3 and 3-5 yrs GME promotion.	As PAS was never set up to promote Gaelic out with areas of GME provision then it's not likely that existing PA's would expect to take on any additional activities around SOA's and community language planning or anything outwith their GME school, nursery and croilleagan.	No
PAS to set minimal marketing efforts for local areas	It would be satisfying for PA's to see tangible return for their efforts.	The PAS project has always been informal and unpaid PA's are unlikely to be responsive to personal target setting.	No
CNP to re-define job descriptions for the PAS scheme against the current National GME operating landscape .	It would be good to remind PA's of their successful role and include the ways that PA's can increase their value within Gaelic promotion	Some PA's may want to go on only as they are.	Yes
CNP provide funding to up-skill existing PA's to work closely to boost, support and further 0-3 year olds initiatives.	This move would tie in to BnaG policy for 0-3 year engagement.	Not all PA's are at ease with this age group but some are.	Yes

The possible additions that are recommended to the PAS remit and key activities to achieve higher GME gain are as follows:

-PA's to be briefed on the full Gaelic language and community planning environment and where they fit within it in terms of furthering local GME aims. This also needs to cover the delivery of 0-3 year support, partnership working approaches with NHS and Book Bugs, LA's, BnaG and Gaelic learning journeys.

-PA's to work in a co-ordinated and complimentary way with LA's (there are good examples of this in Highland Region, the Western Isles and Skye) to support Gaelic but to keep their main focus on one to one support for parents.

-PA recruitment to be 'needs' led or be prioritised where there is higher need for Gaelic awareness and promotion as well as ongoing parental support.

-PA's to be provided updated training on where to sign-post parents to GME information and Gaelic learning -as currently parents enter a cluttered information environment and would prefer a one-stop shop.

- PA's to get training on delivering best practice to parents about sharing Gaelic learning in the home.

-PA's to be given more training in working operationally with 0-3years parents to gain early interest in Gaelic.

-CNP to consider the potential role of PA's out with GME areas to support GME promotion and GLE.

### Analysis Table

PAS Development Action	PROS	CONS	Recommended (yes/no)
PAS to work within strategic plans for the local area (led by CNP Development Officer knowledge)	This is a positive step which would mean that PA's would be recruited in areas where they are most needed and work within co-ordinated plans around 0-3 and 3-5 yrs GME promotion.	As PAS was never set up to promote Gaelic out with areas of GME provision then it's not likely that existing PA's would expect to take on any additional activities around SOA's and community language planning or anything out with their GME school, nursery and cròileagain	No
PAS to set minimal marketing targets for local areas	It would be satisfying for PA's to see tangible return for their efforts.	The PAS project has always been informal and unpaid PA's are unlikely to be responsive to personal target setting.	No
CNP to re-define job descriptions for the PAS scheme against the current National GME operating landscape .	It would be good to remind PA's of their role and include the ways that PA's can increase their value within Gaelic promotion	Some PA's may want to go on as they are, operating in an informal way.	Yes
CNP provide funding to up-skill existing PA's to work closely to boost, support and further 0-3 year olds initiatives.	This move would tie in to BnaG policy for 0-3 year engagement. It would be good to capture the full potential of some PA's who could have the skills to undertake presentations to new parents via NHS anti-natal touch points and activate baby & toddler groups.	Not all PA's are at ease with this age group but some are.	Yes

## **2.3 Management**

The PAS is managed by CNP and should continue to be. If the PAS remit is to stay the same then there's little point in changing the effective (under-resourced) management by CNP already in place. Having two more CNP Development Officers to support PA's and undertake additional GME promotion work would be worthwhile but most important is the need for a Training and Communications officer, to support PA's and give good practice guidance to LA's. It's worth remembering that CNP can be perceived as a lobbying organisation by

LA's so any CNP officers may be better fronted by CNG in terms of identity but sit within CNP.

## 2.4 Structure

The PA structure should stay the same with CNP managing the PAS programme with a new Training and Communications Officer post to increase the skills and knowledge of PA's.

## 2.5 Resources and Costs

A new Training and Communications Officer post to increase the skills and knowledge of PA's. The post including NI, office, travel and all costs would be approximately £50,000.

The appointment of two Development Officers within CNP but fronted as CNG would be ideal but this is a discussion *well out with the brief of this study*.

