

National Gaelic Language Plan

2023-28



Toilichte conaltradh a dhèanamh ann an Gàidhlig no Beurla
Happy to communicate in Gaelic or English

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It gives me great pleasure to welcome the launch of the National Gaelic Language Plan covering the years 2023 to 2028. Without doubt, the promotion of Gaelic in Scotland needs clear priorities and targets. This Plan, prepared by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and approved by Scottish Ministers, provides the priorities and targets needed to make further progress with Gaelic in Scotland. This Plan also comes at an important time given the Scottish Languages Bill has now been introduced to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government is considering the report of the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic. The plan has therefore been influenced by these important pieces of work.

The promotion of Gaelic is a shared responsibility. A significant number of local authorities and public bodies can and do make an important contribution to support for Gaelic. The priorities in this Plan help to bring focus to these shared commitments across a number of sectors in Scottish public life. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has listed priorities and targets relating to home, community, creative industries, business and economy, education, post-school learning and Scottish public life generally. There is already Gaelic activity in all of these sectors and I am confident this Plan will ensure further progress in the years ahead.

We are building on the Gaelic progress of recent decades but clearly there is still much to do. Whether you are acting in a personal, family, community or corporate role, I would like to encourage you to consider what you could do to contribute to the commitments in this Plan. I am confident that this Plan will contribute to the continued promotion of Gaelic in Scotland as it provides an excellent opportunity for cooperation and working together to support Gaelic. I would like to commend Bòrd na Gàidhlig for bringing together a broad range of priorities which will build on the work of the previous Plan and ensure further progress for Gaelic is made across Scotland.

Jenny Gilruth MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, the Scottish Government.

We move in to the fourth National Plan with a sense of optimism for our language based on the significant progress that everyone involved in developing Gaelic at a national, local and community level has made under the previous plan. However, we do not underestimate the work ahead as we seek to revitalise our language across Scotland and see growth in those speaking, using, learning and supporting the language.

The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) reported in June 2022 that:

- The number of Scots who can speak some Gaelic has doubled in the past decade.
- The proportion of people who say they can speak at least the odd word of Gaelic has doubled from 15% in 2012 to 30% today.
- The 2021 survey found that more than half of those surveyed would like to see the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland rise in the future, with 56% giving their backing.
- Young people, those with a greater knowledge of Gaelic, and those who have experienced greater exposure to the language are credited as the key factors associated with its growth. The survey shows that those who come into contact with Gaelic are more likely to hold positive views.
- The SSAS also highlights a major shift of attitude towards education. More than half of those surveyed (55%) believe that all children in Scotland between five and 15-years-old, should be taught Gaelic as a school subject for between one and two hours a week. This is a marked rise from just 38% support in 2012.
- Gaelic also contributes to wellbeing with 70% of adults stating that learning Gaelic gives someone a sense of achievement.

There are a range of key policy and delivery agents, which are contributing to this growth and development of Gaelic.

The strength of Gaelic use in the key Gaelic communities in the islands and the rural Northwest continues to decline however and the impact of language marginalisation still affects these communities. These challenges require holistic solutions which include the provision of affordable homes, well paid jobs and improved communications and transport infrastructure – a message of the previous National Plan. The strengthening and revitalisation of the Gaelic language provides a cohesive focus for the holistic response required to revitalise these communities. It also goes beyond what the National Plan can deliver, but through partnership and integrating the needs of Gaelic and its communities in to national policy making, progress can be achieved.

Faster Rate of Progress, a transformational initiative led by Scottish Ministers, has successfully brought together national organisations and key authorities, which have Gaelic language plans, to progress workstreams and deliver key Gaelic commitments through collaboration. The National Islands Plan includes a strong focus on Gaelic and has included priorities for Gaelic and on wider social, economic, and infrastructural priorities that are important to life in islands where Gaelic is spoken.

Gaelic is a national asset and this plan seeks to deliver progress for the development of Gaelic, as well as using Gaelic as a social, economic and cultural driver across Scotland.

Mairi MacInnes, Chair, Bòrd na Gàidhlig.



Our Vision for 2023-2028

A measureable increase
in the numbers of people,
speaking, learning, using
and supporting Gaelic.



