

Key messages regarding support for the Gaelic language:

1. Recognise that the health and vitality of Scotland's indigenous cultures enriches the country.
2. Resource development appropriately.
3. Support the continuing implementation of a rolling National Plan for Gaelic.
4. Review the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005* to explore how it might be strengthened to reflect progress, and to better equip it for future challenges.
5. Seek to ensure that all Scottish Government policy proposals recognise and include reference to Scotland's Gaelic language and culture.
6. Support the Gaelic communities of the islands and rural areas and those in urban areas.
7. Support the further development of Gaelic-medium Education and recognise the advantages of learning Gaelic.
8. Ensure that all communities can access places, activities and events where using Gaelic is the norm.
9. Support the Gaelic language as an economic asset for Scotland, attracting tourism, stimulating employment and offering young people opportunities to build careers using the language.
10. When presenting policies relating to diversity and equality ensure that Gaelic language and culture are always included.

Appendix A details some relevant points in support of the above.



Introduction.

The purpose of the paper is to highlight some key contexts for the language, which may support wider understanding.

Why Gaelic Matters – some evidence of the importance of Gaelic.

- a) Gaelic is spoken across Scotland.
 - About 50% of Gaelic speakers live in the Highlands and Islands and the remainder in the rest of Scotland. The island and rural communities of the west have the highest percentages of Gaelic speakers.
- b) Young people are extremely supportive of the language.
 - Survey carried out by [YoungScot](#) this year demonstrated that around two thirds of respondents (66.8%) stated that they think Gaelic culture and heritage is very valuable, and around two thirds of respondents (65.9%) stated that they think the Gaelic language is very valuable.
 - The most common reasons that young people who are learning Gaelic have an interest in the language - is to learn more about Gaelic music and literature.
 - Respondents who are fluent in Gaelic would like to receive more content in Gaelic that they can use in their daily lives - as opposed to content about learning the language. They also would like to get more information in Gaelic about current events, news, and politics.
- c) Interest in learning the language is growing rapidly as evidenced in social media and virtual learning opportunities:
 - Learn Gaelic Stats: Site Visits 2019-2020 have risen by 23% between November 2019 and 2020 (rising to 118k November 2020) and page views are now at 281k (annual rise of 9% since November 2019).
 - The Instagram Engagement Rate is very encouraging at 11% (average 3-4%)
 - DuoLingo has been a runaway success with approaching 600k engaging with the platform and with 500k live users. The resource base is being expanded and new course materials are in the pipeline.
 - LearnGaelic also records significant engagement from outwith Scotland e.g. Session visits coming from the following countries – USA 18%, Canada 7% and Germany 2%.

Who else cares about Gaelic?

- d) Interest in the language impacts positively on the international image of the language.
 - VisitScotland has published the first *Gaelic Tourism Strategy* as they have identified through their regular Visitor Survey that finding out more about Gaelic was of interest to a third of visitors to Scotland.
 - The VisitScotland video – **Scottish Gaelic Explained** has had 350k views (average view for VisitScotland videos are 5k views). Users, new users, and sessions all increased by approximately 150% from 2017 to 2018 with 4 out of 5 visitors who viewed Gaelic content coming from outwith the UK (in addition viewers were younger than average – 43% under age of 35).
- e) There is a substantial feeling of goodwill towards Gaelic shown by the majority of the Scottish people, as expressed in public attitude surveys (e.g. Attitudes Towards the Gaelic Language, 2012). Research has shown strong public support for the retention and revitalisation of Gaelic. 81% of people believe that Scotland should not be allowed to lose its Gaelic traditions, 70% believe there



should be more opportunities to learn Gaelic, 65% believe that more should be done to promote Gaelic and 53% want to see Gaelic used more in everyday life.

f) The language impacts positively on the Scottish economy - research carried out by [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), in conjunction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, in 2014 demonstrated that the potential economic value of Gaelic as an asset to the Scottish economy could be in the region of between £82M and £149M.

g) **Where it is – some evidence regarding the national context for the language.**

- There are different communities of speakers – those in the islands and rural areas; those in towns and cities; and those linked by media and technology. This is a strong message in the current National Plan, and that the strategies should address the needs of the different communities.
- Gaelic-medium Education (GME) is expanding across the country and is now available in 15 of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has a presumption that children will enter P1 GME unless parents opt for English-medium. The City of Glasgow now has 1 GME Secondary, 3 GME Primaries (4th now at planning stage) and 3 GME Nurseries. Edinburgh is now consulting on the 1st GME Secondary in the city. Gaelic-medium Education began in 1985 with 14 primary pupils and there are now more than 5,600 pupils in the sector across Early Years, Primary and Secondary education.
- Gaelic is ever more visible and vibrant throughout Scotland with around 60 Gaelic Language Plans now being worked on in a diverse range of contexts and organisations including, for example, National Galleries Scotland, Creative Scotland, Police Scotland and 30 Local Authorities.

h) The Gaelic media presence continues to grow annually. BBC ALBA is watched throughout Scotland – more than 10% of people in Scotland watch BBC ALBA each week. In addition, BBC Radio nan Gàidheal provides comprehensive daily broadcasting. MG ALBA has been set up under the Communications Act 2003 to deliver high-quality broadcasting in Gaelic. The economic impact assessment found that the total impact of MG ALBA was 290 FTE jobs. Of this, around 100 jobs are based in the Outer Hebrides and Skye, with wages above average for the area. Recent analysis has shown that its international content is valued at £8 million over past four years (25/02/20).

i) Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports development across Scotland primarily through Gaelic Language Plans. It also provides funding for development projects, both long and short term and in 2020/21, funding was provided as follows:

Region	Support agreed 2020/21	Number of Projects 2020/21	Support agreed 2019/20	Number of projects 2019/20
Western Isles	£1,390,274	55	£874,459	35
Highland	£1,305,147	81	£937,624	80
Glasgow	£688,851	39	£651,789	43
Argyll & Bute	£390,893	24	£344,787	19
Edinburgh	£157,628	17	£201,730	17



Bòrd na Gàidhlig currently receives approximately 20% of the Scottish Government Gaelic Budget. MG ALBA, Education (Capital and Revenue) and other projects are funded by the remainder.



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