Other resources to support or expand the PA activity remit would involve:

Spend	Allocation
PA communications resources for local GME marketing, distributed via agreed priorities by CNP Training and Communications Officer. New priorities would need to go beyond only supporting parents with children already in GME (see scope and remit section)	£500 expenses per PA area, 32 No (£16k) This figure takes no account of paying PA's. Any payment of PA's needs budgeted elsewhere.
CNP Training and Communications Officer post	£50k
Budget for CNP Training and Communications Officer: venues, events, communications templates & design, printing flyers, posters etc	£30k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£96k</b>

\*A National GME/ bilingual marketing resource (based on a BnaG GME/bilingual marketing tool-kit deliverables) costing £70K+ is not included above.

## 2.6 Operating partnership working with;

### 2.6.1 Schools

Without any change in remit the PAS would continue to work as it already does. However a one-stop shop approach to Gaelic learning has been recommended which means that PA's need to put more time into supporting the parental journey through Gaelic learning with appropriate sign-posting to the best opportunities available at the parents stage of engagement. Sharing Gaelic learning is a strong need at the early P1 stages to increase self-confidence about speaking Gaelic and to support speaking in the home. Free family learning days were strongly supported via the GME parents' survey.

### 2.6.2 LA's

Without the development in remit PA's will continue to be on the periphery of LA acknowledgement. If the PA's remit is increased to include closer working through running joint events and delivering area action plans then better working for better outcomes is achievable. Even activities like distributing GME and bilingualism leaflets, supporting community Gaelic language planning meetings and providing a follow-up information sources are all very useful to LA's.

### **2.6.3 Gaelic organisations**

PA's should optimise useful linkages with external Gaelic organisations. The interaction with Gaelic organisations can be complimentary particularly for PA promotion of the ranging Gaelic learning opportunities on offer plus running complimentary events and informing parents about new educational opportunities.

### **2.6.4 National initiatives**

National initiatives are relevant to PA'S in cases where they assist PA's to deliver their remit. As already discussed community planning, SOA's and issues around curriculum and attainment are not relevant for voluntary PA'S in their current remit but inspiring learning and recreation opportunities are relevant.

### **2.6.5 Gaelic language plans**

PA's should be aware of their LA's GLP and should use the content of their local GLP to deliver their aims and keep LA's to account (in a positive way).

### **2.6.6 Iomairtean Gaidhlig**

PA's are not insured to run events but they are in an excellent position to promote all event opportunities offered in conjunction with Iomairtean Gaidhlig. Where they show willing then PA's can help profile, develop and seek funding for events. Again it needs to be re-iterated that PA's are only volunteers with time constraints being their biggest constraint (as reported from the PA survey).

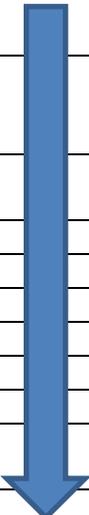
## **Section 3**

### **How is it best to inform families of the advantages of Gaelic Medium Education and to increase the use of Gaelic in the home?**

As required from the study brief this section covers best practice for providing information to parents on the advantages of GME and the use of Gaelic in the home. Also how best to support parent Gaelic learning and how best to inform LA's and schools on GME. Therefore this section is in three related parts.

## PART 1 Recommendations for best practice in providing parents with information on the advantages of GME

The recommendations in descending order (based on survey results) are as follows:

Method of information provision	Impact of method (highest at top to lowest at bottom)
Via word of mouth and social media (PA's support this)	
Council websites (where GME is presented at the forefront right beside parents priority fact finding data on catchments and enrolment information)	
Croileagain sessions (this highlights the importance of early active engagement with families)	
Gaelic nursery sessions	
A leaflet/flyer about GME	
Information from various websites	
GME stand at a local event	
A chat with a parental advisor	
A Gaelic open day	
GME promotion information through the child's nursery	
A poster about GME	

\*Note that previously Book Bugs has featured as a major early influencer amongst the toddler age (0-3yrs) both in Highland Region and East Dunbartonshire where the Gaelic Book Bugs scheme is active. The Book Bugs scheme is not active in Edinburgh where the research was undertaken.

\*The GME poster campaign that was ran on trains in Glasgow was a very successful strategy at the time but now that Glasgow GME demand outstrips supply the need to prioritise communications spend elsewhere is required.

The table above reflects the most common ways that parents are finding out about GME in Edinburgh but does not represent the experiences of parents elsewhere. Even bearing in mind that all areas will have different approaches to how GME is promoted it is clear from the table that it is the 'proactive' and not the 'passive' experience and exposure to GME that has got the attention of parents.

Other desk and interview research during this study has led to a closer analysis of particular marketing initiatives that could show effectiveness within Scotland's existing GME promotion challenges:

- **A** is an example of effectiveness (as also cited as good practice via the Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority language report).
- **B** is an example reflecting marketing theory.