National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28

The Plan sets out where action is needed to strengthen the Gaelic language in Scotland. It underpins the Scottish Government ambition to see an increase in the number of people speaking learning, using and supporting Gaelic in Scotland.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (the “2005 Act”) requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare and submit a National Gaelic Language Plan with proposals relating to the use and promotion of Gaelic, with a focus on the needs and priorities of the Gaelic language for its speakers, learners, and supporters. The 2005 Act requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a National Gaelic Language Plan, however the responsibility for making progress with the aims and targets in this Plan sits with a number of authorities, organisations, and communities.

Many commitments will be implemented by public authorities by means of their own Gaelic Language Plans, while some will be taken forward by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and others by families, communities, and by the private sector. The Plan will only be as successful as the commitment, collaboration, investment, and action achieved by them all.

This is the fourth National Gaelic Language Plan since the 2005 Act was passed. Each consecutive Plan builds on previous progress and is tailored to the current circumstances. In preparing this Plan, a wide range of conversations and consultations have already taken place and a formal public consultation process has been followed in accordance with the requirements of the 2005 Act.

Context for this Plan

This is a plan for growth, it will build on the successes of previous years and address the Gaelic challenges that still remain with us.

Since the late 20th century and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament there has been good progress. The 2005 Act, the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the UK Government's Communications Act 2003 have all contributed to creating and supporting a substantial base for Gaelic progress and development.

Building on this, a number of Scottish local authorities have also put good initiatives in place both with Gaelic-medium Education (GME) and with the commitments in their Gaelic language plans. In addition, a range of public bodies, working in various sectors, are making important contributions to Gaelic in different sectors.

This work of authorities and bodies is supported by dedicated Gaelic bodies, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and MG ALBA and a range of funded bodies including Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG), Stòrlann, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Ceòlas, Comhairle nan Leabhraichean and more. Further vital support for Gaelic comes from community organisations, heritage bodies, community trusts and independent production companies and others in the private sector.

Gaelic activity can now be found in many sectors such as school education, further and higher education, in media and broadcasting, in tourism, in publishing, in heritage, in arts and in adult and community learning. These are vital for the language and create opportunities for the use of Gaelic. There has also been some essential progress in recognising the importance of economic and infrastructural factors for Gaelic. There are now networks and structures operating in many sectors of public, private and community life with a view to supporting and promoting Gaelic.

There is clear evidence that development initiatives are delivering improvements. Gaelic already enriches the daily lives of the people of Scotland and beyond. It creates benefits, both social and economic, and increases wellbeing for Gaelic users, learners, and supporters, across Scotland and internationally. Most local authorities are now providing, or planning for, the provision of GME. The numbers participating in GME, as well as the growth in adult learners, are all key achievements and evidence of increased demand for Gaelic. The increased visibility and use of Gaelic all contribute to the growth in positive attitudes.



Challenges

Significant challenges remain for the Gaelic language. There is a need for continued promotion, support and growth at all levels in Gaelic education. Expansion of GME from early learning and childcare right through to the senior phase creates challenges in terms of access, resources, teacher recruitment and capital expenditure. There is also a need to see progress for adult learners to ensure that there is provision for learners to develop and achieve fluency.

There is the challenge of maintaining Gaelic use in homes and communities. The strength of Gaelic use in the traditional Gaelic communities in the islands and the rural northwest has been declining. There is also the challenge of retaining and growing the population in traditional Gaelic communities while ensuring Gaelic is strengthened in the process. It has always been recognised that different approaches are needed in these communities and this must continue. These challenges require solutions which include the provision of affordable homes, well paid jobs and improved communications and transport infrastructure. Then there is the need for Gaelic resources and budgets to support this activity and meet the challenges in Gaelic communities.



Opportunities

The opportunities we have include a good infrastructure of Gaelic bodies and projects which is now in place, is supported by government and with cross party support in Parliament. It is also welcome to see a number of public bodies recognising that they can make a contribution to Gaelic development. Opportunity also exists in the legal framework and in the Gaelic-medium education sector. There is excellent opportunity in the work of MG ALBA and the projects it is supporting which increase the appeal of the language to young people and brings a new confidence for Gaelic speakers. We must now take the opportunity that exists to build on and strengthen the structures that are in place.

Who is this Plan for?

The Plan is for Gaelic speakers and all who have an interest in Gaelic. It is for those bodies and authorities that have been asked to consider what commitments they can make to support Gaelic in their work.

This Plan is for Gaelic speakers and all those who have an interest in Gaelic. It is for learners, community groups, Gaelic organisations and for bodies and authorities with Gaelic commitments or that have prepared Gaelic plans. This Plan sets out the vision, aims, priorities and targets needed to ensure a stronger future for Gaelic in Scotland. It provides the basis for consensus and partnership working. The National Plan provides over-arching priorities and it is for those listed above to consider as they reflect on the steps they could take to support Gaelic in line with their roles, duties and functions.





Main Aim of the Plan

Increase the use and learning of Gaelic

Priority Areas

The following section of the Plan lists a number of priority areas where progress can be made by increasing the use of Gaelic and increasing the learning of Gaelic. These are areas that public authorities should have regard to as they construct their Gaelic language plans, and also that any other groups could consider as they select priorities for their own work. The priority areas identified are community support, support in the home, creative industries, business and economy, public authorities, 0 – 18 education, post school and adult learning.

Targets

For each of the priority areas there is a smaller table with targets which we believe are important for Gaelic in Scotland and are confident will have broad support from Gaelic speakers and learners. These targets will be progressed through the life of the plan although for some targets an earlier date is provided. Bòrd na Gàidhlig in its Corporate Plan, which will be published shortly, will also provide more specification of target dates for actions it will lead on.

Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Communities

There is a diverse range of Gaelic communities and networks in Scotland. In the island and rural areas, there are many community organisations that make a strong contribution to Gaelic and to sustaining their local areas. There has been an increase in the number of Gaelic community officers and initiatives to support them. The rich heritage of Gaelic in Scotland is supported at community level by a number of groups. Churches in these communities continue to provide a focal point for the language in providing church services in Gaelic and pastoral support through the medium of Gaelic.

Similarly, in towns and cities, there has been growth in the networks where Gaelic use is promoted and delivered, whether through arts, sports or leisure events or social gatherings, and this demand is growing. Wherever these networks are based, they form an important part of ensuring that Gaelic is increasingly used. The work delivered by organisations such as Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Ceòlas and others is critical to ensuring high-quality support for Gaelic in communities.



Community: Priority Areas

The Community priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in communities and for authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Gaelic Community networks and on-line communities
- Recognition of areas of linguistic significance for Gaelic
- Community-based Gaelic Language Plans
- Island Community Impact Assessments
- Network of Gaelic Development Officers
- Gaelic community events and activities for young people
- Community trusts and third-sector organisations
- Churches and faith organisations

Communities Targets

- Community Gaelic Plans will be developed for 3 key Gaelic Communities with support and Guidance prepared and available for other communities by 2028.
- In recognition that for Gaelic there are areas of linguistic significance with differing needs – further and particular consideration will be given and steps taken to reflect these in policy development and delivery across Scottish public life.
- From 2024 a recognised network of properly resourced Gaelic Officers will be maintained and supported to provide a range of Gaelic development and social activities
- Gaelic in the life and work of Community Trusts, third sector organisations, Churches and faith organisations will be supported and further encouraged particularly in areas of low population.



Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Homes

The use of Gaelic in the home is essential to strengthening the language and culture and a range of actions can contribute to this. Along with the use of Gaelic by family members there are a range of measures that have an impact and effect on the use of Gaelic in the home.

These can be educational, cultural and digital influences, and recognition must be given to the effective impact that these can have on the use of Gaelic in the home. There are many Gaelic influences which impact on the home and there are opportunities to increase awareness and promotion of these.

There are many online resources that are watched and listened to, suitable for all ages and Gaelic levels, in homes. Health and education services also provide an opportunity for the promotion of Gaelic in homes. Community and workplace activities can also shape language use in the home and this valuable link is being promoted and encouraged.

There is support in place for parents in the use of Gaelic in the home and officers are employed by Comann nam Pàrant to further support and encourage this. The work of Gaelic development officers has further potential to support the use of Gaelic in homes.



Home: Priority Areas

The Home Priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Homes and for authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Digital resources in delivering quality Gaelic use and learning in the home
- NHS and public authority promotion of Gaelic in the home
- Gaelic books and resources
- Support for measures that promote the use of Gaelic in homes
- Encouragement for people to re-introduce more Gaelic use within the home setting
- Community Officer support for the use Gaelic in the home
- GME Early years, 0-3 provision and related initiatives
- Support for Gaelic learning for GME parents

Home Targets

- A national pilot project will be established to grow and support Gaelic-medium Education 0-3 centres with improved provision of Gaelic childcare services available providing training for playleaders and linked to foundation apprenticeships.
- The support that is in place for GME parents will be reviewed and strengthened.
- Advice will be prepared for Gaelic projects and Gaelic development officers on the impact that they can have on the use of Gaelic in the home.



Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in the Creative Industries

Over recent years there has been good progress in Gaelic broadcasting, arts and publishing and Gaelic has had a wide and rich impact on cultural life.

In this there is a leading contribution from MG ALBA and a range of bodies such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, An Comann Gàidhealach, Comhairle nan Leabhraichean, Ceòlas, Acair and others to ensure that the profile of Gaelic remains high both at a national and international level. This ensures a level of opportunity for skills development, for creativity, participation and expression.

Gaelic is an important part of our national heritage. The creative industries enhance Scotland's image as a diverse and appealing country. The use and promotion of Gaelic is a significant aspect of this sector and contributes to excellence, skills development, community and audience participation, economic growth and the richness of our cultural life.



Creative Industries: Priority Areas

The priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in the Creative Industries and for authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- MG ALBA and network of Gaelic media companies
- MG ALBA support for Gaelic arts
- Media activities appealing to young people
- Fèisean nan Gàidheal
- Arts organisations, activities and festivals
- Gaelic arts bodies
- The Royal National Mòd
- Support to create and use digital, media content

Creative Industries Targets

- With Visit Scotland, Creative Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland working together, a Gaelic strategy will be prepared with priorities in tourism, arts, heritage and the economy.
- Building on this strategy, this partnership will be actively working with Developing Young Workforce partnerships to create Gaelic Foundation and Modern apprenticeships in arts, heritage tourism and the related economy.
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig will coordinate a partnership with Creative Scotland which will lead on the development and production of a National Gaelic Arts Strategy
- Public authority Gaelic language plans will recognise the potential that Gaelic bodies such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal , Ceòlas and An Comann Gàidhealach have to contribute to their support for Gaelic in their areas.
- All relevant parties will work together to address the deficit that BBC ALBA experiences in minority language broadcasting and in recognition of the economic, social and educational potential that Gaelic broadcasting contributes to support the speaker community.



Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Business and the Economy

Gaelic is an economic asset in Scotland with clear evidence of the impact of Gaelic on the Scottish economy. This has also been the subject of a number of studies, most recently by MG ALBA and Glasgow City Council. MG ALBA's 2021 report indicated that each £1 of funding for Gaelic generates a return on investment of £1.34. In Glasgow, the impact of the Gaelic economy is worth £21.6 million and supports 700 jobs.

VisitScotland also recognises the importance of Gaelic to the Scottish tourism market and its statistics show that between 2018 and 2021 there was a 72 per cent increase in the number of VisitScotland.com users visiting Gaelic-related content.

These studies demonstrate that Gaelic has an important and increasing place in building the Scottish economy, particularly in relation to sectors such as tourism, food and drink and heritage, and should have a strong emphasis in the growing renewables and land and environment sectors. The report of the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic recently reported as part of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and made a series of recommendations in this area.



Business and the Economy: Priority Areas

The Business and Economy priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in this area and for authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Gaelic in workplace, services and products
- Economic impact of Gaelic in Scotland
- Gaelic Entrepreneurial and leadership skills
- Gaelic labour market, skills development and training programmes
- Employment opportunities in the public sector and private sector
- GME, apprenticeships and careers

Business and Economy Targets

- Gaelic-medium Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, will be available and promoted to senior phase pupils wishing to pursue careers in early years & social care, the creative industries, culture, heritage, tourism, sport, food & drink and the natural environment.
- From 2024 the Island Community Impact Assessments required should ensure linguistic impacts are properly considered for infrastructural developments in areas of linguistic importance for Gaelic.
- The public authorities which have a development remit for sectors with economic impact and a Gaelic Language Plan will consider and articulate a strategy for development of Gaelic as an economic asset
- An entrepreneurial and leadership skills in business toolkit will be developed



Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Public Authorities

Public authority support for Gaelic increases its visibility and stresses the importance of wider social and economic measures for Gaelic.

There is significant support from local authorities and public bodies for Gaelic and a wide range of initiatives are in place to support Gaelic. This can be seen in bodies dealing with education, heritage, tourism, land and environment, the arts and more.