## A. TWF Wales

TWF (two languages from day 1) is a long term government initiative that ensures that the Welsh language is promoted to parents before, during and after their babies are born- right up to primary school age. This is a very full, strategic and pro-active path-way where all activities operate along the timeline of the babies' growth to primary age. The scheme strongly optimises every opportunity to promote Welsh from the cradle, supporting parents every step of the way.

Due to the robust set-up of TWF there's no need to lobby LA's to be more pro-active about Welsh promotion because TWF are already properly funded to get on with education and influencing, are fully accepted and are properly imbedded within the government health sector, family information service and the education sector.

A summary of the key outputs and working of TWF are:

1. 24 Field officers employed in each of 24 regional areas/ 2 National Support Officers/ 3 Admin/ Head officer/ Marketing officer. Total of 31 staff employed.
2. Full partnership working with fun days and links to many other welsh language initiatives within the Welsh pre-school and childcare sector.
3. TWF is imbedded in education strategies and policies at National and Local level.
4. TWF apply tried and tested approaches to building confidence in parental language learning by re-assuring new parents that babies won't think their language skills are stupid. Parents teach their children nursery rhymes and key words during bath and story time.
5. Relationships with new parents are built before the baby is born via;
  - TWF branded NHS baby notes folder- bilingual messages and TWF contact information on front of folder.
  - Branded scan card to hold 20 week baby scan photo that then gets shown off everywhere and high exposure is achieved.
  - A TWF bounty pack is given to all new born babies in hospital just after birth.
6. Anti-natal clinics share info with new parents on bilingualism.
  - The TWF get spots in parents' classes, 10-30 min sessions.
  - The local midwife hands out the 8 good reasons for bilingualism leaflet during the first 4 weeks of the babies' life.
  - National week presenters- singing story sessions
  - EWF offer baby massage through the medium of Welsh.
7. A unique facebook page for all 24 areas has proven very successful (every area where there is a Development Officer). Sharing content nationally and drip feeding's been successful through facebook.

8 . TWF provide an advice newsletter from local Health visitors plus TWF CD of Welsh nursery rhymes and phrases for babies, or from local TWF Field Officer.

9. At the pre-nursery stage parental support groups are set up from about 6 months old onwards, the TWF then stays on the parents' journey through bilingualism until the start of primary school.

10. Popular language learning modes amongst parents have proven to be : apps, welsh electronic story books, welsh pre-school groups, the welsh TV channel and access to reading books.

### **Summary of Strengths:**

- Engagement approach for both child and parent.
- Provides for correct parental needs at correct point within a child's development timeline.
- Ongoing support and encouragement from pregnancy to primary.
- National and local awareness raising and support targeted at new parents.
- Use of some sustainable minimal engagement and exposure systems via NHS agreement to incorporate TWF branded materials with key messages and website promotion plus facilitate talks and follow-up.
- The upskilling of existing Gaelic Development staff is possible to achieve partnership working with the NHS to mainstream Gaelic promotion within GLP areas (minimal) for 0-3 years families, and to deliver and imbed the Education Scotland Gaelic learning experiences within nurseries and primaries (via early years staff).
- Scottish Gaelic already has significant and transferable early learning resources and thus has the content and coherence to support Gaelic from 6 months onwards', it's only the human resources and tool-kits to support this process that are missing.

### **Summary of Weaknesses in relation to Scotland's situation:**

- The 24 Field officers are expensive and whilst affordable in Wales this may not be the case in Scotland.

## **B. A Scotland Wide approach to marketing GME through Bilingualism and direct experience of GME:**

The parental questionnaire showed that bilingualism is the top reason why parents send their children to GME in Edinburgh, this is also the case in Highland Council. Therefore it is sensible that promoting the key benefits of bilingualism is the most tangible way to promote the advantages of GME. However parents' feeling positive about bilingualism does not

assure that they will make a decision to progress it for their children. The parental journey and pathway needs to be fully considered and planned for.

Like most marketing campaigns there is a customer journey along the lines of **attention, interest, desire and action**, in the case of access to GME there are hurdles to get over. The simplistic path for parents is as follows:

**Attention:** Usage of push, pull and profile to engage with parents. A selection of communications’ mediums’ are relevant.

<p><b>Push:</b> ( marketing awareness via websites, leaflets, well planned National poster campaigns, NHS buy-in to mainstreaming hand-out of Gaelic branded resources during anti-natal and post-natal period, bilingual/GME promotion materials at nursery enrolment, dedicated websites for early parent segment, training teachers on delivery of Education Scotland Gaelic learning and play materials and ease of delivery for unconfident teachers)</p>	<p><b>Pull:</b> (engaging with parents and illustrating bilingualism showing benefits through direct experience of parents via childcare, cròileagain and nursery events)</p>	<p><b>Profile:</b> (building the profile of bilingualism through PR, endorsements, 1+2 approaches, scientific proof of learning benefits and making parents aware of their right to request GME)</p>
--	---	--

**Interest:** This stage is about how parents are kept interested until pre-school decision making level, it is also the stage at which parents must be made aware of their rights to request GME.

<p><b>Ongoing momentum:</b> (ensuring activation of engagement and ongoing engagement meaning that a member of staff should be available to contact for further information about bilingualism and GME). In non GME areas no PA is available to support the parent <i>which is why PA's are not in a position to support GME growth out with dedicated GME growth areas.</i></p>	<p><b>Access to opportunities:</b> ( ensuring that parents get the chance to try out Book Bugs and cròileagain even if it's out with their LA area). This access is very important and supports another reason for joint working and services sharing across LA's. The cròileagain experience will be the experiential touch point for finding out more about GME and sharing conversations with others in the GMPE assessment area- and thoughts about making requests for GME.</p>	<p><b>Re-assurance:</b> (this stage is about a professional re-assuring a parent about both the advantages of GME and the quality of education being offered).</p>
--	--	--

**Desire:** This is where the parent is so motivated that they make a request to their LA for GME. However parents (by this point) are being helped by being made aware that four other families must also be requesting GME within their GMPE assessment area and *sharing of information between parents*. The sharing of information between parents underlines the importance of GME development and information officers within Councils, informal parental networks and clear 'right to request' publications prepared by BnaG and circulated by LA's.

**Action:** This is where a request for GME is submitted. It is hoped that this request will be successful because of the depth of planning and interactions between professionals and other parents that have been active over the 2-3 year parental decision making journey.

### **Summary of Strengths:**

-The approach uses the human resources that already exist but involves up-skilling existing LA officers to work with 0-3 years.

-The approach works on the premise that parents of all 0-5 year olds should have *one experience of direct exposure of bilingualism* and GME and that bilingual benefits evidence should be pro-actively made available.

-The approach uses public sector partnerships between LA's and NHS to imbed Gaelic promotion for babies and toddlers via the shared health and social care sector.

-The approach involves sharing services for direct experiences of bilingualism in terms of place, staffing and GMPE zones- thus almost *halving the costs of running toddler GME groups*.

-The approach has high tangibility with better *optimisation of normally fragmented and ad-hoc* efforts across localities.

### **Summary of Weaknesses in relation to Scotland's situation:**

-It is up to parents to make an informed decision but it shouldn't be the job of a LA Gaelic Support worker to continuously work on parents about the advantages of bilingualism. If National GME promotional information is provided cheaply (as a matter of course) through NHS interactions, nursery enrolment contact and school websites then reasonable message exposure is being provided to parents.

## PART 2 Recommendations on how best to support Gaelic learning for parents and to enhance their Gaelic skills

How best to support Gaelic learning amongst parents was researched with GME parents' . The results were as follows:

- 76% of the 86% of parents who did not speak Gaelic at the start of GME are now learning Gaelic or have been recently.
- 41% have found combined methods of Gaelic learning most beneficial.
- Usage of Gaelic websites [www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com) and [www.learn.gaelic.net](http://www.learn.gaelic.net) are very popular followed by learning options via BBC Alba and Gaelic courses offered locally and afar (via Summer courses)
- 100% of parents felt that the full range of Gaelic learning methods' available are of a good quality.
- 93% of parents have found a Gaelic learning method to suit their needs (within the 76% of parents who are learning Gaelic).
- The practical and accessibility elements that parents most felt would aid their Gaelic learning were; local classes being run at convenient times, free weekend and family days, the chance for regular informal Gaelic conversation via the school ( as an interaction hub), one central point/place to find out about all Gaelic learning options via an exclusive web-page.

\*Further parent survey references are available on request from previous surveys we undertook in 2015 in Highland and East Dunbartonshire Councils'.