Many of these are organisations with a national remit and can contribute to the support for, and growth of, Gaelic across Scotland. Faster Rate of Progress, a transformational initiative led by Scottish Ministers, has successfully brought together national organisations and key authorities, which have Gaelic language plans to progress workstreams and deliver key Gaelic commitments through collaboration.

The National Islands Plan includes a strong focus on Gaelic and has included priorities for Gaelic alongside wider social, economic, and infrastructural priorities that are important to life in islands where Gaelic is spoken. Public authority support for Gaelic, its visibility and recognition stresses the importance of wider social and economic measures for Gaelic.



Public Authorities: Priority Areas

The public authority priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in the work of public authorities, for their consideration as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Gaelic Language Plans
- Scottish Languages Bill provision for Gaelic
- Gaelic Visibility and Signage
- Public Authorities operating in traditional Gaelic communities
- Gaelic Provisions of Islands Communities Impact Assessment

Public Authorities Targets

- The system of statutory Gaelic Language Plans will be reviewed and the Guidance on Gaelic language plans will be revised and updated in 2024. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will also provide support and advice for Gaelic language plans which are voluntary.
- Gaelic language plans will support initiatives which increase the visibility of Gaelic across Scotland.
- The Gaelic plans officers group will be relaunched from 2024 to support those authorities and bodies with their individual plans and promote the sharing of good practice
- The role Gaelic language and culture have in promoting self-esteem, health and wellbeing will be further researched and progress will be demonstrated in creating social and economic opportunities relating to the natural environment.
- Local Place Plans can be used to support and strengthen Gaelic in Communities. This opportunity will be encouraged and promoted with examples of good practice being shared.
- Bodies and authorities operating in island areas will produce Island Community Impact Assessments, taking account of their commitments to Gaelic.



Increase the use and learning of Gaelic in Education, 0-18

Growth of the GME sector along with improvements in quality of provision and promotion and support in place for GME and GLE at all levels

Gaelic-medium education is a recognised and successful sector within Scottish education. In a number of areas of the country there is Gaelic early years provision both for 0-3 and 3-5 year olds. There are a number of primary schools that provide Gaelic-medium education both in stand-alone schools and in dual-stream primaries.

Gaelic-medium education is available in a range of dual-stream secondary settings and there is one stand-alone GME Secondary school in Glasgow. Gaelic as a modern language is available in English medium primary and secondary schools in various local authorities.

In support of this provision, there are a number of bodies active to support teachers, children and young people and parents. These include bodies such as Stòrlann, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, e-Sgoil, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Comann nam Pàrant and more.

In addition, there is legislation in place and Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, covering elements of both Gaelic-medium education and Gaelic learners' education. There are a number of national bodies with responsibilities for GME and GLE such as Education Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Scottish Funding Council, General Teaching Council for Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, and they all make important contributions to both GME and GLE.

Education 0-18: Priority Areas

The school education priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in the education and for public authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Gaelic-medium Childcare and Early years, Primary and Secondary provision
- Digital online GME curriculum delivery
- Resources and training to support children and young people with additional learning needs
- GME curriculum, Broad General Education and Senior Phase in the secondary sector
- GME support and resources
- Gaelic (Learners) at L2, L3, BGE and Senior Phase

Education Targets

- Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education will be reviewed and then promoted widely within Scottish education to ensure adherence to its principles by all those involved in GME.
- The Gaelic Schools Capital Fund will be used to increase GME including for stand-alone schools in life of this Plan.
- A new strategic approach to Gaelic-medium education will be developed.
- Gaelic-medium Education will be considered as an integral part of the work of education groups such as the Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group, the Strategic Board for Teacher Education and across all aspects of education reform.
- Co-ordination of and support for GME extra-curricular activities will be developed within a Strategy for Gaelic Youth to be available for consultation by 2026 – including for example sports, culture, debate and leisure.
- A co-ordinated approach to GME support for teachers in schools will be developed.
- Support will be available to broaden GME subject choice at secondary.



Increase the use and learning of Gaelic, Post-school and Adult Learning

There are opportunities to learn and study Gaelic as an adult and for Gaelic learning in Further Education and Higher Education institutions. There are also routes into GME or GLE teaching and opportunities to undertake research and courses through the medium of Gaelic. Gaelic has a presence in the HE and FE sector with both undergraduate and post-graduate opportunities.

There are also many opportunities to learn Gaelic via important initiatives such as SpeakGaelic, LearnGaelic, GoGaelic, Gaelic for Parents, Duolingo and other language applications. The needs of those who already have some Gaelic skills and want to develop them further is an important focus for learning resources.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has a key role as the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture. It is important in post-school Gaelic learning, education, and research, as are other academic institutions. There has been growth over recent years of provision of access courses for Gaelic language.

There are initial teacher education and early years professional courses available for GME. There are research opportunities in academic institutions and developments in linguistic resources, such as Faclair na Gàidhlig, Tobar an Dualchais, Ainmean Àite na h-Alba, DASG and An Seotal, speech-to-text technology and more. These are only some examples of progress and these and others need to be developed further.

Post School and Adult Learning: Priority Areas

The post-school and adult education priority areas below provide a clear focus for increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in post-school and adult education and for public authorities to consider as they develop their Gaelic plans.

- Speak Gaelic and other adult education opportunities for learners
- Gaelic skills in careers opportunities, employment, skills training, and apprenticeships
- GME Initial Teacher Education
- Courses for early years staff in the GME sector
- Professional development in leadership across GME
- Gaelic learning in Further Education/Higher Education institutions
- Gaelic Research and Linguistic Infrastructure development

Post School and Adult Learning Targets

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig will coordinate and deliver an Adult Learning Strategy.
- Promotion of and support for the routes into GME teaching.
- Support will be maintained to complete the development of Speak Gaelic by the end of 2024.
- Training and support will be made available for GME language assistants.
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig will continue to lead the Gaelic Academic Working Group in developing a strategic approach to all relevant corpus requirements.
- Support will be put in place for linguistic infrastructure initiatives will be continued and strengthened. A strategy for the development, coordination and maintenance of linguistic resources will be created by 2025 and will then form part of the ongoing work of the Gaelic Academic Working Group.



National Plan 2018-2023

There has been good progress, yet there remains much to do. This section will focus on a selection of the projects that have been put in place in recent years. These are the foundational initiatives to be built on in future years.

The earlier part of this Plan has a focus on aims and priorities and the things that need to be done. This section will focus on a selection of the projects that have been put in place in recent years. These are the foundational initiatives to be built on in future years. This includes both the actions of community groups and public authorities. The projects below demonstrate good progress with Gaelic in Scotland.

Home and Community

Home and community have consistently been identified as places where support for Gaelic is needed. Many aspects of Gaelic development have the potential to influence home life. Education, arts, media and publishing can and do shape Gaelic use in home and community.

There have also been new projects. In recent years BnG has supported Comann nam Pàrant to deliver a pilot for the early years with a focus on families and GME. This involved support for a small team of officers providing assistance. CnamP has also created an online, one-stop shop, Neadan, with information for parents about using Gaelic in the home and community and about young people entering the GME system. Developments such as Gaelic Bookbug and Leugh is Seinn le Linda have been important at this level.

Additionally, related to this there has been a range of support put in place for Gaelic in communities. A number of Gaelic development officers are in place and a start has been made to providing a supportive structure for these officers who often have different employers. Comunn na Gàidhlig has seen some expansion of its team of Iomairtean officers who organize events both in the cities and in areas of low population.

Gaelic officers are also located in a variety of situations, in arts centres to deliver projects and events that enhance the use of Gaelic, in the Camanachd Association to strengthen the link between the language and the game of shinty and in YoungScot to support Gaelic within the work of that national body. Support has also been provided to locate Gaelic officers in bodies such as Ceòlas and in heritage societies for projects which strengthen Gaelic in the services and events they deliver.

Another important example was the support Bòrd na Gàidhlig provided for Community Land Scotland for Gaelic projects undertaken by community trusts in the islands. Some community trusts, especially those that are heritage or land-based, make a significant contribution to the economy of their areas and this fund encouraged more Gaelic use.

In addition, BnG funded, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, support workers as part of the pilot project run by local authorities in these cities. Stornoway welcomed An Taigh Cèilidh, the Gaelic café, and in Inverness a group of volunteers are also aiming to establish a Gaelic centre, Cultarlann Inbhir Nis. Furthermore, in areas of low population a number of community centres such as Iomairt Colmcille in Islay and Grinnebhat in Bragar make an important contribution to Gaelic in their areas. In Glasgow and Edinburgh various bodies run events and provide opportunities to use Gaelic.

Arts

It has also been encouraging to see support for Gaelic in arts, publishing and festivals. Again this is a sector that experienced challenges during lockdown but there were good examples in the work of MG ALBA, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Comhairle nan Leabhraichean and Ceòlas. Local and national Mòds have commenced again after lockdown. These events for young and older include music, song, poetry, sports and more. The theatre company, Theatre gu Leòr, support the Gaelic arts and the company has been successful, with tours, new dramas, writing commissions, youth theatre, workshops, training opportunities and national and international partnerships.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal

Fèisean nan Gàidheal continues to make an important contribution to the development of traditional music, culture and the Gaelic language both across Scotland and internationally. The Fèisean movement supports over 115 jobs and in doing so each year some 20,000 people have some involvement with Fèisean activities. There are 43 local Fèisean around Scotland offering a variety of activities such as ongoing tuition, workshops and masterclasses and Cèilidh Trails. Fèisean nan Gàidheal has a network of development officers that support the growing activities which include Fèisgoil, its education services, delivery of the Youth Music Initiative, Gaelic language and drama services, Fuaran (a Gaelic archiving project), 5 Latha (a residential Gaelic event) Fèis TV (with online tuition channel) the Blas annual festival in Highland Council, and the Tasgadh grant programme delivered on behalf of Creative Scotland.

Cnoc Soillier

The formal opening of the first stage of the Cnoc Soillier development in South Uist was welcomed. Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise have provided funding for the development, and the second phase is now being planned. Much work has been undertaken to enable Cnoc Soilleir to open with its first phase, with the volunteer board of Ceòlas contributing a significant part to that.

Education

In recent years there has been progress with another Gaelic-medium education school in Glasgow and an annex for GME secondary provision in Edinburgh. There has been good growth with the establishment of standalone Gaelic schools at Portree and at Lochaber. We are also seeing numbers increase in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and GME provision in various other council areas. The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education was published in 2017. Since then, the Guidance has been used to assist authorities as they consider new GME provision. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has developed and delivers courses at Foundation Apprenticeship Level in Creative and Digital Media and Childcare through the medium of Gaelic.

During Covid-19, BnG along with partners Comunn na Gàidhlig, Stòrlann and Fèisean nan Gàidheal, established the initiative #cleachdaigantaigh to provide resources for families while pupils were not able to attend school. This was particularly important for families where Gaelic is not their main language. Stòrlann created two resources in particular to support families learn and use Gaelic in the home. e-Sgoil also launched and provided strong support for Gaelic learning while Stòrlann continued to support teachers, parents and young people.

e-sgoil has created and delivers courses such as drama and climate change and for primary pupils and climate ready classrooms for pupils in S4-S6. Activities to support GME, such as those provided by Comunn na Gàidhlig and Spòrs Gàidhlig including outdoor activities, camps and learning events, all through the medium of Gaelic have made a valuable contribution to the sector. FC Sonas was established to offer football through the medium of Gaelic, and to raise the profile of Gaelic among players, fans and the media. Other programmes such as Film G, High School Debate, 5 Latha, Drama summer school and the Royal National Mòd all provide support for young people in GME.

A range of activity is also in place to support and recruit GME teachers. Some have been in place for some time but have been augmented with new provision in recent years. Following a GTCS survey of teachers, Bòrd na Gàidhlig produced a booklet 'So You Want to Teach in Gaelic' which outlined the pathways to teaching and other professional careers in GME. BnG has also created a padlet outlining the routes to teaching. Alongside this, BnG launched a campaign, #DèanDiofar (make a difference), on social media with videos of six tutors discussing how they came to teach and why they enjoy it and this will be followed shortly by a similar initiative for early years staff.

There has also been progress with routes into GME teaching. This includes the MA Gaelic-medium Primary Education (learners and fluent) at the University of Edinburgh, Gaelic with immersion Certificate at the University of Glasgow, Additional Teaching Qualification at Strathclyde University for modern language teachers to be able to teach Gaelic as a modern language, Masters in Education at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and other SMO courses also offered at UHI locations. BnG funds local authorities to enable teachers to undertake an immersion courses to strengthen Gaelic language skills.

The former STEM bursary scheme is now open to applications from those who would like to step into GME teaching at secondary and primary. UHI PGDE at primary and secondary is available throughout UHI. BnG and MG ALBA have both recruited Graduate Apprentices who receive some of their training in Gaelic. Skills Development Scotland support these initiatives and also encourage young people to consider careers where they use their Gaelic skills, as part of the implementation of their Gaelic language plan.

Adult Learning

A Scottish Gaelic course became available on Duolingo in 2019 and by 2022 over a million people had started learning Gaelic through the course. SMO is now offering a course for people studying Duolingo to improve their skills; LearnGaelic – is an ongoing resource for learners and fluent speakers. The website has been revised and updated to include more features and improve user experiences. Visitor numbers continue to grow.

Impressive numbers of adults have been learning Gaelic and the Scottish Government has supported learning opportunities of LearnGaelic and Speak Gaelic. There is a focus on adult learning through one of the workflows of the Faster Rate of Progress initiative seeking to establish a common framework for assessing learners' skills has been developed. This is based on the European Common Framework of Reference, which organises skills into six levels; SpeakGaelic continues to develop. It is a multi – media initiative with TV programs, online resources, social media support and SpeakGaelic aims to take learners from beginner to fluent.

In addition, the then Deputy First Minister launched and chaired the Faster Rate of Progress initiative, the Community Engagement Meetings, the Gaelic Summit meetings and launched the National Plan for Gaelic.

Public Bodies

Other initiatives that brought a welcome focus on Gaelic were the Convention of the Highlands and Islands with its focus on the role of Gaelic in economic developments. Following the publication of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the then Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy set up a working group to consider economic and social opportunities for Gaelic communities recently. This Working Group has now reported. The National Islands Plan also includes welcome support for Gaelic in many sectors of public life.

Various organisations regularly publish economic impact reports, including MG ALBA, with Gaelic Media driving growth in our communities and the impact of Mòds organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach. One of the Faster Rate of Progress initiative's workstreams has been working on strategies and initiatives to drive developments in the labour market and the economy. Skills Development Scotland has published a report on this subject – one of the actions in its Gaelic language plan – which forms the basis of ongoing work. There is a workstream in the initiative, Faster Rate of Progress, which takes forward work relating to Gaelic in tourism, culture and heritage. VisitScotland developed the first ever National Gaelic Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 which was published in 2018. This was one of the actions in their Gaelic language plan. Following the launch, they established a working group to take forward the strategy's actions with about 30 organisations involved, ranging from commercial businesses, community groups, destination management organisations as well as public sector. The group meets regularly and has timetabled the renewal of the strategy.



Media

The contribution of MG ALBA/BBC ALBA continues to be important for Gaelic at different levels and in different sectors. BBC ALBA continues to have impressive viewer figures, is present on iPlayer and BBC ALBA news has been extended to weekends. FilmG – is a Gaelic short film competition, which promotes and supports all aspects of film, from young people to industry professionals.

Gaelic Organisations

There are probably too many to mention but Gaelic bodies are active in many sectors such as publishing, parental support, place names, community development, drama, arts, heritage and groups are active in bringing forward new projects to support Gaelic in communities

The Gaelic Books Council, and publishers such as Acair, contribute greatly to developments in writing and poetry, and skill development in editing, translating and other creative skills. Hands Up for Trad created the first-ever World Gaelic Week which was held in March. Many people around the world took part in the events, discussions and workshops which were held online, and also created a high profile in social media for Gaelic.

Corpus and Linguistic Infrastructure

In order to maintain the richness and relevance of the Gaelic language a number of groups meet together under the heading of Gaelic Academic working group. This working group is an effective way for linguistic infrastructure bodies to work together and co-operate and for sharing of information and projects. The working group includes a focus on place names, translation, media definitions, technology, nature terms, speech to text, terminology, grammar, curriculum terms and orthography. The working group also includes local authorities and larger bodies such as the BBC, Education Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority, MG ALBA, universities and the Fàclair Gàidhlig, historical dictionary project.

This closing section, at best, could only ever be a small selection from the many Gaelic projects taking place in schools, communities and in public life. There are many valuable projects that we are aware of that have not received a specific mention above yet are welcome and essential examples of activity and commitment. These examples all demonstrate that support for Gaelic is moving forward and the challenge is to make further progress by building on the progress of recent years. That is the aim of this Plan.

Photography courtesy of:

- Julie Broadfoot
- Skye Commercial Photography
- Lucy Knott Photography
- Angus Forbes
- Sandie Photos



Toilichte conaltradh a dhèanamh ann an Gàidhlig no Beurla
Happy to communicate in Gaelic or English