We can also draw upon the 'Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority language' report that suggests the following as important factors that motivate parental learning of minority languages;

- Educating through minority languages have been most successful where parents have been equipped with the **expectation that they have to learn the minority language** (Gaelic) if their children are in immersion education (GME), this has strongly applied to Catalan in Spain.
- Success is achieved where there is **graded provision of language learning opportunities that reflect the age point of the child within the life cycle of parenting**. For example there should be parental engagement approaches and language learning approaches sculpted to the needs and accessibility of the parents of 0-3 ages group, then 3-5 then 5 onwards. The needs of the 0-3 age group are well considered within TWF approaches.
- The development of the minority language **ethos** is very important, this means full integration and use of the language, for example in Canada consumer food packages are in English and French, in Wales all signs (even for commercial business's) are bilingual.

- The school building as a **physical entity is an important place for minority language conversation** between parents and for PAS activities.

### **PART 3 Recommendations on how best to inform LA's and schools on GME.**

#### **Building a Gaelic 'know how' in Local Authorities**

LA's are required by statute to fully deliver the requirements of the 2015 Education Bill, and are obliged to proceed with the GME considerations and guidance as stated. There are elements of support, advice and direction that could be offered to LA's via BnaG (as the initial contact point). The types of support are;

- Advice on bilingualism messaging, content, communications tools (web/flyers/articles/PR).
- Advice on offering one direct parent experience of GME via a nursery or toddler group.
- Advice on communicating bilingual opportunities through formal information contact points for parents including; leaflets at enrolment, embedding of GME messaging at forefront on priority information pages on LA schools information websites, parent newsletters.
- Strongly promoting any Gaelic support staff as contact points for parents.
- Provision of advice on possible GMPE catchment scenarios based on previous data.
- Advice on new data capture required to inform GMPE areas.

#### **Building a Gaelic 'know how' in non GME schools**

The guidance on the Education Bill is likely to state that Local authorities must promote GME and GLE and provide support for pupils and teachers in Gaelic education. The impact of this is that non- GME schools will have to plan for the potential delivery of GLE in their school.

An underlying challenge amongst schools is that most primary teachers speak no Gaelic and have no knowledge of teaching Gaelic. However every primary school needs to potentially offer GLE. GLE training opportunities are being provided for teachers via Education Scotland resources being delivered by training providers. This package of training and associated classroom resources is enough to support teachers and pupils to deliver GLE as part of 1+2 languages and to fully prepare and deliver coherent language experiences.

The lead into the teacher training will be the LA's who will identify relative levels of demand for GLE access across their region. Initially the level of demand is unpredictable but it would seem wise for LA's to gather early data via an *on-line parent survey to ascertain levels of interest to have GLE run for their children in their school locality*. The results will direct which schools have highest demand and direct where GLE teacher training is required most.

Also the survey should be run in the interests of setting up GMPE geographical zones as the percentage of popularity measurement for Gaelic per school postcode can be coded and layered onto a GIS system, the GIS data will then identify clusters of highest GLE interest and suggest the areas where GME requests are more likely. It is important that this survey records the school that the pupil of the parent attends and not the parents' home postcode.

\*It would not be wise to request an interest for GLE through a Schools Parent Council as this could risk a head teacher saying 'no' to GLE without it being properly researched and considered.

There are other aspects to assist the mainstreaming of Gaelic learning in schools:

**Gaelic Ethos:** Using Gaelic for schools informal signage within the school building and classrooms highlighting the relevance of the language day to day. Where possible playing Gaelic music, learn Gaelic poetry and integrate Gaelic within Scottish history projects.

**Gaelic Culture:** Awareness raising amongst teachers, pupils and parents is achievable via annual Gaelic culture celebration weeks in schools just as is done with Robert Burns this would include all classes and not only GLE trained teachers. Nursery should also apply this.

**Appendices** (separate file attachment)

**Appendix 1** Parental Advisor on-line survey

**Appendix 2** Study SWOT and Interview list

**Appendix 3** Content of GME Parent self-completion questionnaire

## **References**

Education (Scotland) Bill, Part 2- Gaelic medium education

National Gaelic Language Plan (Growth and Improvement) 2012-2017

National Education Strategy, BNaG

Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority language, Report for BnaG, Nov 2012

Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 approach. Scottish Government Languages Working Group: Report and Recommendations Scottish Government, May 2012.

Gaelic Education: Building on the Successes, addressing the barriers, Education Scotland. June 2011.

Gaelic (Learners) Experiences and Outcomes

Twfcymru.com

[www.parant.org.uk](http://www.parant.org.uk) and discussion papers

[www.cnag.org](http://www.cnag.org)

[www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com)

[www.learnghaelic.net](http://www.learnghaelic.net)

Education Scotland webpages

The National Parent Forum of Scotland webpages

Storlann web pages

Fios is Freagairt

Colin Baker's A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism