



Coinneamh: Bòrd-stiùiridh
Ceann-là/Àm: 12 Màrt 2026 aig 09.30
Càite: Cnoc Soilleir, Uibhist a' Deas

Clàr-gnothaich – Seisean Fosgailte

1. Cùisean Tòiseachaidh

- 1.1. Fàilte is Leisgeulan
- 1.2. A' Nochdadh Com-pàirtean
- 1.3. Gnothaich Iomchaidh Sam Bith Eile (GISBE)

2. Ionmhas

- 2.1. **Aithisg Ionmhais (Airson fiosrachadh)** **duilleag 05**
 PT 1 Aithisg Ionmhais
Nicola Pearson, Ceann an Ionmhais is Cùisean Corporra
- 2.2. **Buidseat na Bliadhna & Plana Ionmhas Meadhan-teirm (Airson aontachadh)** **duilleag 08**
 PT 1 Draft budget & Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
Nicola Pearson, Ceann an Ionmhais is Cùisean Corporra

3. Cùisean Corporra

- 3.1. **Conaltradh le Luchd-ùidh (Airson fiosrachadh)** **duilleag 15**
 PT 1 Comhairle don Mhinistear air stiùireadh a thaobh SCS
Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard

4. Plana Corporra is Coileanadh

- 4.1. **Aithisg air PCC an 25/26 (Airson deasbad)** **duilleag 20**
 PT 1 Aithisg air PCC an 2023-28
Iain Mac a' Mhaoilein, Stiùiriche
- 4.2. **Foghlam & Ionnsachadh (Airson fiosrachadh)** **duilleag 24**
 PT 1 Foghlam Àrd-sgoile tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig:
 Measadh agus Molaidhean Leasachaidh
 PT 2 Cearcall Leasachadh a' Churraicealaim **duilleag 133**
Calum Rothach, Ceannard Foghlaim is Phlanaichean



5. Rianachd Mhì-chinntean

5.1. Clàr mhì-chinntean Ro-innleachdail (Ri aontachadh)

duilleag 137

PT 1 Clàr Mhì-chinntean Ro-innleachdail

Nicola Pearson, Ceann an Ionmhais is Cùisean Corporra

6. Èifeachdas is Trèanadh a' Bhùird-stiùiridh

duilleag 148

6.1. Èifeachdas is Trèanadh a' Bhùird-stiùiridh (Airson fiosrachadh)

Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard

7. Plana Obrach a' Bhùird-stiùiridh

7.1. Plana Obrach a' Bhùird-stiùiridh (Airson aontachadh)

duilleag 150

PT1 Plana Obrach 2026/27

Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard

8. GISBE

Ceann-là na h-ath choinneimh: 25 Ògmhios 2026

Deireadh an t-Seisein



Pàipear 2.1

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Aithisg Ionmhas |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Airson Fiosrachadh |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 2.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Nicola Pearson, Ceann an Ionmhas is Cùisean Corporra |
| Pàipearan taic: | PT1 Aithisg Ionmhas 31/12/25 |

1. Adhbhar

- 1.1. Is e fiosrachadh a thoirt dhan Bhòrd air an t-suidheachadh ionmhasail mar a bha e air 31 Dùbhlachd 2025 adhbhar a' phàipeir seo.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Prìomh aithris

- 2.1. Ann an 2025/26 tha Tabhartas gus Cuideachadh (GiA) bunaiteach de £6,325k aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 2.2. Chaidh suim a bharrachd de £46k, bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba, a chur ris a' bhuidseit gus pàigheadh airson màl An Tosgan.
- 2.3. Gu deireadh an Dàmhair tha caiteachas timcheall air £273k air dheireadh air a' bhuidseit, timcheall air 6% den bhuidseit iomlan.
- 2.4. Tha àm pàighidhean tabhartais ag adhbhrachadh fo-chosgais ann an cosgaisean leasachaidh.
- 2.5. Tha an fo-chosgais ann an Cosgaisean Luchd-obrach tron bhliadhna mar thoradh air dreuchdan bàn luchd-obrach agus clàran-ama fastaidh
- 2.6. Tha Cosgaisean Obrachaidh Eile air dheireadh a' bhuidseit leis gun do thòisich dà phròiseact nas fhaide na bha dùil an toiseach.
- 2.7. Tha sinn an dùil gun tèid am buidseit air fad a chosg ro dheireadh na bliadhna ionmhais.

3. Moladh

- 3.1. Thathar ag iarraidh air buill a' Bhùird-stiùiridh
 - Beachdachadh air an aithisg agus am fiosrachadh a thoirt fa-near

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdach

- 4.1. Buaidhean air Ionmhas: Mar a chaidh a mhìneachadh gu h-àrd.
- 4.2. Buaidhean air Luchd-obrach: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.3. Buaidhean air Trèanadh: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.4. Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra: Gum bi ar n-obair a' fiosrachadh agus a' toirt buaidh air leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus air poileasaidhean a bheir buaidh air a Ghàidhlig.



Pàipear 2.1

- 4.5. Buaidhean air Cliù: Tha e cudromach gun lean Bòrd na Gàidhlig air adhart a' dearbhadh gu bheil e a' riaghladh an ionmhais aige gu h-èifeachdach.
- 4.6. Buaidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.7. Buaidhean air Laghail: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.8. Buaidhean air Co-ionannachd: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.9. Buaidhean air an Àrainneachd: Chan eil buaidh ann.

5. Ceanglaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnàthach



6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

- 6.1. Thug an Comataidh Poileasaidh is Ghoireasan fa-near don phàipear seo air 10 Gearran 2026.
- 6.2. Thug an Sgioba-stiùiridh fa-near don phàipear seo air 29 Faoilleach 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

- 7.1. 'S e pàipear fosgailte a tha seo.

Sgrùdadh gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2025

MAOINEACHA
DH / TEACHD A
STEACH

Airgead air a thoirt air adhart

| GU 31.12.25 | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| BUIDSEAT | AN DA- RÌRIBH | SEACHRANAC HD | SEACHRANAC HD |
| £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 9 | 9 | - | - |
| 4,325 | 5,125 | 800 | - |
| 46 | 46 | - | - |
| 4,371 | 5,171 | 800 | 18% |

| |
|---|
| Tabhartas Gus Cuideachadh - Bun-loidhne |
| Maoineachadh GIA a bharrachd |

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|---|
| 4,325 | 5,125 | 800 | - |
| 46 | 46 | - | - |

BUIDSEAT IOMLAN

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| 4,371 | 5,171 | 800 | 18% |
|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|

TUAIMSE AIRSON NA BLIADHNA AIR FAD

| BUIDSEAT | RO-AITHRIS | SEACHRANAC HD | SEACHRANAC HD |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | % |
| 9 | 9 | 0 | 0% |
| 6,325 | 6,325 | 0 | 0% |
| 46 | 46 | 0 | 0% |
| 6,371 | 6,371 | - | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|----|
| 9 | 9 | 0 | 0% |
|---|---|---|----|

| | | | |
|-------|-------|---|----|
| 6,325 | 6,325 | 0 | 0% |
| 46 | 46 | 0 | 0% |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|--|
| 6,371 | 6,371 | - | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|--|

CAITEACHAS

| |
|-----------------|
| GLAIF |
| Leasachadh eile |

| | | | |
|-------|-------|------|-----|
| 935 | 881 | (54) | -6% |
| 2,396 | 2,404 | 8 | 0% |

COSGAISEAN LEASACHAIDH IOMLAN

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 3,331 | 3,285 | - 46 | -1% |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|

| |
|----------------------------|
| Cosgaisean Luchd-obrach |
| Cosgaisean Obrachaidh Eile |

| | | | |
|-----|-----|-------|------|
| 989 | 856 | (133) | -13% |
| 340 | 246 | (94) | -28% |

COSGAISEAN OBRACHAIDH UILE

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1,329 | 1,102 | - 227 | -17% |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|

COSGAISEAN IOMLAN

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 4,660 | 4,387 | - 273 | -6% |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|

| | | | |
|-------|-------|----|----|
| 1,140 | 1,140 | 0 | 0% |
| 3,347 | 3,407 | 60 | 2% |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| 4,487 | 4,547 | 60 | 0 |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------|

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1,379 | 1,215 | (164) | -12% |
| 505 | 609 | 104 | 21% |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 1,884 | 1,824 | - 60 | - 0 |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| 6,371 | 6,371 | - | - |
|--------------|--------------|----------|----------|



Pàipear 2.2

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Meeting: | Board |
| Date: | 12 March 2026 |
| Title: | Draft Budget & MTFP 2026/27 |
| Action Required: | For Approval |
| Paper number: | 2.2 |
| Spokesperson: | Nicola Pearson, Head of Finance & Corporate Affairs |
| Appendices: | PT1 Draft budget & Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for the draft budget for the financial year 2026/27.
- 1.2. The paper is in English as it has been prepared by the Head of Finance and Corporate Affairs and will be reviewed by auditors as part of their work.

2. Background/Main points

- 2.1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig receives annual funding by way of a Grant in Aid (GiA) letter from the Scottish Government.
- 2.2. The GiA letter confirms the level of funding for financial year and is normally received prior to the start of the new financial year.
- 2.3. In 2025/26 Bòrd na Gàidhlig received baseline GiA of £5,635k, and received an additional £690k in the Autumn Budget Review giving a total of £6,325k.
- 2.4. In 2025/26 an additional amount of £46k was added to the budget to facilitate a payment from Scottish Government to Stòrlann for the lease of An Tosgan. This gave a total budget figure for 2025/26 of £6,371k
- 2.5. The total funding in the GiA letter was divided into the following budget allocations:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| | £ '000 |
| Gaelic Development Fund | £3,301 |
| Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund | £1,140 |
| Operating Costs | <u>£1,884</u> |
| Total GiA | <u>£6,325</u> |
| Additional for An Tosgan | <u>£ 46</u> |
| Total budget | <u>£6,371</u> |

- 2.6. Scottish Government announced its proposed budget for 2026/27 on January 13th, and indicated a baseline budget of £6,325k for Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 2.7. We are not anticipating additional income from external sources and staff costs have been calculated based on the Scottish Government pay policy 2026/27.



Pàipear 2.2

- 2.8. The assumed cap of £1,884k is imposed on operating costs which across the five years presented is increasingly unachievable. We will continue to request Scottish Government review and increase this cap.
- 2.9. The proposed budget for 2026/27 is presented below with the 2025/26 budget shown for comparison:

| DRAFT Budget 2026/27 | | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | £'000 | £'000 |
| FUNDING/ INCOME | Grant in Aid - baseline | 5,125 | 6,325 |
| | GIA additional funding | 1,200 | - |
| | TOTAL AVAILABLE BUDGET | 6,325 | 6,325 |
| EXPENDITURE | GLAIF | 1,140 | 1,140 |
| | Other Development | 3,301 | 3,301 |
| | TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS | 4,441 | 4,441 |
| | Staff Costs | 1,379 | 1,438 |
| | Other Operating Costs | 505 | 446 |
| | TOTAL OPERATING COSTS | 1,884 | 1,884 |
| | TOTAL COSTS | 6,325 | 6,325 |

3. Recommendation

3.1. The Board is requested to:

- Consider the financial situation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Note the information in the report
- Approve the draft budget for 2026/27

4. Main Strategic Impacts

- 4.1. Impact on Finance: The budget is the key tool for controlling finance.
- 4.2. Impact on Staff: The budget includes salary costs as well as the budgets which enable staff to deliver Bòrd na Gàidhlig's role and Corporate Plan.
- 4.3. Impact on Training: The budget includes a budget for training and development.
- 4.4. Links to Corporate Aims: The budget links to delivery of all the corporate aims.
- 4.5. Impacts on Reputation: Effective use of finance is important to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's reputation. The budget aims to achieve maximum impact in delivery of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's role.
- 4.6. Impacts on Health and Safety: N/A
- 4.7. Legal Impacts: Appropriate budgeting and financial controls are required to comply with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.
- 4.8. Impacts on Equality: N/A
- 4.9. Impacts on the Environment: N/A



Pàipear 2.2

5. Links to the National Performance Framework

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Human Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> | Children and Young People | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Environment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | International | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Learning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Economy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Successful Innovative Businesses | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

6. Governance Route

6.1. Approved by the Policy & Resources Committee on 10 February 2026.

6.2. Approved by the Leadership Team on 28 January 2026.

7. Confirmation of Circulation of Document

7.1. This paper is presented to the open session.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig**Draft Budget 2026/27 – with outline budgets to 2030/31**

The proposed Budget for 2026/27 is below with 2025/26 shown for your reference.

Also shown are draft budgets for 2027/28 through to 30/31 based on the proposal for 2026/27 demonstrating the potential funding gap.

for approval

| BUDGET: Income | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000s | £'000s |
| Grant in Aid | 5,635 | 6,325 |
| Additional Grant in Aid | 690 | - |
| Total Grant in Aid | 6,325 | 6,325 |
| Other Income | - | - |
| Total Income | 6,325 | 6,325 |

for information

| 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s |
| 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 | 6,325 |

| BUDGET: Gaelic Development | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000s | £'000s |
| GLAIF | 1,140 | 1,140 |
| Other Development | 3,301 | 3,301 |
| Total Development | 4,441 | 4,441 |

| 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s |
| 1,140 | 1,140 | 1,140 | 1,140 |
| 3,301 | 3,301 | 3,301 | 3,301 |
| 4,441 | 4,441 | 4,441 | 4,441 |

| BUDGET: Operating Costs | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000s | £'000s |
| Staff Cost | 1,379 | 1,438 |
| Training | 25 | 20 |
| Premises Costs | 58 | 62 |
| Travel & Subsistence | 67 | 56 |
| IT Costs | 150 | 137 |
| Professional Fees | 116 | 100 |
| Other Costs | 88 | 71 |
| Total Operating Costs | 1,884 | 1,884 |

| 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s |
| 1,466 | 1,540 | 1,583 | 1,622 |
| 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 |
| 63 | 65 | 66 | 67 |
| 57 | 58 | 59 | 61 |
| 138 | 140 | 143 | 146 |
| 102 | 104 | 106 | 108 |
| 72 | 74 | 75 | 77 |
| 1,919 | 2,002 | 2,054 | 2,102 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total expenditure | 6,360 | 6,443 | 6,495 | 6,543 |
| Funding gap | (35) | (118) | (170) | (218) |

Budget assumptions and considerations

All information in this paper is in draft as 2026/27 Scottish Government not yet approved by parliament. A final budget will be presented once this has been approved and a Grant in Aid letter received.

Income

The Scottish Budget for 2026/27 was announced on 13th January 2026 and the indication was that Bòrd na Gàidhlig's budget will be as it was in 2025/26. This will be confirmed along with any conditions when Bòrd na Gàidhlig receives the Grant in Aid (GiA) letter of confirmation.

For the purposes of preparing this budget we have assumed that £6,325k is the total available budget for 2026/27 and the four years beyond.

Gaelic Development Costs

These comprise grant schemes, development activities and support for Gaelic organisations, all applied in line with the priorities of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Corporate Plan. They can be budgeted with greater flexibility and there is scope for increase and/or reduction in accordance with available funds.

The reporting of the development budget has been reprofiled to agree to the reporting requirements of the Grant in Aid letter from Scottish Government.

GLAIF is the acronym for the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund and this budget is to be used for the development of Gaelic language plans by public authorities and related purposes in line with the National Gaelic Language Plan priorities.

The remaining development budget is allocated to Other Development which is delivered via funding for Gaelic organisations and by means of grant schemes to support Gaelic initiatives or related purposes.

The Bòrd na Gàidhlig spend on development costs can be contained within the level of GiA awarded by the Scottish Government. They are not subject to ongoing factors to the same degree as operating costs and can be varied more readily and at shorter notice, and whilst underspends in operating costs can be transferred to development, underspends in development budgets cannot normally be transferred to operating costs.

Operating costs

Operating costs are effectively ring-fenced and restricted through GiA conditions to a cap of £1,884k.

The major budgetary pressures on the Bòrd na Gàidhlig operating costs are salaries and inflation. Salary and related costs for 2026/27, if inflated as per Scottish Government pay policy guidelines, constitute 76% of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's total operating costs.

Subject to affordability, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is aligned to Scottish Government for pay purposes and as such Bòrd na Gàidhlig usually apply the Public Sector Pay Policy in its budget setting. The Pay Policy for 2026/27 was agreed with the unions in October 2025.

A salary model, based on the established permanent staffing structure has been developed for the forthcoming five year period. This comprises a 3.5% rise applied in 2026/27 and, in the years beyond the scope of the pay policy, we have applied a 2% increase.

Other operating costs

Within the remaining operating costs there are very few discretionary budget lines – the majority of costs relating to either IT, premises, or necessary professional services such as HR, Data Protection etc.

In estimating the draft budgets, the actual costs for the last two financial years have been reviewed along with an estimation of the full costs for the current year. Known future factors were then applied and the main variances identified between 2025/26 and 2026/27 are noted below:

- Other office costs - reduction of £17k
- Professional Fees – reduction of £16k
- IT costs – reduction of £13k

Bòrd na Gàidhlig continues to keep its operating costs budget within the cap by means of additional funding, holding vacancies, finding more effective and efficient ways of working etc however, there is very little by way of discretionary budget within operating costs, the bulk of the costs being staff costs.

Beyond 2026/27

It is clear that Bòrd na Gàidhlig face significant budgetary pressures on operating costs in future years particularly with costs capped at £1,884k. There are two main options to address this:

1. An increase in the levels of income
2. A reduction in operating costs

Option 1. An increase in the levels of income

In forecasting the budget for the next five years, income is assumed to be at baseline level and income from an external source has not been considered realistic.

However, Bòrd na Gàidhlig continue to work closely with the Scottish Government and seek opportunities for an increase in the Grant in Aid where possible.

Option 2. A reduction in operating costs

Operating costs are currently restricted through GiA conditions to £1,884k.

Staff costs are calculated to comprise 76% of the total operating costs in 2026/27 and this rises to 86% in 30/31 based on an operating cost cap of £1,884k. The discretionary spend remaining within operating costs reduces as the staff costs increase and inflation rates also impact operating costs - meaning that even without reducing the operating cost budgets, what can be delivered by the budget is reduced.

The future operating cost budget information presented above is calculated with a 2% inflationary increase across the individual expenditure lines where appropriate; on the assumption that establishment of staff will remain as is with no additional posts; the continued Scottish Government policy of no compulsory redundancies and that staff costs will increase by 2% per annum from 2027/28.

These assumptions are conservative but demonstrate the lower range of adjustments in budget required to achieve a balanced budget with the current cap on operating costs.

The Scottish Government Workforce Management Governance Framework, to be published in Spring 2026, will set out principles, metrics and governance for effective workforce management across public services.

This will include guidance on:

- recruitment controls and managing attrition
- redeployment and voluntary severance
- the No Compulsory Redundancy commitment
- good practice workforce planning and organisational redesign
- use of digital and intelligent automation
- progress on the review of the public sector delivery landscape

(extract from communication from Neil Rennick, Director General, Education & Justice, Scottish Government)

A Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covers a period of 5 years, in this case 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. It is intended to enable longer term financial planning and to identify the "Additional Funding Requirement" between the current and projected level of income from Scottish Government and the estimated cost of future requirements identified by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The five-year budget has been prepared based on current known information and on the assumption that Grant in Aid funding will not increase beyond current communicated levels for the current work of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The five-year financial focus that was presented in the previous year has been incorporated into the budget preparation process this year and the budget being considered by the Board forms the basis of the five years of the MTFP. This budget

is based on current known funding and service commitments and is projected forward on the basis of steady state funding. This provides a solid platform from which to consider future changes and aspirations.

While effective financial management and planning is critical to the success of Bòrd na Gàidhlig it is equally important that the outcomes achieved by the funding made available is brought more into focus. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has clear Operational Plan outcomes and work has been undertaken to allocate the appropriate budget to facilitate the achievement of these outcomes.

The focus on outcomes provides an opportunity for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to consider its activities and provides a basis for considering current achievements in the context of government priorities for Gaelic and the fulfilment of the National Gaelic Language Plan.

There are obvious difficulties in presenting a Medium Term Financial Plan when funding is received on a one year funding model, however planning for a full five year period allows Bòrd na Gàidhlig to be agile in applying the annual budget once it has been confirmed.



Pàipear 3.1

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Conaltradh le Luchd-ùidh |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Airson fiosrachadh |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 3.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard |
| Pàipearan-taic: | PT 1 - Comhairle don Leas-Phrìomh Mhinistear |

1. Adhbhar

1.1. Tha am pàipear seo a' taisbeanadh fiosrachadh mu chonaltradh ro-innleachdail a tha iomchaidh innse don Bhòrd mu dheidhinn, mar a chaidh aontachadh aig coinneamh a' Bhùird san Dùbhlachd.

2. Stiùireadh air Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte– comhairle don Leas-Phrìomh Mhinistear

2.1. Tha Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte nam prìomh eileamaid de Achd nan Cànanan Albannach, agus tha an Achd a' leigeil le Ministearan na h-Alba stiùireadh a thoirt seachad air a' chùis seo. Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air dreachd stiùiridh ullachadh agus tha seo air leantainn gu conaltradh mòr eadar oifigearan agus luchd-ùidh.

2.2. Tha an stiùireadh ag amas air mìneachadh:

- Dè tha air a chiallachadh le sgìre cànan sònraichte.
- Dè na dleasan a tha air ùghdarrasan ionadail.
- Na pròiseasan a bu chòir a leantainn, agus na slatan-tomhais a bu chòir a bhith air am beachdachadh, ann a bhith ag ainmeachadh sgìre cànan sònraichte.
- Dreuchd Bhòrd na Gàidhlig agus Mhinistearan na h-Alba a thaobh ainmeachadh.

2.3. Chaidh an dreachd stiùiridh a thoirt do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig agus do luchd-ùidh eile air 11 Dùbhlachd 2025. Chaidh aideachadh, ged a bha e gu bhith air a sgaoileadh gu farsaing, nach robh seo na phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh iomlan. Chaidh iarraidh air freagairtean ron 29mh den Fhaoilleach 2026.

2.4. Thug Bòrd na Gàidhlig taic do Riaghaltas na h-Alba na oidhirpean gus conaltradh farsaing a dhèanamh air an dreachd stiùiridh. Chuidich sinn le bhith a' cur air dòigh coinneamhan, nam measg coinneamhan leis na buidhnean leasachaidh againn, oifigearan leasachaidh agus lionra nan oifigearan. Chuir sinn cuideam cuideachd air cho cudromach sa tha e freagairt a thoirt don chothrom beachdan a thoirt seachad, gus cuideachadh le bhith a' toirt fiosrachadh don phròiseas airson an dreachd stiùiridh ath-sgrùdadh.

Pàipear 3.1



- 2.5. Bha Bòrd na Gàidhlig cuideachd an sàs le oifigearan gu h-inmheach, buill a' bhùird againn, agus luchd-ùidh nas fharsainghe gus beachdan susbainteach is togail a chuir a-steach a tha sinn an dòchas a chuireas ri stiùireadh làidir is èifeachdach.
- 2.6. Thug Bòrd na Gàidhlig nota comhairle oifigeil do Riaghaltas na h-Alba, faic Pàipear Taic 1, a' soilleireachadh nam prìomh raointean a bha sinn a' faireachdainn a bu chòir don Mhinistear beachdachadh orra, a bha ag amas air co-chomhairleachadh, inbhean agus ionmhas. Thug sinn seachad beachd obrachaidh nas mionaidiche cuideachd airson deasbaid leis na prìomh oifigearan ann an Riaghaltas na h-Alba.
- 2.7. Tha oifigearan a' leantainn air ag obair gu dlùth le Riaghaltas na h-Alba agus a' toirt taic dhaibh gus Achd nan Cànanan Albannach a chur an gnìomh.

3. BBC Charter

- 3.1. Tha Ath-sgrùdadh Cairt a' BhBC a' dol air adhart. Tha MG ALBA a' stiùireadh na cùise seo a thaobh craoladh Gàidhlig. Tha an Cathraiche (Raibeart Dunbar) agus an Ceannard air a bhith ag obair còmhla ri MG ALBA agus a' toirt taic don dòigh-obrach aca ann a bhith a' conaltradh ris a' BhBC.

4. Tairgsean

- 4.1. Chaidh a' chompanaidh Maraid Design fhadthadhadh gus làrach-lìn ùr a thogail airson Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Nì an obair seo cinnteach gum bi làrach sùbailte againn a bhios freagarrach do na feumalachdan a th' againn an-dràsta agus do leasachaidhean san àm ri teachd.
- 4.2. Chaidh Astar Media fhadthadhadh gus sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air roghainnean airson soirbheachas a chomharrachadh. Bheir iad aithris sa Mhàrt, le fòcas air modail dhuaisean a libhrigeadh san fhoghar.

5. Moladh

- 5.1. Gum bi na buill a' toirt fa-near dhan fhiosrachadh anns a' phàipear.

6. Prìomh Bhuaidhean Ro-innleachdail

- 6.1. **Buaidhean air Ionmhas:** Chan eil
- 6.2. **Buaidhean air Luchd-obrach:** Chan eil
- 6.3. **Buaidhean air Trèanadh:** Chan eil
- 6.4. **Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra:** Tha seo a' cuir ri adhartachadh agus libhrigeadh a' phlana chorporra agus an ro-innleachd conaltraidh bhon taobh a-muigh
- 6.5. **Buaidhean air Cliù:** Togaidh seo cliù na buidhne le barrachd mothachaidh air a' bhuidhinn agus an obair a bhios sinn a' dèanamh.



Pàipear 3.1

6.6. **Buidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd:** Chan eil

6.7. **Buidhean Laghail:** Chan eil

6.8. **Buidhean air Co-ionannachd:** Chan eil

6.9. **Buidhean air an Àrainneachd:** Chan eil

7. Ceanglaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnàthach | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

8. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

8.1. Thug an Sgioba Stiùiridh fa-near don phàipear seo air 27 Gearran 2026.

9. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

9.1. 'S e pàipear fosgailte a tha seo.

Advice to the Deputy First Minister from Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Draft Guidance on Areas of Linguistic Significance (ALS)

29 January 2026

Introduction

Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcome the opportunity for an early look at the draft guidance prior to a formal consultation. We have outlined the points which Bòrd na Gàidhlig stress must be considered and answered as a matter of priority. This will inform the final draft of the guidance and we look forward to engaging in the official consultation process.

Consultation

Bòrd na Gàidhlig would like to emphasise the importance of full and considered consultation, particularly in relation to new and previously undefined aspects of legislation. We support the testament made by the Scottish Government in the Island Communities Impact Assessments Guidance Toolkit 2:

“This guidance stresses the importance of consultation and robust community engagement so that islanders are given a platform to voice their opinions, concerns and suggestions.”

This information gathering exercise is not consultation, and it is important that consultation is undertaken in a transparent and open manner to provide a strong foundation for communities first experience of ALS. In the Scottish Parliament on 17 June the Deputy First Minister stated her “desire to consult extensively with relevant bodies and other members on the substance of the guidance.”

ALS are in fact communities, and it is essential that those communities feel a part of the process. To apply guidance without consultation risks a lack of alignment with communities and a potential that they feel this is something that is being ‘done to them’, which has a negative perspective, as opposed to something which provides opportunity. In essence, we must ensure that communities are engaged and part of this process.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig believe that a formal consultation is required, and we would recommend that includes a public engagement and consultation process.

Standards

Bòrd na Gàidhlig would emphasise that it will be very difficult to follow the ALS guidance without a full set of agreed standards. We would caution on the risks in relation to

Pàipear 3.1 PT 1

implementation and to ensure community expectation is linked to a clear understanding of what they should expect of bodies in areas in ALS.

Obligations on public bodies in relation to commitments underlined in the 2005 Gaelic Languages (Scotland) Act are still to be adhered to. Bòrd na Gàidhlig note the importance of **general standards** for all local authority areas with Gaelic language plans in both service delivery and operational aspects.

General standards should continue to be applied to ALS along with additional standards. These additional standards will inform the obligations on local authorities and evidence the differential when the status of ALS is applied.

Standards will therefore be a defining feature of ALS and it is recommended that they are published, with an agreed monitoring model, alongside the final guidance on ALS. Due to the complex nature of standards, if it is not feasible to publish at the same time as the guidance is published, Bòrd na Gàidhlig would strongly advise that there is an agreed framework and delivery timetable to ensure that they are available within a period not greater than 12 months after the guidance is made available. In addition, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should oversee a steering group, appointed by the Minister, which would undertake the drafting and public consultation process necessary to ensure the standards are comprehensive.

Finance

Bòrd na Gàidhlig remains committed to the view that we expressed in our response to the financial memorandum for the Scottish Languages Bill.

“The Bill proposes the designation of Areas of Linguistic Significance, and this is welcomed. There will however be a need for additional investment in these areas if this initiative is to be anything other than a descriptive label.”

Bòrd na Gàidhlig would welcome an indication of an additional funding model which will support the introduction and development of areas of ALS. Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcome the additional funding which has been provided for Gaelic activity and community development. However, this is not close to closing the funding gap on where Gaelic funding should be, as outlined in our response to the financial memorandum. With continued funding pressures on public bodies and local authorities, it is important that they and communities are given the tools to deliver on the standards and ensure ALS has a positive impact on the development of Gaelic.



Pàipear 4.1

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Mairt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Aithisg air PCCan a' Phlana Chorporra 2023-28 |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Airson Deasbad |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 4.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Iain Mac a' Mhaoilein, Stiùiriche Leasachaidh |
| Pàipearan-taic: | Chan eil |

1. Adhbhar

- 1.1. Airson fiosrachadh a thoirt do Bhuill a' Bhùird-stiùiridh mu adhartas le coileanadh nam prìomh chomharran coileanaidh a tha air aithneachadh anns a' Phlana Chorporra 2023-28 agus airson fios a thoirt seachad air an adhartas leis a' Phlana Gnìomh.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Prìomh aithris

- 2.1. Dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas ri Plana Nàiseanta 2023-28 anns an Dùbhlachd 2023 agus chaidh am Plana fhèin fhoillseachadh ron Nollaig 2023. Leis a sin cha deach am Plana Chorporra ùr aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig chun a' Bhùird-stiùiridh airson aonta chun a' Mhàirt 2024 agus an uair sin air adhart chun an Riaghaltas airson aonta foirmeil. Dh'aontaich an Riaghaltas ris a' Phlana Chorporra san t-Sultain 2024.
- 2.2. Tha adhartas mu choinneamh nan targaidean sa Phlana Chorporra far a bheil sinn an dùil a bhith aig an ìre seo. Chan eil sinn air raointean sam bith sa Phlana a chomharrachadh far a bheil sinn an dùil ri bacaidhean mòra a thaobh crìochnachadh. Ach, bidh na prìomh bhacaidhean co-cheangailte ri maoinachadh, com-pàirt luchd-ùidh ann am prìomh ro-innleachdan agus comas buidhne. Bithear a' cumail sùil orra sin uile tro ar pròiseasan cunnairt, agus tha iad nam prìomh amas aig an Sgioba-stiùiridh.
- 2.3. Tha an t-adhartas a chaidh a dhèanamh air na na Prìomh Chomharran Coileanaidh (PCC) anns a' Phlana Chorporra airson 2023-28 ri fhaicinn sa chlàr gu h-ìosal:

| PRÌOMH CHOMHARRA COILEANAIDH | | Adhartas gu Gearran 2026 |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| PCC1 | Barrachd chothroman do dhaoine an cuid sgilean Gàidhlig a chleachdadh aig an taigh, san obair agus sna coimhearsnachdan aca | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Phlana Gàidhlig Coimhearsnachd ann an Uibhist agus Iar Thuath Leòdhais ga cur an gnìomh agus adhartas ri fhaicinn. – aithisg aig a' choinneimh air adhartas as an t- |

Pàipear 4.1



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| | | <p>Ealain Sgitheanach le iarrtas airson taic a thighinn a staigh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coinneamhan ris an Riaghaltas agus Comhairlean air Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte • 12 Prìomh bhuidhnean libhrigidh Gàidhlig a' dèanamh adhartas air na Planaichean ro-innleachdail aca • Lìonra Oifigearan Leasachadh Gàidhlig a' leantainn orra leis an obair aca – coinneamhan gach mìos. • Sgeamaichean tabhartasan a' cumail taic ri tachartasan anns na coimhearsnachdan le 53 pròiseactan a faighinn taic tro sgeama Taic Freumhan Choimhearsnachd eadar 2026 agus 2028. |
| PCC2 | Barrachd taic do sholar sna Tràth-bhliadhnaichean | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sgeama thabhartasan tràth-bhliadhnaichean air a libhrigeadh (taic ri 29 buidhnean) • Pàipear air adhartas le ro-innleachd airson seirbheisean airson tràth-bhliadhnaichean a' tighinn dhan bhùird. |
| PCC3 | Brosnaich buannachdan Foghlam tro Meadhan na Gàidhlig (FtG) is Foghlam Luchd-ionnsachaidh (FLi) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maoineachadh ga thoirt seachad airson obair Chomann nam Pàrant. • Stiùireadh Reachdail airson Foghlam Gàidhlig air a chur air adhart chun an Riaghaltais |
| PCC4 | Barrachd taic do dh'ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taic ga thoirt seachad gu SMO airson FICE a thoirt air adhart mar dòigh adhartas air comasan a thomhais. • Fiosrachadh air adhartas air Ro-innleachd ionnsachaidh Inbhich air a' chlàr aig an ath choinneimh den Bhòrd |
| PCC5 | Tha barrachd àite aig a' Ghàidhlig ann an aithne nàiseanta na h-Alba, aithne-dùthcha iom-fhillte is fhosgailte | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiùireadh Reachdail air Planaichean Gàidhlig ùr air aontachadh leis an Riaghaltas • Bile nan Cànan Albannach air aontachadh le Pàrlamaid na h-Alba • Taic maoineachaidh a bharrachd bhon Riaghaltas airson Sgeama Oifigearan ùr air a chleachdadh agus taic ga thoirt seachad airson 24 Buidhnean Coimhearsnachd. • Sgeama Planaichean Gàidhlig a' toirt taic do Bhuidhnean aig a bheil Planaichean Gàidhlig. |
| PCC6 | Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig èifeachdach na dhreuchd ceannardais agus a' cur ri | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seirbheisean gan toirt seachad taobh a staigh a' bhuidseit mar a tha ri fhaicinn anns na cunntasan bliadhna |

Pàipear 4.1



| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | libhrigeadh Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig 4 san fharsaingeachd | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freagairtean air an cur a-staigh air co-chomhairlean poblach • Frithealadh aig coinneamhan agus fòraman roinneil is nàiseanta |
|--|--|--|

2.4. Tha adhartas math ga dhèanamh agus tha sin gar fàgail ann an suidheachadh làidir airson an àm ri teachd.

2.5. Aig ìre luchd-obrach tha Plana Gnìomh againn a tha manaidsaran a' toirt air adhart.

3. Moladh

3.1. Gum bi na buill a' toirt fa-near dhan fhiosrachadh anns a' phàipear seo agus a' gabhail beachd air an adhartas.

3.2. Gun aontaich Buill ri aithisgean adhartais air PCCan a' Phlana Chorporra 2023-28 tighinn gu gach dàrna coinneamh dhen Bhòrd.

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdail

4.1. Buidhean air Ionmhas: Chan eil buaidh air ionmhas

4.2. Buidhean air Luchd-obrach: Tha am paipear a' toirt fa-near dhan obair a tha luchd-obrach a' Bhùird ris tron bhliadhna.

4.3. Buidhean air Trèanadh: Chan eil buaidh ann.

4.4. Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra: Tha an aithisg a' toirt iomradh air coileanadh amasan ro-innleachdail agus corporra

4.5. Buidhean air Cliù: Tha e riatanach gum bi sinn a' coileanadh nam PCCan agus tha seo a' toirt buaidh air cliù Bhòrd na Gàidhlig.

4.6. Buidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: Chan eil gin ann.

4.7. Buidhean Laghail: Tha dleastanasan air Bòrd na Gàidhlig fo sgèith Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005.

4.8. Buidhean air Co-ionannachd: Chan eil buaidh ann.

4.9. Buidhean air an Àrainneachd: Chan eil buaidh ann.

5. Ceanglaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnàthach | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

Pàipear 4.1



6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

6.1. Thug an Sgioba-stiùiridh fa-near dhan phàipear seo air 27 Gearran 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

7.1. 'S e pàipear fosgailte a tha seo.



Pàipear 4.2

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Coinneamh: | Am Bòrd Stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Foghlam agus Ionnsachadh |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Airson fiosrachadh |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 4.2 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Calum Rothach, Ceannard Foghlaim is Phlanaichean |
| Pàipearan-taic: | PT1 Aithisg Rannsachaidh: Foghlam Àrd-sgoile tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig: Measadh agus Molaidhean Leasachaidh PT2 – Cearcall Leasachadh a' Churraicealaim |

1. Adhbhar

Tha am pàipear seo a' toirt cunntas air aithisg rannsachaidh cudromach a chuireadh air gnìomh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus cuideachd air iomairt nàiseanta a bheir buaidh air foghlam agus ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Priomh aithrisean

2.1. Foghlam Àrd-sgoile tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig: Measadh agus Molaidhean Leasachaidh

- 2.1.1. Air 4 Gearran fhuair Bòrd na Gàidhlig tionndadh deireadh aithisg rannsachaidh Foghlam Àrd-sgoile tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig: Measadh agus Molaidhean Leasachaidh.
- 2.1.2. Bha Bòrd na Gàidhlig ag aithneachadh an diofar a th' ann eadar solar foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig san àrd-sgoil (FtMGAS) an taca ri foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig sa bhun-sgoil. Bhathas a' sireadh taic gus molaidhean ullachadh do Riaghaltas na h-Alba is ùghdarrasan ionadail airson feumalachdan aig theaghlaichean a tha taghadh FtMG a choileanadh nas fheàrr.
- 2.1.3. Bhathas airson gum biodh an rannsachadh a' cur air adhart molaidhean do Riaghaltas na h-Alba, ùghdarrasan ionadail agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig a thaobh dòigh(ean) co-obrachail a leudaicheas foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig aig ìre na h-àrd-sgoile a ghabhadh a chur an gnìomh bhon bhliadhna sgoile 2026/27 no 2027/28 air adhart.
- 2.1.4. Chaidh cumhnant na h-obrach a thoirt do Jim Whannel agus don Ollamh Wilson McLeod air 9 Iuchar 2025. Lean an rannsachadh eadar an t-Iuchar 2025 agus am Faoilleach 2026.

Pàipear 4.2



- 2.1.5. Tha an rannsachadh stèidhichte air sealladh farsaing air solar Foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtMGAS), cliath reachdail agus poileasaidh FtMGAS, sgrùdadh mhodailean FtMGAS anns a' Chuimrigh agus ann an Eirinn agus air coinneamhan le oifigearan ùghdarrasan ionadail, buidhnean nàiseanta, pàrantan agus òigridh.
- 2.1.6. Tha molaidhean an cois an rannsachaidh do dh'ùghdarradsan ionadail, buidhnean nàiseanta, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (gu h-ìosal) agus Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Tha an rannsachadh a' meas Bòrd na Gàidhlig mar bhuidheann chudromach ro-innleachdail.

2.2. Molaidhean do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig às an Aithisg Rannsachaidh

- 2.2.1. Vision, Leadership and Local Authority Issues
- 2.2.1.1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life national working party with representation from LAs and national immersion providers to review current practice, identify challenges and deliver a new, refreshed teacher immersion option for teachers.
- 2.2.1.2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life working party of LA HR officers and LA Lead Officers for Gaelic to identify key challenges and successes in supporting GME and GMSE recruitment and retention and agree recommendations with the group on how best practice can be shared and how high-quality HR support for the GMSE sector can be sustained. The group should deliberate on how more attractive contract offers can be made (e.g. how might a current part-time contract be augmented to full-time, potentially as an inter-authority agreement or to enable wider sectoral support such as joint working with e-Sgoil etc.).
- 2.2.2. Teachers and Initial Teacher Education
- 2.2.2.1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should liaise directly with Comann Luchd-teagaisg Àrd-sgoile (CLAS), the organisation for Gaelic secondary teachers, to agree a development plan for the organisation. This should aim to greatly increase the percentage of GMSE teachers in the group so that nationally the body can represent the sector more effectively (at present around 25% of GMSE teachers are active in CLAS). This should include investigating the feasibility of funding to enable a teacher or teachers to work on building CLAS as an organisation and its ability to support all GMSE teachers. The secondee could work on building networking (in liaison with Stòrlann Nàiseanta), moderation groups, subject development networks etc. A CLAS secondee may also be able to foster greater sharing of resources created by teachers (again working with

Pàipear 4.2



Stòrlann Nàiseanta).

- 2.2.2.2. In its monitoring role relating to Gaelic Language Plans under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the new developments taking place around the provisions of the Scottish Languages Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should monitor and report very closely on improvements in GMSE provision in each local authority.
- 2.2.2.3. Working with the ITE providers, the Scottish Funding Council and other relevant partners, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short-life working party to review current ITE provision for GMSE and identify where there could be increased provision (e.g. the University of Edinburgh delivers a Primary and Gaelic degree course with inbuilt immersion. This could be reviewed as a potential option for piloting a PGDE Secondary with inbuilt immersion). A report should be compiled within a short period of time with summary details of all pathways into GMSE teaching and the recommendations for new development. This may include recommencing PGDE provision for Gaelic-medium at Aberdeen University and including PGDE Secondary GME in the PGDE programme available at Edinburgh University.
- 2.2.2.4. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should regularly audit funding streams such as the Tabhartasan Foghlaim scheme, community grants etc to be satisfied that appropriate support continues to be provided for the GMSE sector (as happens at present).

2.2.3. Inter-authority Cooperation

- 2.2.3.1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should provide professional support and advice for inter-authority GMSE development projects and for GMSE Inter-authority Working Parties.

2.2.4. Thèid an rannsachadh fhoillseachadh Dihaoine 13 Màrt 2026.

2.3. Cearcall Leasachadh a' Churraicealaim

- 2.3.1. Mar thoradh air molaidhean aithisg OECD ann an 2021 chaidh Cearcall Leasachadh a' Churraicealaim (CLC) ann an Alba a stèidheachadh – prògram 10 bliadhnaichean airson Curraicealam airson Sàr-mhathais ath-sgrùdadh agus ùrachadh. 'S e amas an leasachaidh soillearachd a thoirt air a' churraicealam, na dàimhean eadar eòlas, sgilean agus tuigse a dhaigneachadh agus piseach a thoirt air leanailteas agus ciall bho aoisean 3 gu 18.
- 2.3.2. Tha Litearrachd agus Gàidhlig agus Gàidhlig do luchd-ionnsachaidh air a bhith nam pàirtean den leasachadh churraicealaim seo bhon fhìor thoiseach. A thaobh Litearrachd agus Gàidhlig tha an leasachadh ga thoirt air aghaidh le oifigearan

Pàipear 4.2

foghlaim Gàidhlig le Foghlam Alba. Tha Bun-bhuidheann ann am co-bhanntachd ri Buidheann Co-obrachaidh ag obair air smuaintean mòra, bun-bheachdan agus cruth curraicealam Litearrachd agus Gàidhlig le Buidheann Stiùiridh a' toirt stiùireadh agus mholaidhean don phròiseas aig coinneamhan ràitheil. Tha Ceannard Foghlaim is Phlanaichean Bhòrd na Gàidhlig na bhall air a' Bhuidheann Stiùiridh seo.

- 2.3.3. Tha CLC ann do Chànanan cuideachd. Tha a' Ghàidhlig mar chànan do luchd-ionnsachaidh air a bhith an cois leasachadh curraicealam chànanan bho thùs. Tha a h-uile cuspair sgoile a' leantainn an aon phròiseis leasachaidh; a' cruthachadh smuaintean mòra agus bhun-bheachdan agus an uair sin a' dealbhachadh frèam teicnigeach a bhios a' toirt cruth airson lìbhrigeadh eòlas agus sgilean aig gach ìre a' chuspair sin. Tha na h-aon bhuidhnean (bun-, co-obrachaidh agus stiùiridh) an sàs ann an CLC airson gach cuspair.
- 2.3.4. Thathas an dùil gun tèid dreachd stiùireadh curraicealaim a sgaoileadh do sgoiltean aig toiseach bliadhna sgoile 2026-27.
- 2.3.5. 'S e leasachadh curraicealaim bunaiteach agus cudromach a tha seo a bheir buaidh air lìbhrigeadh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig agus foghlam Gàidhlig do luchd-ionnsachaidh air feadh Alba

3. Moladh

- 3.1 Thathas ag iarraidh air Buill toirt fa-near don fhiosrachadh air an aithisg rannsachaidh air FtMGAS.
- 3.2 Thathas a' moladh gum beachdaich oifigearan a' Bhùird air an aithisg rannsachaidh agus na molaidhean a tha innte, a' gabhail a-steach còmhraidhean le prìomh luchd-ùidh, agus gun tèid pàipear le beachdan agus gnìomhan a thoirt gu coinneamh a' Bhùird Stiùiridh san Dàmhair.
- 3.3 Thathas ag iarraidh seisean fiosrachaidh a chur air dòigh do Bhuill le oifigearan Foghlam Alba a mhìnicheas leud na h-obrach agus buaidh Cearcall Leasachadh a' Churraicealam.

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdach

- 4.1. Buaidhean air Ionmhas: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.2. Buaidhean air Luchd-obrach: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.3. Buaidhean air Trèanadh: Chan eil buaidh ann.
- 4.4. Ceangalaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra: Tha an obair seo a' cur ri Prìomh Chomharran Coileanaidh (PCC) bho Phlana Corporra Bhòrd an Gàidhlig mar a leanas: PCC 3 - Brosnaich buannachdan FtG agus Fli agus PCC 4 Barrachd taic do dh'ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig PCC 5 - Tha barrachd àite aig a' Ghàidhlig ann an aithne nàiseanta na h-Alba, aithne-dùthcha iom-fhillte is fhosgailte



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- 4.5. Buaidhean air Cliù: Tha e riatanach gum bi sinn a' coileanadh nan gnìomhan agus prìomhachasan a tha a' tuiteam air a Bhòrd agus tha seo a' toirt buaidh air cliù Bhòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 4.6. Buaidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.7. Buaidhean Laghail: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.8. Buaidhean air Co-ionannachd: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.9. Buaidhean air an Àrainneachd: Chan eil gin ann.

5. Ceangalaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Eaconomaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnathach | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

- 6.1. Ghabh an Sgioba-stiùiridh fa-near a' phàipeir seo air 23 Gearran 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

- 7.1. Tha am pàipear seo ri breithneachadh air san seisean fosgailte den choinneimh.

**Foghlam Àrd-sgoile tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig:
Measadh agus Molaidhean Leasachaidh**

Aithisg Rannsachaidh do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig

**Gaelic-medium Secondary Education:
Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement**

A Research Report for Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Jim Whannel

Wilson McLeod

February 2026

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--|
| ASN | Additional Support Needs |
| BGE | Broad General Education |
| BnG | Bòrd na Gàidhlig |
| CLPL | Career-long Professional Learning |
| CnaG | Comunn na Gàidhlig |
| EIS | Educational Institute of Scotland |
| EM | English medium |
| EME | English-medium education |
| FTE | full-time equivalent |
| GLE | Gaelic learners education |
| GM | Gaelic medium |
| GME | Gaelic-medium education |
| GMPE | Gaelic-medium primary education |
| GMSE | Gaelic-medium secondary education |
| GTCS | General Teaching Council for Scotland |
| HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools |
| IM | Irish medium |
| IME | Irish-medium education |
| ITE | initial teacher education |
| LA | local authority |
| PGDE | Professional Graduate Diploma in Education |
| SG | Scottish Government |
| SIP | School Improvement Plan |
| SMO | Sabhal Mòr Ostaig |
| SQ | Standards and Quality |
| WM | Welsh medium |
| WME | Welsh-medium education |

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Executive Summary

This report presents a detailed review of Gaelic-medium secondary education (GMSE) in Scotland, examining its historical development, the extent of current provision and key challenges, and offering a wide range of recommendations for improvement.

The report is based on substantial fieldwork and desk research, including interviews with over sixty representatives from local authorities, national education bodies, teacher education providers, Gaelic organisations, parents, teachers, and pupils across Scotland.

Module A1: GMSE in Scotland: an overview of provision

Module A1 gives an overview of current GMSE provision in Scotland. Historically, GMSE has existed since the early 1990s. An important 1994 HMIE report argued against the feasibility of wide-ranging GMSE provision, suggesting a narrower focus on Gaelic language and culture. Despite this, GMSE developed in a piecemeal fashion, with subjects offered through Gaelic depending largely on staff availability. This legacy has produced variation between schools, particularly when compared with the relative consistency of GMPE.

In numerical terms, GMSE has expanded significantly. Between 2014–15 and 2024–25, pupil numbers increased by 67%, reaching 2,011 pupils. Nevertheless, GMSE still accounts for only 0.6% of Scotland's secondary population, and growth has been unevenly distributed. Almost two-thirds of all GMSE pupils are enrolled in just four schools, while many schools operate with very small cohorts, some numbering fewer than ten pupils.

Progression and retention are persistent concerns. Although GMSE enrolment grew overall, progression from GMPE to GMSE has weakened in recent years. Drop-off rates from P7 to S1 rose sharply during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, before partially recovering. Further attrition occurs at key transition points within secondary education, particularly from S2 to S3 and from S3 to S4. Course choice, reduced subject options, timetabling constraints, and competition with STEM subjects all disadvantage Gaelic, especially where it is not mandatory. In some schools, Gaelic classes are delivered by withdrawing pupils from other subjects, placing additional burdens on learners.

The extent of Gaelic-medium provision vary markedly between schools. Only one school, Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, approaches full Gaelic immersion across the curriculum. Most other schools fall into categories where Gaelic is used for a limited number of subjects in the Broad General Education phase (S1–S3) and rarely extends into the Senior Phase. In many schools, Gaelic is restricted to the language subject alone. Even within the BGE phase, Gaelic input often diminishes by S3, despite national guidance emphasising the importance of sustained immersion. Variation also exists in the number of Gaelic teaching periods per week and in the use of bilingual or partial Gaelic delivery, further weakening immersion.

These structural issues contribute to what Education Scotland has termed the “Gaelic attainment gap.” Because Gaelic is not compulsory beyond the early years of secondary in most schools, many pupils leave GMSE without formal qualifications in Gaelic literacy. Nationally, fewer than two-thirds of pupils entering GMSE achieve a recognised qualification in Literacy and Gàidhlig, and outside Glasgow and Edinburgh this falls to around half. Education Scotland identifies curriculum design, transitions, timetabling, and weak tracking and monitoring systems as the primary drivers of this gap, rather than pupil motivation or staff commitment.

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The consequence is that many young people leave GME without the fluency or confidence required to use Gaelic in adulthood or Gaelic-related employment.

Examination data reinforce these concerns. While entries for National 5 Gàidhlig have increased, growth has not matched the rise in pupil numbers, and Higher and Advanced Higher entries remain low or have declined. Uptake of examinations in subjects other than Gaelic through the medium of Gaelic is extremely limited, both in the number of subjects available and the number of candidates entered. This contrasts sharply with Welsh-medium education, where a far broader range of subjects is examined through Welsh. Although recent policy changes, such as additional exam time for Gaelic-medium candidates from 2026, may help, the overall picture remains one of constrained curricular ambition.

Teacher supply is identified as the single greatest barrier to sustainable GMSE development. While pupil numbers have risen sharply, the number of secondary teachers delivering GMSE has increased by only around 21% over the past decade. The workforce is ageing, recruitment pipelines are weak, and very few teachers of non-language subjects are able to teach confidently through Gaelic. Data inconsistencies between national bodies further complicate workforce planning. Although several pathways into GMSE teaching exist, including specialist PGDE routes, immersion programmes, and bursaries, the scale of uptake remains insufficient to meet current or future demand.

Planning, leadership, and accountability are additional weaknesses. Analysis of School Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality reports reveals that GMSE is often poorly differentiated from English-medium provision, making it difficult to assess progress or identify specific development priorities. While some local authorities have embedded Gaelic planning more systematically, provision is inconsistent nationally, and access to planning documentation is often limited. Interviews suggest support for clearer GMSE-specific planning but also concerns about additional workload for small teaching teams.

HMIE inspection evidence paints a mixed picture. Inspectors consistently praise the commitment of teachers and pupils, improvements in school ethos, and the expansion of extracurricular Gaelic activities. However, they also repeatedly call for clearer curriculum pathways, stronger immersion pedagogy, improved strategic leadership, better timetabling, and more explicit links between Gaelic education and employability. Recent HMIE reporting emphasises the need for improved curriculum coherence, stronger vision and values for Gaelic, better parental engagement, enhanced collaboration between schools and authorities, and improved national data on GMSE outcomes. Proposals include the development of a digital all-Gaelic school and stronger safeguards for staffing allocations.

Overall, the document concludes that while GMSE has expanded in scale, it remains structurally fragile and uneven in quality. Without coordinated national and local action—particularly in staffing, curriculum design, immersion, assessment, and strategic planning—GMSE will continue to fall short of its potential to produce fluent Gaelic speakers and to support the long-term sustainability of the Gaelic language in Scotland.

Module A2: The legal and policy framework for GMSE

Module A2 examines the legal and policy framework governing GMSE, highlighting how recent legislative reforms have significantly reshaped responsibilities while stopping short of creating enforceable rights to GMSE provision. Despite growing policy attention, parents and pupils still have no legal entitlement to GMSE, and local authorities (LAs) retain wide discretion over whether and how it is delivered.

At the core of the framework is the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended by the *Scottish Languages Act 2025*. These amendments modernise earlier provisions by replacing references to “Gaelic-speaking areas” with explicit recognition of GME and GLE across Scotland. However, the overarching duty on LAs remains qualified by the requirement that provision be “adequate and efficient,” limiting enforceability. Recent amendments relating to residential outdoor education further require delivering such provision through Gaelic for pupils in GME.

The *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005*, also amended in 2025, continues to play a central role. Responsibility for the national Gaelic language plan has shifted from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to the Scottish Government, now termed the national Gaelic language strategy. The 2025 reforms also expand regulatory powers, allowing the Government to set standards for Gaelic provision in education.

Procedural protections for GMSE are strengthened through amendments to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, which require full statutory consultation before discontinuing GMSE or related transport arrangements. These provisions acknowledge the practical barriers to accessing GMSE, particularly where provision depends on cross-authority arrangements.

The *Education (Scotland) Act 2016*, supplemented by the 2025 Act, introduces wide-ranging duties on both the Scottish Government and LAs to promote, facilitate, and support GME and GLE. New provisions enable stronger oversight, require Qualifications Scotland to ensure an appropriate range of Gaelic-medium qualifications, and oblige authorities to support pupils in accessing GMSE in neighbouring areas where local provision is unavailable.

A particularly innovative development is the new statutory process for assessing the viability of all-Gaelic schools, potentially including secondary schools. However, the strict definition of an “all-Gaelic school” may limit the practical application of these provisions at secondary level.

Finally, the statutory guidance and *Education Scotland Advice on Gaelic Education* are considered, which emphasise immersion, continuity from primary to secondary, curriculum ambition, and extracurricular Gaelic use. While these frameworks provide direction, they allow substantial flexibility, contributing to ongoing variation in GMSE provision nationwide.

Module A3: Welsh-and Irish-medium secondary education

Module A3 provides an overview of Welsh- and Irish-medium secondary education, with particular focus on governance structures, planning frameworks, and the role (or absence) of inter-authority cooperation. While Wales shares similarities with Scotland in its local authority–led education system, Ireland operates a centrally administered model, meaning inter-authority cooperation is largely irrelevant there.

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In Wales, responsibility for education lies with 22 local authorities, which control school organisation and staffing. Welsh plays a far more prominent role in education than Gaelic does in Scotland: all pupils study Welsh until age 16, around 25% of pupils attend Welsh-medium or bilingual education, and Welsh-medium secondary education has existed since 1956.

The *Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025* significantly strengthens planning requirements. Each LA must now produce a detailed “local Welsh in education strategic plan” aligned with national targets, notably the aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 under *Cymraeg 2050*. These plans must set out concrete steps to increase both the number of pupils receiving primarily Welsh-medium education and the number of Welsh-medium schools. The Act also introduces a national framework to support these goals.

Schools are categorised into three language types based on minimum percentages of Welsh-language education: “Primarily Welsh” (80%), “Dual Language” (50%), and “Primarily English, partly Welsh” (10%). In 2023–24, most Welsh secondary schools remained primarily English-medium, though the government plans to require all schools to meet at least the 10% threshold by 2030. Welsh-medium education is well established across many subjects, but there is a sharp decline in uptake of Welsh language study from GCSE to A Level, with candidate numbers falling substantially over the past two decades.

All Welsh LAs provide Welsh-medium primary education, but three do not offer Welsh-medium secondary provision, requiring pupils to travel across boundaries. To address such issues, the Welsh Government established a Welsh Medium Secondary Planning Group in 2024 to support collaborative planning across South East Wales, though this work is still at an early stage.

In contrast, education in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is centrally administered, so inter-authority cooperation is not a defining issue. Irish-medium education (IME) is organised differently within and outside the Gaeltacht. In the Gaeltacht, Irish-medium post-primary provision is stable, guided by language-based criteria under the Policy on Gaeltacht Education, though community use of Irish is weaker than official designation suggests.

Outside the Gaeltacht, Irish-medium post-primary provision is limited relative to primary education, with many counties lacking Gaelcholáistí. Transition rates from IM primary to IM secondary are low due to limited availability, travel barriers, and parental concerns. Since 2009, national planning mechanisms have favoured IM units within English-medium schools over new standalone IM schools, a policy widely criticised by advocacy organisations.

In Northern Ireland, despite a statutory duty to encourage IME, post-primary provision remains limited and geographically uneven, with unmet demand. While plans exist for new Irish-medium secondary schools, progress has been slow.

Module B: Meetings with local authority officers, national organisations and parents and young people

This research project ran from July 2025 to January 2026 and involved extensive engagement with stakeholders across the GMSE sector. In total, 67 meetings were held with LA officers, national organisations, parents, young people, and representatives of the Scottish Government and its agencies. Engagement included online interviews (mainly via Teams) and school visits to Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and James Gillespie’s High School.

All participants were provided with project information and consent documentation, with tailored consent processes for young people, parents, and professionals. Interviews followed

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

structured question frameworks adapted to each group, while allowing participants to raise additional issues. Gaelic was used for written correspondence with Gaelic-speaking officers and for interviews with young people, while English was used in most other interviews.

Participation was wide-ranging, covering 23 local authorities and 19 national organisations. Despite challenges related to school holidays and tight reporting deadlines, engagement was strong, reflecting a shared recognition across Scottish education of the need to reflect strategically on GMSE and to improve provision.

Vision, leadership, and local authority issues

A central finding was the highly variable nature of GMSE provision across Scotland, both between and within local authorities. While Gaelic-medium early years and primary education are broadly understood as equivalent to English-medium provision (with immersion as a defining feature), GMSE provision ranges from substantial curriculum delivery through Gaelic to situations where Gaelic is taught largely as a single subject.

There is no shared, operational national understanding of what GMSE should constitute in practice. Education Scotland considers that this is defined in the *Advice on Gaelic Education*, while many LAs and national organisations argued that greater clarity is needed—particularly around immersion expectations in the Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase. While the long-term aspiration of full curriculum delivery through Gaelic was widely supported, stakeholders stressed the need for realism and sensitivity to local circumstances.

Human resource challenges were consistently raised. Recruitment, retention, and workforce planning for GMSE require specialist expertise that is not always available. Examples of good practice were highlighted, including relocation packages in Edinburgh, housing support in Argyll and Bute, and the creation of promoted posts to strengthen career pathways. However, concerns remained about insecure contracts, part-time posts, and insufficient incentives.

Professional learning (CLPL) was another recurring issue, particularly for teachers working in small or isolated GMSE teams and for school leaders without Gaelic or immersion backgrounds. Supporting teachers' Gaelic fluency, subject-specific terminology, and literacy skills was identified as critical. Uptake of the Bòrd na Gàidhlig teacher immersion scheme has been very low, due to funding gaps, staffing cover challenges, uncertainty about posts on return, and geographical barriers. Greater flexibility, including hybrid delivery models, was proposed.

Curriculum development

Curriculum development emerged as a major opportunity and challenge for GMSE. Stakeholders widely agreed that the wider curriculum—youth work, cultural activities, sports, arts, and residential experiences delivered through Gaelic—is central to strengthening fluency, confidence, and identity. Support from organisations such as Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, and Tobar an Dualchais was seen as invaluable, particularly in providing authentic, community-linked Gaelic experiences.

Residential and shared experiences were highlighted as especially powerful, both for connecting young people from different GMSE settings and for linking urban provision with more traditional Gaelic-speaking areas. There was strong support for expanding such opportunities and for exploring models similar to Welsh-language residential centres.

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

However, clarity around curriculum pathways and subject availability varied greatly. Parents and teachers expressed concern about mixed classes involving Gaelic learners and GME pupils, vocational and apprenticeship pathways, and limited subject choice. Several respondents stressed that curriculum expansion should prioritise literacy-rich areas that directly support Gaelic fluency.

Structural barriers within schools—such as timetabling and column structures—were identified as inhibiting uptake of Gaelic-medium subjects. There was also support for embedding Gaelic awareness within GMSE, helping pupils understand the value of bilingualism and develop a strong Gaelic identity.

Recent national developments, including the Curriculum Improvement Cycle and the Centre for Teaching Excellence, were widely welcomed. Their early and explicit inclusion of GME was seen as critical. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of linking GMSE curriculum provision to employability and careers, noting positive examples such as Gaelic-focused careers events.

Parents and young people

Parents were consistently described as highly committed to GME, with their enthusiasm seen as foundational to the sector's development. Nonetheless, parents raised significant concerns. These included the weak visibility and ethos of GMSE in many dual-language schools, insufficient internal signage, and the marginalisation of small GMSE cohorts within larger English-medium environments.

Meeting additional support needs (ASN) in GMSE was a major concern, often cited as parents' foremost issue. This included access to specialist staff, appropriate assessment, and Gaelic-medium resources. Parents also noted uncertainty around curriculum delivery, progression pathways, examinations available through Gaelic, and future planning by LAs—issues that directly affected confidence in the system.

Parents strongly valued the wider curriculum and cultural opportunities provided through Gaelic but felt provision was insufficient and oversubscribed. They expressed strong support for greater inter-authority cooperation to build critical mass, improve cost-effectiveness, and enhance social and educational experiences for young people.

Teachers and initial teacher education

Teachers highlighted workload pressures associated with translating and creating resources, often duplicating work across authorities. While support from Stòrlann Nàiseanta and recent national initiatives was welcomed, resource creation remains a major burden.

Teacher isolation was a recurring theme, with many GMSE teachers working alone or in very small teams. This contributed to fragility in provision, difficulties with moderation, and concerns about sustainability. While digital collaboration was emerging, stakeholders stressed the need for more systematic solutions.

Issues relating to national qualifications included marking capacity, translation errors, limited Understanding Standards materials, and the need for Gaelic-speaking markers. Teachers also supported greater recognition of GMSE expertise through potential accredited specialisms linked to GTCS registration.

ITE providers highlighted persistent challenges in securing suitable placements, particularly for less commonly taught subjects and rural locations. Student numbers remain very small and

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

inconsistent across subjects. Proposals included developing e-Sgoil placements, designating GMSE ITE hub schools, and strengthening national placement coordination.

National policy and inter-authority cooperation

The Scottish Languages Act was widely welcomed as a landmark development with significant potential to strengthen GMSE. However, stakeholders emphasised the need for clear implementation timelines, adequate resourcing, and strong local authority support structures. Suggestions included a dedicated liaison officer to support LAs in implementing the Act.

Formal inter-authority statutory education delivery is currently rare in Scotland, but the research identified emerging and potential models. Notably, joint planning between East Lothian, Midlothian, and Edinburgh for shared GMPE provision could become a significant precedent. Other examples included shared CLPL arrangements and online delivery of senior courses.

There was broad support in principle among LAs and parents for inter-authority GMSE provision, particularly to build scale, reduce teacher isolation, and improve sustainability, provided transport and consultation were handled effectively.

Structural models and future direction

Finally, the issue of stand-alone GMSE schools versus dual-language provision was raised repeatedly. With only one stand-alone GMSE secondary school currently operating, several feasibility studies are underway or proposed. The report recommends that authorities with substantial GMSE provision, including Edinburgh, Highland, and North Lanarkshire, formally review and publish plans for developing stand-alone or campus-based GMSE provision.

Overall, the research highlights strong commitment across the system, alongside significant structural, workforce, and strategic challenges. Addressing these coherently will be essential to securing a sustainable and high-quality future for GMSE in Scotland.

Module C: Recommendations

Module C sets out a comprehensive set of recommendations to strengthen GMSE. These are organised across local authorities, national organisations, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and the Scottish Government, with additional cross-cutting proposals focused on research and evidence. Collectively, they aim to address persistent weaknesses in planning, leadership, workforce capacity, curriculum delivery, and inter-authority cooperation, while aligning the GMSE sector more firmly with the opportunities created by the Scottish Languages Act.

Local authorities

Local authorities are urged to establish consistent and transparent GMSE improvement planning and quality reporting arrangements. All GMSE-delivering schools should have formal improvement plans in place, either as discrete GMSE plans or as embedded sections within whole-school planning frameworks. These plans should be publicly available to support parental confidence and national oversight. Strategic leadership for GMSE should be clearly assigned within senior leadership teams, with appropriate professional learning to ensure leaders understand immersion education and sector-specific challenges.

Workforce planning is a central priority. LAs should audit teacher qualifications, Gaelic language confidence, and professional learning needs, ensuring funded access to Gaelic language development and immersion-focused CLPL. Protected time for GMSE teachers is

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

recommended to support additional workload demands such as resource creation, moderation, curriculum development, and participation in national initiatives. Measures such as shared translators, adjusted class sizes, and increased promoted posts — potentially funded jointly across authorities — are highlighted as effective practice.

Curriculum development should extend beyond subject delivery to include the wider Gaelic curriculum, with LAs encouraged to reduce barriers for organisations providing cultural and enrichment activities. Authorities should closely monitor curriculum uptake, attainment, and transitions from Gaelic-medium primary to secondary education, with the explicit aim that all learners leave GMSE with appropriate Gaelic qualifications. Parity of provision for additional support needs between English- and Gaelic-medium sectors is emphasised.

Inter-authority cooperation is identified as essential for sustainability. Specific clusters of LAs are encouraged to explore joint GMSE provision, shared staffing models, digital delivery, and collaborative leadership structures. Any such arrangements must prioritise educational quality, clarity for parents, and alignment with statutory guidance.

National organisations

Education Scotland is asked to play a stronger coordinating role by producing national summaries of GMSE improvement planning and ensuring curriculum reform initiatives explicitly evidence their impact on GMSE. Gaelic cultural and youth organisations are encouraged to develop education-focused strategies aligned to GMSE needs, including proposals for residential provision and enhanced youth pathways.

Stòrlann Nàiseanta is tasked with accelerating resource and terminology development, supporting Gaelic awareness across GMSE, and convening national working groups on resourcing challenges. Skills Development Scotland should strengthen the visibility of Gaelic within careers education, ensuring learners understand the long-term value of bilingualism and that careers support aligns with available GMSE pathways.

Qualifications Scotland, GTCS, and initial teacher education partners are urged to embed GMSE systematically into strategic planning, qualifications development, accreditation routes, and placement models. Clear action is recommended to address ongoing concerns around assessment, moderation, and subject availability through Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is positioned as a central strategic driver. It is recommended that the organisation convene short-life national working groups on teacher immersion, recruitment and retention, resourcing, and initial teacher education pathways. Strengthening CLAS as a representative professional body for GMSE teachers is identified as a priority, alongside enhanced monitoring of local authority performance and targeted funding oversight.

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is encouraged to embed GMSE planning, quality improvement, and workforce development explicitly within national standards and the forthcoming National Gaelic Language Strategy. Clear articulation of the long-term vision for GMSE is required, supported by aligned funding streams, improved national data, and stronger governance through teacher workforce planning and curriculum oversight structures. Inter-authority

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

projects should be prioritised for funding, and tailored implementation support for the Scottish Languages Act should be provided to local authorities.

Additional recommendations

Finally, the report calls for a coordinated national research programme covering Gaelic Learners' Education and the wider GME system. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is invited to lead this work to ensure policy, practice, and investment decisions are underpinned by robust evidence.

Introduction

Gaelic-medium education in the secondary school (GMSE) has long been recognised as a challenging stage in Gaelic education, with significant consequences for the Gaelic-medium system as a whole and its wider societal and sociolinguistic impact. This report aims to give a broad assessment of current provision and the various difficulties and obstacles that have arisen, before presenting a range of practical recommendations for improvement. These include recommendations relating to schools where GMSE is on a relatively small scale or in local authorities that are beginning to develop their provision.

The research is based on extensive fieldwork and a range of desktop research. As detailed in Module B, interviews were conducted with more than fifty representatives of local authorities, national education bodies, providers of initial teacher education and Gaelic organisations. Input was also sought from parents, teachers and pupils in several different parts of Scotland.

The report is structured as follows. Module A gives an overview of GMSE provision across Scotland, placing this in its legal and policy framework and drawing comparisons with secondary provision in Welsh and Irish-medium education.

Module B presents key findings from meetings with local authority officers, national organisations and parents and young people, and sets out relevant recommendations on a range of issues. These include Vision and Leadership and Local Authority Issues, Curriculum Development, Young People and Parents, Teachers and Initial Teacher Education, National organisations and the Scottish Government, Inter-authority cooperation, and additional issues relating to local government delivery.

Module C presents a summary of recommendations, brings all the recommendations set out in Module B together and grouping them according to the different bodies or organisations with responsibility for taking them forward.

Module A, Part 1**GMSE in Scotland: an overview of provision***A1.1 Introduction*

GMSE has been offered in Scotland since the early 1990s, when pupils who had come through the Gaelic primary units established from 1985 onwards reached secondary school. However, the use of Gaelic as a teaching medium in secondary school goes back a decade before this, when Western Isles pupils who had benefited from Comhairle nan Eilean's Bilingual Education Project came to secondary school (McLeod 2020: 186–88, 214–15).

In 1994 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published an important report on Gaelic education policy, *Solarachadh na Gàidhlig ann am Foghlam ann an Albainn/Provision for Gaelic Education in Scotland* (HMIE 1994). Aspects of the report were controversial, in particular its comments and recommendations in relation to Gaelic secondary education. The report concluded 'that the provision of Gaelic-medium secondary education in a number of subjects, determined by the vagaries of resource availability, is neither desirable or foreseeable in the future' and that secondary provision should instead have 'a closer focus on transmission of Gaelic language and culture per se . . . including elements from history, geography, music, art and drama' (HMIE 1994: 3). Since the late 1990s, however, GMSE has effectively developed along the lines rejected by HMIE, with schools offering different subjects through Gaelic as 'determined by the vagaries of resource availability' – in other words, when a teacher with the necessary linguistic ability is available to deliver a particular class through Gaelic rather than English. As shown in detail below, this means that there is very considerable variation in the range and quantity of GM teaching from one secondary school to another, in a way that is not true of primary, where there is greater consistency nationally in terms of the structure of provision (O'Hanlon, Paterson and McLeod 2012).

In January 2026, shortly before completion of the current report, HMIE published a comprehensive new report on GME, covering all phases of the system, including GMSE, *Evaluating the Quality of Gaelic Education: actions to raise standards, quality and equity in 3-18 Gaelic Education*. As discussed in section A1.11 below, the report identified a number of challenges, which align with the findings of the research conducted for the current study.

Difficulty with recruiting teachers has been the central obstacle to the expansion of GMSE. There has been a consistent and ongoing shortage of Gaelic language teachers, which has not only limited the provision of language teaching to fluent speakers at secondary level, but also precluded the expansion of GMSE. More seriously, few teachers of other subjects are able to teach through the medium of Gaelic.

A commonly reported pattern is that secondary GM pupils perceive a decline in their linguistic confidence as they progress through secondary school. As detailed below, in almost all schools that provide GMSE the proportion of the curriculum delivered through Gaelic is much less than in the associate primary schools that pupils have come from, and that proportion diminishes much further after the first two years of secondary.

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Coupled with this, there is a widespread perception that many students experience attrition of their Gaelic skills over their time in secondary school and thus leave GME with insufficient linguistic competence and confidence. This may then mean that they are not in a position to take up Gaelic-related employment. Research suggests that only a small proportion of GM graduates make active use of Gaelic in their social and personal lives going forward (Dunmore 2019). This is a key problem from the standpoint of language policy.

A1.2 Pupil numbers in GMSE

The number of pupils in GMSE has increased by more than two thirds over the last decade. In 2024–25 there were 2,011 pupils in GMSE in Scotland, an increase of 67% since 2014–15, when there were 1,204.¹ This still only represents 0.6% of the total number of secondary pupils in Scotland (as compared to 1.0% in GMPE). The proportion is much higher in the Western Isles (29%), Skye (approximately 35%) and the Highland Council area in general (3.8%).

Although there has been a strong upward trajectory over time, there have been fluctuations in the rates of growth from year to year, ranging from 14% in 2018–19 and 13% in 2023–24 to a decline of 2% in 2017–18. Numbers are projected to rise slightly until 2026–27 and then begin to fall.

For a number of reasons enrolment data for GMSE are difficult to interpret, however. While primary pupils typically receive almost all teaching through the medium of Gaelic, the intensity of Gaelic input in secondary varies considerably from school to school (although in almost all cases is significantly less than in primary). In addition, it appears that some schools continue to record all pupils who began secondary as GM pupils as such throughout their time in school, even if they are no longer taking Gàidhlig as a subject or any other subjects delivered through Gaelic. Thus, the figures recorded for pupils in S3 upwards appear to become increasingly unreliable.

Enrolment in S1 GME actually peaked in 2020–21, when it stood at 404 (up from 286 in 2014–15). In 2024–25 the figure was 388. This is largely the consequence of decreasing rates of progression from GMPE to GMSE in recent years. Enrolment in GMPE has grown more slowly than secondary over the last decade, 36.7% as against 67%.

Between 2015–16 and 2019–20 an average of approximately 6% in the number of pupils did not progress to S1 GME from P7 GME. Non-progression could be caused by several different factors: a pupil might decide to move to EM or might choose to attend a different secondary school, either in the same area or in a different area with no GMSE provision. In a few cases there is no simply no offer of GMSE in the area in question.

However, in the last few years there has been a rapid acceleration in the drop-off from P7 to S1. This rose to 39% in 2021–22, 37% in 2022–23 and then declined somewhat to 22% in 2023–24 and 23% in 2024–25. This pattern can likely be attributed to the disruption of the Covid pandemic, as pupils lost the benefits of immersion, with negative consequences for their linguistic

¹ Enrolment data are taken from BnG 2015 and 2025. Note that the total number of secondary pupils in Scotland increased by 10.6% over this period, although this increase did not extend to core Gaelic areas in the West Highlands and Hebrides (Scottish Government 2025a: Table 3.1). Overall numbers of secondary pupils in Scotland are projected to decline from 2024 onwards while the number of primary pupils has been declining since 2018 (Scottish Government 2022).

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development and confidence. This may in turn have caused parents to decide to move to EM after primary school. These impacts have been the focus of research studies in Wales and Ireland (Williams et al. 2023, Ó Domagáin 2022), but there has been no research on this issue in relation to Gaelic.

Although the rate of non-progression may be expected to decline in the coming years, there will probably be a continuing decline in the total GMSE enrolment, given falling numbers entering GMPE. In 2020–21 614 pupils entered P1 GME, but this declined to 536 in 2024–25 (a fall of 12.7%).

There is also a significant drop off from S3 to S4, although in this case this was much higher before 2021 and lower thereafter. Between 2015 and 2020 the average dropoff was approximately 23% per year. In 2021–22, 2022–23 and 2024–25 the rate varied between 2% and 5% while in 2023–24 there was actually a small increase from S3 to S4.

National statistics are not available for the transition from S2 to S3, but in some schools this is another important drop off point, notably in the Western Isles, where Gaelic is mandatory for all pupils in S1 and S2 but optional thereafter.

In contrast, in two of the largest schools, Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and James Gillespie's High School in Edinburgh, Gaelic is mandatory for GM pupils through S4.

Perhaps the most important factor in the drop off in GM enrolment through the different years of secondary is the issue of course choice. Unless Gaelic is mandatory, pupils must select Gaelic (or in a few cases a subject taught through the medium of Gaelic) in preference to a wide range of other possible options, which may be more attractive for one reason or another (including the strong push in favour of STEM subjects). 'Choice' may not be the most appropriate framing, however. In many authorities the number of subjects pupils take in S3 and S4 has been reduced in recent years, sometimes to as few as 6, while others may still allow 8. Gaelic is sometimes placed in the same column as other subjects that are perceived as important, thus precluding pupils from taking both. In some GMSE provision the Gàidhlig (Fluent Speakers) course is delivered by extracting young people from other classes. They are then expected to make up the other lessons they have missed.

A1.3 Number of schools offering GMSE

Although the number of pupils in GMSE has increased very considerably over the last decade, the number of schools offering it has been stable, although a few schools have ceased providing it and a few others have begun to do so. In 2014–15 GME was offered in 32 secondary schools, located in 12 LA areas, while in 2024–25 GMSE was offered in 33 secondary schools (9.2% of the total) and 11 LA areas. Fifteen of those 33 schools were in Highland, five in Argyll & Bute, four in the Western Isles, two in Perth & Kinross, and one each in East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Stirling.²

² GMSE has been available in Aberdeen for many years but this did not appear in the table for 2024-25 as delivery was being made via e-Sgoil rather than on site, due to teacher unavailability.

Table 1**GMSE pupils by local authority, 2024–25**

| LA | Number of pupils in GMSE | Percentage of total |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Glasgow (1 school) | 532 | 26.4 |
| Highland (15 schools) | 529 | 26.4 |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (4 schools) | 426 | 21.2 |
| Edinburgh (1 school) | 245 | 12.2 |
| Argyll & Bute (5 schools) | 100 | 5 |
| North Lanarkshire | 80 | 4 |
| Other (5 authorities, 6 schools) | 99 | 4.9 |

There is extreme variation in the number of GM pupils in the different schools; in 2024-25 cohorts ranged from 3 to 532. 63% of all secondary GM pupils were in the four largest schools while 42% of the schools have fewer than 20 GM pupils.

Growth over the last decade has also been very unevenly distributed, with the highest increases in both percentage and numerical terms tending to be in the larger schools, principally in urban areas. An increasing proportion of GMSE pupils are in Lowland areas as against the three main Gàidhealtachd authorities (47.5% in 2024–25 as against 39.5% in 2014–15).

For many years GMPE provision showed a similar pattern to GMSE, with no growth in the number of authorities offering GMPE, but there has been a recent expansion, and this will in turn have consequences for GMSE, particularly in the West of Scotland. GMPE expanded rapidly between 1985 and 1998 but after that no additional authorities began to offer it until 2020, when it commenced in North Ayrshire. Renfrewshire followed in 2022 and East Renfrewshire in 2023, and Scottish Borders Council is currently conducting a formal assessment of a request for provision in Peebles. This recent expansion of provision is a consequence of the *Education (Scotland) Act 2016* (discussed in Module A, Section 2), which requires LAs to provide GMPE when there has been a sufficient expression of parental demand and other specified criteria are satisfied. North Ayrshire has its first P7 class in 2025–26 and the issue of GMSE provision for those pupils will become live in August 2026.

A1.4 Variation in the extent of GMSE provision in different schools

There is also very considerable variation in the nature of the provision in the different schools with GMSE, especially in terms of the proportion of the curriculum delivered through Gaelic. As discussed in Module A, Section 2, the delivery of GMSE is regulated by Bòrd na Gàidhlig's *Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education* (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2017) and Education Scotland's *Advice on Gaelic Education* (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]). Both these documents allow for a considerable degree of flexibility and variation according to local circumstances, and in addition school inspectors have questioned the extent to which LAs are following the guidance

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consistently (Education Scotland 2020: 36). The GMSE curriculum is currently being reviewed through a comprehensive programme of work through the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.

Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu is unique in Scotland as the only dedicated Gaelic secondary school. In all other schools, Gaelic is provided within EM schools in which GM pupils are the minority. Unlike in primary schools, there are no 'Gaelic units' in secondary; some classes in the schools are taught through the medium of Gaelic and the majority (typically the overwhelming majority) through English.³

Schools that provide GMSE can be divided into four categories according to their level of provision through the different school years. It is notable, however, that none meet the simple definition of an 'all-Gaelic school' set out in section 29 of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025*: 'a school in which . . . all of the education provided is Gaelic medium education'.

In the top category, Gàidhlig is the medium of instruction for all or almost subjects in the Broad General Education (BGE) phase (S1-S3) and for some subjects at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels, and Gàidhlig itself is taught to Advanced Higher level. Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu is the only school in this category.

In the second category, Gaelic is the medium of instruction for several subjects in the BGE phase and for some subjects at National 5 and (in some cases) Higher levels. In 2020–21 (the last year in which these data were collected)⁴ there were three schools in this category; two others have now been added. It is notable that only the largest schools offering GMSE are in the two top categories. This adds to the 'postcode lottery' quality of GME – it is only available at all in some areas, and some GM secondary pupils have better access to rich GMSE provision than others.

In the third category, Gaelic is the medium of instruction for some subjects in the BGE phase (but not in the Senior Phase). There were 12 schools in this category in 2020–21.

In relation to the second and third categories, it is notable that although *the Advice on Gaelic Education* (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]): 21–22) emphasises the importance of maintaining immersion through the entire BGE phase up to the end of S3, subject teaching through Gaelic in S3 is much less extensive than in S1 and S2.

In the lowest category, only Gàidhlig itself is provided, and no other subjects are delivered through Gaelic. There were 16 schools in this category in 2020–21.

There is an implicit fifth category, provision in a number of LAs where there is as yet no agreed GMSE provision associated with the GMPE provision or where the GMSE offer is solely a digital delivery.

Whether a subject is delivered through the medium of Gaelic or English is not necessarily a simple binary matter. The class may be taught bilingually, with different elements in Gaelic or English, or

³ James Gillespie's High School in Edinburgh has a Gaelic 'annexe' (Darroch), located some distance from the main school, at which the Gaelic language and Gaelic-medium classes are delivered.

⁴ From 2021–22 onwards BnG ceased its own data collection concerning GME and now uses data gathered by the Scottish Government, which are much less detailed.

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with oral instruction in Gaelic but written work in English, or with Gaelic used in a more incidental manner for classroom interaction and so on.

It should also be noted that there is considerable variation in the number of Gaelic classes that are offered per week in the BGE phase. Depending on the school, Gaelic is taught for as little as two periods a week or as many as five. The level of input may have important consequences in terms of sustaining and develop students' Gaelic ability and confidence at this point in their education.

Finally, but very importantly, the wider school ethos and the offer of extracurricular activities through Gaelic can play a significant role in building pupils' skills and confidence, encouraging them to use their Gaelic in a wider variety of contexts, and build a stronger sense of Gaelic identity. These important aspects cannot be captured in data concerning class provision and enrolment but play a vital role in the wider experience and impact of GLSE. At the same time, there is a risk of tokenism, if for example the Gaelic element does not extend beyond bilingual signage or basic greetings.

A1.5 The pattern of secondary GLE provision

In contrast to GMSE, growth in the number of pupils in secondary GLE has been less rapid, increasing by 15.5% between 2014–15 and 2024–25, from 3020 to 3487.

Provision of secondary GLE is more concentrated than GLSE. In 2014–15 only 9 LAs offered secondary GLE, in a total in 31 schools. In 2024–25 the number of schools remained the same, but these were in only 7 authorities. The overwhelming majority of pupils were in Highland, the Western Isles and Argyll & Bute: 84% in 2014–15 and 83% in 2024–25.

A1.6 The 'Gaelic attainment gap'

Because Gaelic is not mandatory in most schools after the first two years of secondary – if at all – many pupils leave GME without any formal qualification or certification of their Gaelic skills, particularly in relation to literacy.

Education Scotland have framed this issue as 'the Gaelic attainment gap', a phrase that is potentially confusing as the general term 'attainment gap' refers to differential educational outcomes based on socio-economic factors. In a report assessing the trajectories of pupils who entered S1 GMSE between 2013 and 2019, Education Scotland found that 'nationally, less than two thirds of young people who enter [GMSE] achieve an SCQF level in Literacy & Gàidhlig'. Outwith Glasgow and Edinburgh, where Gaelic is mandatory through S4, 'the fraction drops to almost a half achieving an SCQF level in Literacy & Gàidhlig, dropping to less than a half when it comes to those achieving a qualification at SCQF Level 5 or more' (Education Scotland 2025: [4]). The report determined that 'whilst a lack of Gaelic-positive ethos and learning and teaching in some settings may be contributing factors, it is apparent that, more widely, curriculum design and issues around curriculum transitions are more likely to be the main drivers of the Gaelic Medium Attainment Gap' (p. [4]). It also found significant shortcomings in the ways GM pupils' data were entered, tracked and monitored in some schools. The report concluded that:

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It is evident that despite the strong Gaelic-positive ethos of many settings, and the committed and passionate work of many Gaelic teachers, without the institutional support of tracking and monitoring, curriculum design and timetabling, there will be a glass ceiling in terms of achieving equity for attainment in Gaelic. At least 50% of young people in Gaelic medium Education are not having their most basic needs around literacy met and are not being provided with the coherent 3-18 education that is promised to them under a Curriculum for Excellence. In the context of the ongoing Curriculum Improvement Cycle, any improvements to the curriculum for Literacy & Gàidhlig will, if the current situation is allowed to continue, not get close to ensuring that every young person fulfils their potential (p. [8]).

A1.7 Data on Gaelic exam entries

Entries for National 5 and Higher and Advanced Higher in Gàidhlig have not increased in line with the overall rate of growth of pupil numbers in GMSE between 2014–15 and 2024–25 (67%). Entries for National 5 went up by 49.7% (from 167 to 250) and for Higher by 8.7% (from 138 to 150). Entries for Advanced Higher declined by 21%, from 38 to 30, although 2020 saw the highest figure ever recorded (43).

Table 2**Exam entries in Gàidhlig**

| Gàidhlig | 2015 | 2025 | Highest recorded since 1986 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| National 5 | 167 | 250 | 250 in 2025 |
| Higher | 138 | 150 | 150 in 2025 |
| Advanced Higher | 38 | 30 | 43 in 2020 |

The data for Gaelic Learners are still more concerning, particularly at Higher and Advanced Higher, where entries have declined significantly. However, this pattern is also seen in relation to other modern languages; entries for Higher French declined by 45% between 2014 and 2025 and for Higher German by 40%.

Table 3**Exam entries in Gaelic (Learners)**

| Gaelic (Learners) | 2015 | 2025 | Highest recorded |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| National 5 | 109 | 165 | 185 in 2024 ⁵ |
| Higher | 97 | 70 | 168 in 1997 |
| Advanced Higher | 30 | 10 | 30 in 2015 |

⁵ Entries for the former Standard Grade were much higher, peaking at 540 in 1997.

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Exams in subjects other than Gàidhlig/Gaelic have been available since 1993, when SQA's predecessor, the Scottish Examinations Board, began to offer Standard Grade exams in Matamataig (Mathematics), Eachdraidh (History), Nuadh-eòlas (Modern Studies) and Cruinn-eòlas (Geography).

Examinations in these subjects are now available at National 5 and Higher levels, and Mathematics is available at Advanced Higher. Applications of Mathematics has been available for National 5 only since 2024. As discussed in section A3.2 below, in Wales 30 subjects are examined through the medium of Welsh at GCSE and 27 at A Level.

Further, the number of candidates taking these exams is very low, especially at Higher level, and only a very small number of schools enter candidates for them. Only four schools have entered candidates for National 5s and only one has entered candidates for Highers or Advanced Highers. Candidates have been entered every year since 2015 for the National 5 exams and for Higher Matamataig but only occasionally for the Higher in Eachdraidh (on three occasions), Cruinn-eòlas (twice) and Nuadh-eòlas (once).

Table 4**Entries for GM exams**

| Examination | Entries 2025 | Maximum recorded |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| National 5 Cruinn-eòlas | 29 | 38 in 2019 |
| National 5 Eachdraidh | 49 | 50 in 2022 |
| National 5 Matamataig | 73 | 89 in 2024 |
| National 5 Applications | 53 | 53 in 2025 |
| National 5 Nuadh-eòlas | 29 | 46 in 2024 |
| Higher Cruinn-eòlas | 1 | 2 in 2023 |
| Higher Eachdraidh | 3 | 3 in 2025 |
| Higher Matamataig | 61 | 61 in 2025 |
| Higher Nuadh-eòlas | 0 | 3 in 2024 |
| Advanced Higher Matamataig | 10 | 12 in 2024 |

Under a new policy agreed by SQA, candidates taking exams through the medium of Gaelic will be given an additional ten minutes from 2026 onwards. This may encourage the uptake of these exams in the future.

Finally, it should be noted that in a few cases Gaelic is used as a teaching medium in certificated subjects that are not examined through the medium of Gaelic. In 2020-21, 69 S4-6 pupils did GM classes in Biology, 20 in Human Biology, 43 in Art and 40 in French.

A1.8 Numbers of teachers delivering GMSE

In contrast to primary, it is difficult to build a clear picture of the number of staff (FTE) currently involved in delivering GMSE, or of other teachers who could potentially do so. In principle, there are four kinds of teachers currently involved in delivering GMSE:

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1. Teachers of Gaelic language who only teach Gaelic language to fluent speakers or other subjects through the medium of Gaelic
2. Teachers of Gaelic language who teach Gaelic language to learners as well as fluent speakers
3. Teachers of subjects other than Gaelic who only teach their subjects through the medium of Gaelic
4. Teachers of subjects other than Gaelic who teach their subjects through both Gaelic and English

In recent years, a fifth category has emerged: primary teachers delivering BGE classes in secondary schools. It is not known how many are currently working in GMSE, but half the secondary schools in Scotland are now deploying primary teachers in this way (*Glasgow Times* 2025).

In the case of categories 1 and 3, the teachers are fully deployed in the delivery of GMSE. For categories 2 and 4, a portion of their time – potentially the overwhelming majority – is not given over to GMSE. It is unhelpful, therefore, to count each of these teachers in the same way, but available figures appear to do so.

Data on GMSE collected by the Bòrd until 2020–21 distinguished between the number of Gaelic teachers and the number of teachers of other subjects teaching in each school. Since 2021–22 these have been amalgamated in the Bòrd's reports, although the annual Teacher Census gives a total national figure for the two categories. According to the 2024 Teacher Census there were 116 secondary teachers teaching through Gaelic, of which 78 were teaching Gaelic language (Scottish Government 2025b: Table 3.12a). Prior to 2021–22, differentiated figures were available to show how many Gaelic teachers were delivering classes to Learners as well as fluent speakers. In 2020–21, 45 teachers were doing so.

The GM teaching workforce is relatively old compared to the secondary teaching workforce as a whole. In 2024, 31.9% of GM teachers were aged 50 or over compared to 24.6% of the overall workforce (Scottish Government 2025b: Tables 3.2 and 3.12a). This has implications for the future management and development of GMSE.

There are discrepancies between the figures given in BnG's annual reports on Gaelic education (based on reporting for the SG's Schools Census) and the figures in the SG's annual Teacher Census. In 2024, the report on Gaelic education indicated that there were 128 teachers involved in delivering GMSE, while the Teacher Census gave a figure of 116 (Scottish Government 2025b: Table 3.12a). The Teacher Census also indicated that there were 58 secondary teachers who could teach through Gaelic but were not doing so.

The number of teachers recorded in 2014-15 was 106. The 20.8% increase over the last decade is thus much less than the increase in the number of pupils (67%).

Another source of discrepancy is General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) data. As of September 2025, the GTCS had 362 registrants who declared themselves as being able to teach

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through the medium of Gaelic (GTCS 2025: 21). This is far less than the number indicated in the teacher census (570 between primary and secondary).

A1.9 Pathways to GMSE teaching

There are several possible ways that a teacher may become involved in delivering GMSE. At the outset it should be noted that no specific qualification is required to do so. The decision to deploy a particular GTCS-registered teacher to deliver a particular class through the medium of Gaelic is a matter for the school and the LA. This will include an assessment of the teacher's linguistic ability.

The most direct and obvious pathway is to complete a PGDE course as a Gaelic teacher, typically following an undergraduate degree in Gaelic. In many cases such teachers will also have studied another subject at university to a level that allows them to teach it at the BGE or Senior Phase. GME PGDE courses are available at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the University of Strathclyde. For many years the number of new teachers coming through this pathway has been very small, rarely exceeding 5 annually.

Teachers of other subjects qualify via a PGDE programme in the usual manner and if they have sufficient Gaelic skills they would be equipped to teach through the medium of Gaelic. However, securing GM placements can be a major challenge.

In 2025-26, there are 4 probationer secondary teachers of Gaelic and 6 teachers of other subjects.

Gaelic-speaking teachers working in English medium who wish to move to Gaelic medium may choose to develop their skills, including Gaelic literacy skills, by following the Master's in Education programme at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, which supersedes the former Strep programme, which ran from 2005-22. The programme allows participants to develop their literacy skills in Gaelic while at the same time progressing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Gaelic education. Participants have the option to complete one, two or three years of study to achieve either a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master of Education degree.

These pathways relate to teachers who already have sufficient Gaelic skills. Other qualified teachers may seek to improve their Gaelic skills to a level that allows them to teach confidently through Gaelic. In some cases teachers may be seconded to undertake an immersion programme such as the Cùrsa Comais at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (<https://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/course/cert-he-an-cursa-comais/?lang=en>) or the University of Glasgow's year-long Gaelic with Immersion course (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/cpd/gaelicwithimmersion/>).

The Scottish Government's Teaching Bursary in Scotland offers a £20,000 bursary to attract career changers into teacher training in key subjects. Since 2023 this has been extended to include Gaelic as a secondary subject, Gaelic medium across all secondary subjects and in primary. In 2024-25 three GM students benefited from this bursary, including two in secondary (Skills Development Scotland 2025: section 3.3).

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A1.10 GMSE planning and reporting

Bòrd na Gàidhlig lists 33 secondary schools with GMSE provision in 2024–25. The websites of all of these schools were audited, and 15 school improvement plans (SIPs) and 8 standards and quality (SQ) reports were examined. Wherever an SIP or SQ report could not be located on the school website, LA officers were contacted and further examples were supplied to the research team. SIP and SQ reporting is a statutory requirement for all schools. GMSE is provided as part of a school's overall delivery so there is no statutory requirement at present for schools to produce GMSE planning and quality reporting, except for Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, which is the only stand-alone GMSE school at present.

A key issue is that within the majority of the 14 SIPs and 7 SQ reports available to the research team, it was sometimes unclear if the improvement targets and quality reporting referred to EM and GM provision or whether there were additional issues identified within GMSE provision which were being developed at school level. The exceptions to this evaluation are the following:

- a) Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu – as a stand-alone GMSE school, the SIP and SQ report relate entirely to GMSE development.
- b) Stirling – in this LA a School Gaelic Development Plan is provided, with comprehensive information.
- c) Highland - six school improvement plans were available to the research team from within Highland Council, most had comprehensive information in the SIP, including information on attainment. This was usually located in a specific GMSE column.
- d) Argyll and Bute – within this authority all GME providers are asked to complete a section relating to GME development as part of the pro forma the local authority uses to structure all school development planning. GME development planning is therefore integrated into the structure of development planning as a whole across the local authority.
- e) In the three SIPs available for other LAs there was generally very little information or none at all (apart from Sgoil Lìonacleit in Eilean Siar, which had considerable information in the improvement plan)
- f) One local authority provided a Departmental Plan for the research team. Departmental Plans are generally internal to a school (and therefore not available for parents or other agencies).
- g) In SQ reporting there was generally much less information on progress or none at all.

It is important to acknowledge that accessing any information on SIPs and SQ reporting remains consistently difficult nationally as a very significant number of schools do not provide the information on their websites.

A1.10.1 Issues arising from interviews

1. Some LA officers welcomed the idea of there being identified GMSE and GME development information, and quality reporting coming from GMSE provision within their authorities in a systematic way. Some LA officers noted that this could be used to support further the completion of applications through the Scottish Government's Gaelic Specific Grants scheme. In Argyll and Bute, officers noted that supporting GME was improved through the compiling of clear GME priorities within the SIP and that this

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supported LA officers in collegiate discussions with schools on their progress towards improving provision.

2. Some LA officers and representatives of national organisations acknowledged that a national summary of the issues schools are working on, and their current successes, could be compiled, which would support wider national strategic planning. This could impact on, for example, strategic planning relating to resourcing the GMSE sector and strategic planning relating to developing national qualifications through the medium of Gaelic.
3. Some teachers raised concerns that the workload relating to devising and implementing school development planning and identifying successes would fall on small GMSE teams (sometimes a single GMSE teacher). School Development Planning and SQ reporting across Scottish education is the responsibility of the head teacher and senior leadership team collaborating with the entire staff team on agreed priorities. There was some concern expressed that GMSE provision might have both its own planning system and also be expected to be part of the wider school improvement planning programme in each school. It was also noted that the GMSE infrastructure within some schools makes it harder to deliver agreed priorities for English-medium provision. So, for example, where a school has a priority relating to support for learning in numeracy or literacy there may be challenges relating to available support for learning materials in Gaelic or staffing issues (e.g. the school may not currently have support for learning staff who speak Gaelic).
4. Generally, parents were unaware of SIPs or SQ reporting but recognised that it would be beneficial to have a greater understanding of what the GMSE staff were working on to improve provision for their young people and the successes they are delivering annually.

A1.10.2 Recommendations

Local Authorities

1. All LAs should ensure that there is GMSE Improvement Planning and SQ Reporting in place. This could be in the form of a discrete plan or through a standard section in the pro forma used by all schools within the local authority (as provided by Argyll and Bute and used in most Highland Council provision). This may be an annual or biannual process which is understood by all stakeholders, ensuring that processes are clear. GME Improvement Planning should be available on school websites so that parents can be informed of development aims and national agencies such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig can use these materials to compile national summaries. It should be noted that Argyll and Bute are the only local authority nationally that ensures that GMSE providing schools have school improvement planning in place as this is integrated as an essential element in the pro forma used by all schools in the authority. We would recommend this practice as a way to ensure all GMSE delivering schools have GMSE improvement planning in place.
2. The responsibility for leadership of improvement planning and quality reporting relating to GMSE provision should be clearly remitted to the senior leadership team. Appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure workloads for GMSE staff are not increased but instead focused on issues relating to the GMSE sector. There may also be the

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opportunity to develop inter-authority planning and/or collegiate working on priorities by different GMSE provisions within a single authority.

3. LAs should ensure that the senior leadership team member with responsibility for GMSE has received appropriate CLPL support and understands fully his/her role in providing strategic leadership for the sector. LAs may wish to consider inter-authority training and networking so that strategic leads at school level develop appropriate skills and knowledge.

Education Scotland

1. The Education Scotland Team should produce an annual or biannual summary of development planning and quality reporting and publish it on their website to enable wider strategic use of the school-based information by national organisations such as Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig, Qualifications Scotland, Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government. A national summary of issues that GMSE teams are working on will also support the work of the Curriculum Improvement Team, synchronising their work with school-based development. Given the continuing difficulties in accessing SIPs and SQ reports it would be hoped that schools would respond positively to requests for information from Education Scotland.

Scottish Government

1. To support further the national rollout of GMSE strategic planning and quality reporting, the Scottish Government should consider incorporating these recommendations into the standards for Gaelic education being developed under section 16 of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025* and the National Gaelic Language Strategy to be published under the same act.

A1.11 Key messages from HMIE reporting

The research team reviewed HMIE reports on the following GMSE provisions (with date of publication noted for each and local authority).

Àrd-sgoil James Gillespie's High School – inspection report published January 2026, City of Edinburgh Council

Àrd-sgoil Ulapuil /Ullapool High School – inspection report published January 2024, Highland Council

Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail / Nicolson Institute – inspection report published January 2024 (further visits and publication of updates October 2024 and December 2025), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Àrd-sgoil Uallais / Wallace High School – inspection report published May 2024, Stirlingshire Council.

Acadamaidh Pheairt / Perth Academy - further inspection report published May 2025, Perth and Kinross Council

Sgoil an Tairbeirt / Sir E Scott School – inspection report published August 2025, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

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Across the reports a range of prominent issues were raised impacting on the GMSE sector. Amongst the factors where progress was being noted were the following:

- a) Across several schools there was improvement in attaining National Qualifications in Gaelic literacy or in qualifications through the medium of Gaelic. James Gillespies HS and the Nicolson Institute were identified as schools where significant numbers of young people (almost all in James Gillespie's) were successfully gaining awards in Gaelic literacy.
- b) GMSE staffing teams were noted as being committed and enthusiastic, with teachers focussed on improving GMSE provision. Young people were also praised for being committed to Gaelic and proud of their developing Gaelic language skills and the culture associated with the language.
- c) All these schools are dual language settings with EM and GM provision and several of them had GMSE numbers which were growing significantly. Improvements in whole school vision and values in relation to the Gaelic language was identified as having improved though further development was advocated in others. The development of a supportive school ethos for Gaelic was highlighted as showing improvement in some settings, with further progress recommended generally.
- d) A number of the schools were making significant improvements in providing additional wider curriculum opportunities through Gaelic (e.g. participation in national and local Gaelic-language events, in-school events and activities etc.)

Amongst the issues where further progress was advocated were the following:

- a) Establishing a clear curriculum offer for GMSE for the provision and ensuring that curriculum pathways were clearly outlined was raised in most of the reports analysed. This includes ensuring that parents and young people in GMSE understood clearly what was being offered in GMSE and what was being planned to improve the offer. Websites and school handbooks were identified as requiring improvement in communicating Curriculum Offers and Pathways. In addition, strategic planning for improving the Curriculum Offer (e.g. extending the number of subjects being provided and/or extending the availability of a subject into S3 and the Senior Phase) was raised as requiring attention in a number of settings.
- b) Immersion pedagogy requires to be developed in some settings, with a renewed focus on ensuring that fluency in Gaelic was strengthened in both the BGE phase (S1-S3) and the Senior Phase (S4-S6).
- c) Much more effective strategic leadership for GMSE, with school improvement planning being strengthened for the GMSE provision, was advocated in several schools.
- d) Greater focus on employability through Gaelic was raised as an issue in some reports, though there was also evidence that progress is being made around raising awareness of career opportunities in Gaelic and the provision of apprenticeships and work placements with a Gaelic context.
- e) Further work to ensure that Gaelic features as an element in the school's work around promoting equality and celebrating diversity was proposed in a number of reports.
- f) Timetabling was identified as an area where further progress will be beneficial so that young people are not extracted from EM classes they attend to provide time for Gaelic

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(which means they have to find a way of catching up with the EM classes they have not attended). This of course links to establishing clear curriculum offers and pathways for all young people in GMSE from S1 to S6.

In 2025 Education Scotland took on a new shape, with two independent national organisations being formed – HMIE and the new Education Scotland, which has a remit for supporting strategic development within Scottish education as a whole.⁶ HMIE has begun creating a new website area promoting effective practice with five spaces, one of which is for Effective Practice in Gaelic Education. Curriculum Improvement at the Nicolson Institute is the first GMSE exemplar published, with the following issues noted:

- a. The need to improve the curriculum offer, which will lead to increased attainment in National Qualifications at the Senior Phase.
- b. Planning for improvement with an increased focus on continuity in learning through Gaelic immersion across S1-S6.
- c. Recognition that the school had improved strategic leadership and maximised how GMSE staff are deployed.
- d. Development of an improved curriculum offer for GMSE, more diverse pathways and support for additional learning needs in GMSE.

A national seminar, 'Sharing Inspection Findings: Effective GME', took place on 16 December 2025 and amongst the contributions was a presentation from the Nicolson Institute.

In January 2026 HMIE published a report *Evaluating the Quality of Gàidhlig Education: Actions to Raise Standards, Quality and Equity*. Amongst the key messages are the following:

- Curriculum development in GMSE is required. It was noted that the totality of the curriculum offer in Gaelic was not strong or consistent enough across the country to develop young people's fluency appropriately. The curriculum offer should be clear and promoted effectively.
- Vision and values relating to Gaelic should be improved in the GMSE sector.
- Parents need to have their voices heard in relation to strategic planning (as noted in section A1.10.2, a national summary of School Strategic Planning will support all parents to understand what the sector is currently developing).
- There are further opportunities for schools and LAs to collaborate and reciprocate expertise.
- The report recommends that the Scottish Government sets up a digital all-Gaelic school with a full curriculum offer. Furthermore, the report recommends that the Scottish Government works with Local LAs to secure staffing allocations that safeguard staffing within GME.
- SQ reports do not consistently contain high-quality evaluation of progress.
- Young people's progress in GMSE should be tracked, with a view that children and young people in GME should remain in the sector across the 3-18 range. The

⁶ The new Education Scotland also has best practice materials relating to GMSE, including Sports Development through Gaelic at Bishopbriggs Academy (2024) East Dunbartonshire, Curriculum Development at Dunoon Grammar (2022) Argyll and Bute and Curriculum Development at Greenfaulds High (2022) North Lanarkshire. The Curriculum Improvement Cycle development is a major national initiative being led by Education Scotland, with a GME team now in place which is poised to provide comprehensive support for the sector from 2025 onwards.

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provision of national data relating to the GMSE sector's needs should be improved.

- Immersion pedagogy should be developed within the sector.
- Too many young people leave the GM system without appropriate qualifications and awards in Gaelic or through Gaelic.
- Gaelic requires to be fully integrated into a school's work to promote respect for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Fluency in Gaelic requires a renewed focus, with schools working with partners in different communities to ensure young people are confident in their Gaelic and proud of their identity as Gaelic speakers.

Module A, Part 2**The legal and policy framework for GMSE***A2.1 Introduction*

The legal and policy framework surrounding GMSE has become increasingly complex over time, most recently as a result of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025*, which brings significant changes for Gaelic education in general. Even so, it remains the case that parents and pupils have no enforceable right to GMSE, local authorities have no obligation to provide it and those authorities that do provide it have substantial leeway in terms of the nature and extent of their provision.

A2.2 Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended by the Scottish Languages Act 2025 and the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Act 2025

The *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* ('the 1980 Act') sets out the basic statutory framework for the delivery of school education and further education in Scotland. Section 1(1) provides that every education authority has the duty 'to secure that there is made for their education area adequate and efficient provision of school education and further education'. As originally enacted, subsection 1(5)(a)(iii) provided that the term 'school education' includes 'the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas', and subsection (iv) applied this to further education provided by education authorities.

The definition of 'school education' has been amended significantly by section 19(2) of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025* ('the 2025 Act'). The phrase 'Gaelic learner education and Gaelic medium education' replaces 'the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas' in subsection 1(5)(a)(iii). Further education now includes 'the teaching of the Gaelic language' rather than 'the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas'.

The main effect of these amendments is to remove any geographical restriction on 'Gaelic-speaking areas' (which had never been formally defined) and extend them across Scotland, and to make specific reference to GLE and GME. This could be interpreted as requiring some provision for Gaelic in all schools, perhaps at secondary as well as primary level. However, this requirement is qualified by the language of section 1(1) of the 1980 Act, that provision should be 'adequate and efficient'.

Most recently, section 1 of the *Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Act 2025* inserts a new section 6A into the 1980 Act that provides that 'an education authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, provide or secure the provision of one course of residential outdoor education to each pupil attending a public school under the education authority's management'. Subsection 6B(1) requires the Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish guidance to LAs about their duties under section 6A, and subsection 6B(4)(i) provides that this guidance must include provision about 'the delivery of residential outdoor education by means of the Gaelic language to pupils who receive Gaelic medium education'. In practice, such delivery will probably be made on behalf of secondary and upper primary pupils. The Act is currently awaiting Royal Assent and implementation will follow in due course, beginning with the development of the Scottish Government guidance.

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A2.3 Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended by the Scottish Languages Act 2025

The *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005* ('the 2005 Act') established a statutory language board, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, several of whose functions relate to education. These include the duty to prepare a national Gaelic language plan every five years, which must include, among other things, 'a strategy for promoting, and facilitating the promotion of . . . Gaelic education' (section 2(2)). Under section 5 of the 2025 Act, this duty has now been placed on the Scottish Government and the plan will now be renamed 'national Gaelic language strategy'.

The most important requirement of the 2005 Act in relation to education is the power of Bòrd na Gàidhlig to require 'relevant public authorities' to prepare Gaelic language plans. Section 3(4) provides that 'a Gaelic language plan must . . . set out the measures to be taken by the relevant public authority in relation to the use of the Gaelic language in connection with the exercise of the authority's functions'. In the case of LAs, this obligation implicates education functions, and in practice a large part of LA plans have dealt with provision for Gaelic in education.

A new subsection 3(4A) has been added by the 2025 Act (section 22(2)), requiring that an education authority's Gaelic language plan must include the authority's plan for the provision in its area of GLE and GME, opportunities to learn or use Gaelic in the authority's provision of further education, and 'opportunities for pupils in GME to use the Gaelic language in social, cultural and recreational activities'.

Section 6 of the 2025 Act inserts a new section 2C in the 2005 Act, authorising the Scottish Government to promulgate regulations that specify standards and requirements relating to promoting, facilitating and supporting the use of the Gaelic language which are to apply to relevant public authorities in exercising their functions'. Subsection 2C(3) indicates that these regulations 'may in particular include provision about . . . the provision of education'.

Section 9 of the 2005 Act provides that Bòrd na Gàidhlig 'may prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers guidance in relation to the provision of Gaelic education and the development of such provision'. Section 16(2) of the *Education (Scotland) Act 2016* ('the 2016 Act') substituted the word 'must' for 'may' in this section, and the guidance was duly published in 2017. Section 17 of the 2025 Act has now reassigned the obligation to prepare this guidance to the Scottish Government. Section 17 provides that in preparing the guidance the Government must consult Bòrd na Gàidhlig, education authorities, Comann nam Pàrant and other appropriate persons.

A2.4 Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended by the Scottish Languages Act 2025

The *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* ('the 2010 Act') establishes the procedural requirements that education authorities must follow before making certain designated kinds of changes to their provision. These include the requirement to provide a statement setting out the educational 'benefits which the authority believes will result from

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implementation of the proposal' (section 3(d)). The changes subject to this process not only include proposals to discontinue a school or a stage of education in a school, but also to 'discontinue the provision of Gaelic medium education in all the nursery classes in a school that also provides a nursery class through English medium education' or 'discontinue the provision of Gaelic medium education in a stage of education (apart from a nursery class) in a school that also provides the stage of education through English medium education' (schedule 1, section 2). These requirements extend to secondary education.

Section 26 of the 2025 Act amends the 2010 Act (new section 7A to schedule 1 and a new section 7A to schedule 2) so as to add to the list of matters requiring full statutory consultation any 'proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport by the education authority for pupils in Gaelic medium education'. This intersects with section 24 of the 2025 Act in that it addresses practical issues of access to GME, including GME offered by another authority.

A2.5 Education (Scotland) Act 2016, as amended by the Scottish Languages Act 2025

As initially enacted, the 2016 Act contained relatively few provisions relating to Gaelic education. It has now been significantly supplemented by a range of provisions that have been inserted by virtue of the 2025 Act. Almost all of these address Gaelic education in general and thus have an impact on GMSE. The most important provisions in relation to relationships between different education authorities and possible inter-authority co-operation are probably sections 24 and 26.

The new section 6A of the 2016 Act (section 15(3) of the 2025 Act) imposes a broad duty on the Scottish Government to 'promote, facilitate and support' GME and GLE and 'the provision of adequate education resources in Gaelic'.

The new section 6B of the 2016 Act (section 16(2) of the 2025 Act) grants the Scottish Government the power to promulgate regulations specifying 'the standards and requirements to which an education authority must conform in discharging its functions' relating to GME and GLE. Section 6B(3) provides that in preparing these regulations the Government must consult Bòrd na Gàidhlig, education authorities, Comann nam Pàrant, HMIE, the GTCS and other appropriate persons.

The new section 6D of the 2016 Act (section 18 of the 2025 Act) provides that when the Scottish Government produces 'any information, guidance or documents in the English language for use in school education by teachers or pupils', it 'must consider whether also to produce that material in the Gaelic language'.

Section 15 of the 2016 Act imposes a duty on education authorities to promote the potential availability of GME or GLE in its area and promote and support any GME or GLE provision in its area. These obligations extend to GMSE. Section 20(3) of the 2025 Act inserts a new section 14A in the 2016 Act, which provides that education authorities must promote and support GME and GLE in exercising their functions under parts 1 and 2 of the 1980 Act.

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The new section 16A of the 2016 Act (section 21 of the 2025 Act) provides that Bòrd na Gàidhlig may serve notices on education authorities requiring them to provide information about their provision of GME or GLE.

The new section 16B of the 2016 Act (section 23 of the 2025 Act) requires that the SQA must ensure that an appropriate number and range of qualifications are available in Gaelic. 'In deciding what is an appropriate number and range of qualifications', the SQA must 'seek advice' from the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other appropriate persons (section 16B(2)). Section 23 of the 2025 Act also creates a new section 16C requiring the SQA to produce information, guidance or documents in Gaelic as well as English when they relate to qualifications that are available in Gaelic. Inadequate resourcing of GM qualifications has been a source of dissatisfaction in the past and it is to be expected that this new statutory provision will improve matters.

The new subsection 15(6) of the 2016 Act (section 24 of the 2025 Act) provides that when an education authority does not deliver GME in its area 'appropriate for the age of a particular child', or 'it is not reasonably practicable for the child to access it', the authority 'must, so far as reasonably practicable, support a child who is resident in its area to access GME provided in the area of another education authority'. This provision might come into play, for example, if an authority offered GMPE but not GMSE, and secondary GME was available in a neighbouring authority.

The new subsection 15A of the 2016 Act (section 25 of the 2025 Act) provides that education authorities must establish a catchment area for every school under its management at which GME is provided. These catchment areas may differ from those used for EME. It is unlikely but not impossible that catchment area boundaries might go across LA boundaries.

Sections 7-13 of the 2016 Act established a mechanism for the assessment by LAs of the need for primary GME by education authorities following parental requests. This mechanism has been simplified by the 2025 Act (sections 27-28) and extended to cover GM early years and childcare provision. However, it still does not apply to GMSE and thus will not be considered in detail here.

Finally, one of the most important and innovative provisions in the 2025 Act relating to education is section 29, which deals with the assessment of the viability of all-Gaelic schools (new sections 13A, 13B, 13C and 13D to the 2016 Act). This issue has not been addressed by legislation up to now. This section of the Act does not distinguish between different stages of schooling (section 13D(4)), so would apply to secondary schools as well as primary.

Sections 13A-D may be summarised as follows. Under section 13A, if a request for an assessment of the viability of an all-Gaelic school is made, the education authority, must, within 9 months of receiving the request, 'complete an assessment of whether it would be viable for the education authority to establish an all-Gaelic school in the area specified in the request'. Requests may be made by any 'relevant person', defined as 'a parent of a child

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resident in the education authority's area', Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) or Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The Scottish Government may give guidance on the conduct of evaluations (subsection 13A(7)).

Section 13B sets out the process for evaluating viability. An education authority must 'have regard' to ten factors in making the evaluation, including

- Immersion pedagogy should be developed within the sector.
- Too many young people leave the GM system without appropriate qualifications and awards in Gaelic or through Gaelic.
- its current level of provision and projections of future demand
- advice received from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, HMIE, Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta), and other education authorities which have established all-Gaelic schools
- any Scottish Government guidance under subsection 13A(7)
- its latest Gaelic language plan
- the duty to promote Gaelic education established by the new section 14A of the 2016 Act (see above)
- the location of any all-Gaelic school in the authority's area or in the area of another education authority adjacent to that area
- the extent to which— (i) pupils resident in the area of an education authority adjacent to the area of the authority which is making the assessment could access an all-Gaelic school established in the area specified in the request, and (ii) pupils resident in the area specified in the request could access an all-Gaelic school in the area of another education authority adjacent to that area
- the availability and suitability of any premises in the education authority's area in which an all-Gaelic school could be established,
- the cost of establishing an all-Gaelic school, and
- the potential to assign or recruit persons to teach in an all-Gaelic school.

Section 13B(3) then provides that 'the education authority must assess that it would be viable to establish an all-Gaelic school in the area specified in the request unless, having regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (2), it would be unreasonable to make that assessment'. The authority may conclude 'that it would be viable to establish an all-Gaelic school if certain circumstances occur' (section 13B(4)).

Section 13C provides that the authority must then publish its assessment, including the result of the assessment and the reasons for making it'. If it concludes that it would be viable to establish an all-Gaelic school, it must specify 'the period within which the authority considers it would be reasonably practicable' to do so (section 13C(2)(a)). If the authority concludes that establishing a school would be viable if certain circumstances occur, it must specify what those circumstances are and how those circumstances will be kept under review, and then, 'after those circumstances occur, take such steps to establish the school as are reasonably practicable' (section 13C(3)(c)).

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Finally, section 13D gives the Scottish Government the power to direct an education authority to establish an all-Gaelic school when it assesses that it would be viable to do so but then fails to take steps to establish the school.

Although sections 13A-D do appear to apply to secondary schools, it is possible that the definition of 'all-Gaelic school' in the Act might be an obstacle. Under section 13D(4), 'all-Gaelic school' 'means a school in which—

- (a) all of the education provided is Gaelic medium education,
- (b) all other services related to the provision of that education are delivered in the Gaelic language as far as reasonably practicable, and
- (c) the use of any facilities which are shared with another school is separate to the use of those facilities by that other school.

As shown in Module A, Part 1 above, no secondary school in Scotland meets this definition. At Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, approximately 30% of the teaching is done through the medium of English and in all other schools that offer GMSE the proportion of GM teaching is far less. Under a very strict reading of the statute, it might be argued that it would not be 'viable' to establish an 'all-Gaelic' secondary school according to the definition set out.

A2.6 Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education

The *Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education* was promulgated by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2017 pursuant to section 16 of the 2016 Act. In early 2025, the Bòrd conducted a consultation on a revision to this guidance, but as noted above, under the 2025 Act, responsibility for promulgating this guidance has now passed to the Scottish Government. The current guidance remains in effect until it is replaced by new guidance from the Government, however.

The section of the guidance dealing with GMSE is relatively brief compared to the section dealing with GMPE and it allows education authorities substantial flexibility and latitude in terms of delivery.

According to the guidance, where GMPE is available, it is considered essential that pupils are given the opportunity to continue their studies into secondary school. The guidance notes that this may be done through a joint provision arrangement between different education authorities (Education Scotland 2017: 25 (2.14)).

The key sections of the guidance provide that:

- 2.15 The GMSE curriculum at all stages remains one based on the principle of immersion in Gaelic. It is considered essential that education authorities and schools identify the curricular areas and subjects, in addition to Gaelic, that are possible to deliver through the medium of Gaelic, based on the availability of staff and young people's choices.

2.16 Schools should aim to deliver a sufficient proportion of the secondary curriculum through the medium of Gaelic to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic). Some secondary schools with GME will offer other subject provision and this will depend on local circumstances and teacher availability. Schools and education authorities should collaborate to develop secondary level GME curriculum opportunities, sharing of expertise, courses and a range of delivery methods, including the use of distance learning and technology (Education Scotland 2017: 25).

The guidance also includes a short section on qualifications and awards in Gaelic education, stating that it is considered essential that pupils studying through the medium of Gaelic should have access to the available qualifications in Gaelic and other subjects delivered through Gaelic. It is also considered essential that education authorities consider the qualifications and awards they wish to offer through the medium of Gaelic in their area and publicise their availability (Education Scotland 2017: 25–26).

A2.7 Education Scotland's Advice on Gaelic Education

Education Scotland's *Advice on Gaelic Education* was promulgated in 2015 and updated in 2022. While this advice is not statutory, it plays an important role in school inspections and thus receives careful attention from schools. The section in the Advice (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 21–27) that deals with GMSE is seven pages in length and is much more detailed and specific than the Statutory Guidance. As with the Statutory Guidance, the Advice allows education authorities substantial flexibility and latitude in terms of delivery.

Like the Statutory Guidance, the Advice emphasises that the GMSE curriculum 'remains one based on the principles of immersion', but it distinguishes between the BGE phase, when GME 'needs to be a compulsory part', and the senior phase, when Gaelic may become optional (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 22). As discussed in section 1 of this report, current provision in schools reflects this distinction in the level of GM provision in the BGE phase (especially S1 and S2) and the senior phase.

The Advice states that 'schools need to aim to deliver a sufficient proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic at the secondary stages to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic through immersion'. Crucially, though, it goes on to explain that 'an exact proportion is not, at this stage, specified' but that 'it has to be sufficiently substantial to impact on young people's fluency' (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 22).

At the same time, the Advice notes that 'to ensure equality of access to GME, all secondary schools need to be ambitious in aiming for a substantial proportion of the curriculum being delivered through the medium of Gaelic' (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 22). The extent to which this has been fulfilled in practice is open to question.

The Advice gives more detailed suggestions for curriculum delivery at particular stages (S1-S3, S4-S5 and S6) (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 25–27).

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The Guidance also emphasises the importance of including and embedding Gaelic in school events and of opportunities for personal achievements after school clubs, summer camps, and excursions, as well as sports and pastimes. These provide 'an important context for applying language, building confidence and a range of skills for learning, life and work' (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]: 25).

Module A, Section 3**Welsh-and Irish-medium secondary education and the role of inter-authority cooperation***A3.1 Introduction*

This section gives an overview of Welsh- and Irish-medium secondary attention, with particular attention to the issue of shared delivery and inter-authority cooperation. The situation in relation to inter-authority cooperation in Wales is broadly comparable to that of GMSE, while in Ireland the issue does not arise in the same way as there is a single unitary education authority in both the Republic and Northern Ireland.

A3.2 Welsh-medium secondary education

The structure of education delivery in Wales is broadly similar to Scotland, in that responsibility falls primarily to individual LAs (22 in Wales as against 32 in Scotland). As in Scotland, decisions to open or close schools are matters for LAs, as are issues concerning staffing and general school management. However, the role of Welsh in the education system, including secondary education, is far greater than that of Gaelic. All school pupils in Wales must study Welsh until age 16, and approximately 25% of pupils are enrolled in Welsh-medium or bilingual education, compared to less than 1% in GME in Scotland. Welsh-medium education (WME) has also been established for far longer; the first Welsh-medium secondary school opened in 1956.

Although parents do not have a legal right to WME, and LAs do not have a legal obligation to deliver it, there is a highly developed body of regulation that is much more demanding than the structures controlling GME in Scotland, and an increasingly strong policy push to increase the number of pupils in WME and the number of Welsh-medium schools.

Notably, section 30 of the recently enacted *Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025* requires each LA to prepare a 'local Welsh in education strategic plan'. This requirement can be understood as an expansion and tightening of the previous obligation under section 84 of the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*, which required each LA to prepare a 'Welsh in education strategic plan', which would include 'targets for improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area'.

The new requirements for 'local Welsh in education strategic plans' are detailed and stringent. These plans are directly linked to national targets for growth in the number of Welsh speakers, including the headline target of a 70% increase to one million by 2050, as set out in the national language strategy *Cymraeg 2050* (Welsh Government 2017). Particularly important requirements in relation to the current research are that the strategic plan must 'must, in particular, set out the steps the local authority will take . . . (iii) to increase the number of pupils of compulsory school age receiving education in "Primarily Welsh language "category schools in its area, [and] (iv) to increase the number of "Primarily

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Welsh Language” category schools in its area’ (s. 30(3)). (The meaning of ‘Primarily Welsh Language’ is discussed below).

The Act also requires the Welsh Government to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh, which ‘must, in particular, set out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh by, among other things ‘promoting Welsh language education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools, in order to increase the number of pupils attending those schools’ (s. 24 (1) and (3)).

The 2025 Act places schools in Wales (both primary and secondary) into three categories according to the ‘the minimum amount of Welsh language education’ that they provide, ‘as a percentage of the education and training provided over a school year during school sessions for pupils of compulsory school age’. ‘Welsh language education’ is defined as meaning both ‘teaching Welsh’ and ‘education and training through the medium of Welsh’ (s. 8(2)).

The three categories are ‘Primarily Welsh’, ‘Dual Language’ and ‘Primarily English Language, partly Welsh’. ‘Primarily Welsh’ schools must deliver a minimum of 80% Welsh language education, ‘Dual Language’ schools a minimum of 50% and ‘Primarily English Language, partly Welsh’ a minimum of 10% (s. 10). This supersedes a system introduced in 2007 which set out four categories: WM schools, bilingual schools (divided into four sub-categories), EM schools but with significant use of Welsh, and EM schools (Welsh Government 2021: 10-11). In 2023-24, 72.7% of secondary schools in Wales were classified as EM, 10.2% WM and 17% one of the intermediate categories (StatsWales 2024).

The Welsh Government has announced plans for a phased implementation of the 2025 Act, so that all schools would have to reach the minimum 10% threshold by 2030 (Nation.Cymru 2025b).

It should be noted that if the criteria in the 2025 Act were applied in relation to Gaelic in Scotland, Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu would not reach the 80% threshold to be designated ‘Primarily Welsh’ and it is likely that no other secondary school in Scotland would even reach the 10% threshold (bearing in mind that the calculation would encompass all the pupils in the school).

In terms of the curriculum, Welsh-medium secondary education is well established across a broad range of subjects. In 2025, 38,405 candidates were entered for GCSEs through the medium of Welsh in 30 subjects and 4,070 candidates were entered for A Levels through the medium of Welsh in 27 subjects. Welsh-medium entries were 12.6% of the total for GCSE and 10% of the total at A Level (Qualifications Wales 2025: Tables 8 and 9).

However, there is a dramatic drop off in the number of pupils studying Welsh language from GCSE to A Level. In 2025, 5,055 pupils were entered the Welsh First Language GCSE and 21,250 sat the Welsh Second Language exam. At A Level, the corresponding figures were only 255 and 265. The comparable numbers for Gàidhlig and Gaelic in 2025 were 135 and 245 at National 5 and 45 and 145 at Higher.

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The number of candidates for A Level Welsh (first or second language) has dropped by 65% since 2005 (Nation.Cymru 2025a). In contrast, the number sitting Higher Gàidhlig in 2025 was the highest ever, as noted in Module A, Section 1. There has been a decline for the Learners exam but much less rapid than in Wales.

All 22 LAs in Wales provide Welsh-medium primary education, but three of these (Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Monmouthshire) do not continue this into secondary. Pupils in those areas must travel to access Welsh-medium secondary provision. Similarly, pupils in south Powys and some parts of Carmarthenshire travel to Welsh-medium secondaries in Neath Port Talbot. These arrangements are not currently formalised but discussions are proceeding to secure this (information from Welsh Government).

The Welsh Government established a Welsh Medium Secondary Planning Group in October 2024 to provide a platform to collaborate in relation to the planning of Welsh-medium secondary provision across South East Wales (a densely populated area with relatively low levels of Welsh in the community, comparable to central Scotland). Seven LAs are members of the group (information from Welsh Government).

The objectives of the group are:

- To consider how best the represented LAs can work together collaboratively in providing Welsh-medium secondary provision.
- To develop and review projections and demand for Welsh-medium secondary provision.
- To develop an options appraisal to meet projected demand for Welsh-medium secondary provision across South East Wales.

As the group was only established recently, this work is still ongoing.

A3.3 Irish-medium secondary education

The Republic of Ireland differs significantly from Scotland and Wales in that the central government's Department of Education and Youth has full responsibility for educational delivery and LAs play no role. In particular, decisions to open or close schools are made centrally. The role of the Education Authority in Northern Ireland is broadly similar. As such, the issue of inter-authority delivery or cooperation does not arise directly, although pupils sometimes travel to access Irish-medium secondary education (IMSE) in a different area.

A3.3.1 Provision in the Gaeltacht

There is no legal requirement to provide Irish-medium education (IME) and provision is not governed by legal regulation. IME provision in the Republic is organised somewhat differently in the Gaeltacht and in the rest of the Republic. The two are therefore discussed separately.

In 2023–24, there were 29 post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht, with a total of 3,942 pupils (Gaeloideachas n.d.). The number of schools is stable and the recent difficulties seen

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outside the Gaeltacht in relation to the establishment of new provision (discussed below) have not arisen here.

Although Irish has long been established as the principal teaching medium in schools located in the Gaeltacht, in 2017 a new system for recognising schools as 'Gaeltacht schools' was put in place under the new *Policy on Gaeltacht Education* (Department of Education and Skills 2016). In relation to post-primary schools, this requires the school to satisfy eleven language-based criteria, including to 'extend the availability of a full curriculum through Irish . . . by moving towards a total immersion approach where all subjects, apart from the English and other language curricula, will be taught through Irish' (Department of Education and Skills 2016: 8). In this connection a detailed *Indicators of Good Practice for Immersion Education*, which give specific guidance in relation to each of the criteria (Department of Education 2020).

Although the Gaeltacht is officially designated as an Irish-speaking area, home and community use of the language is weak in some areas, and as such some families have a preference for English-medium education (EME). According to the 2022 census only 63.2% of the total Gaeltacht population could speak Irish and only 31% spoke Irish on a daily basis. In the Republic as a whole, 40.4% of the population (1,873,997 people) could speak Irish but only 1.4% of the population did so on a daily basis (Central Statistics Office 2023).

A3.3.2 Provision outside the Gaeltacht

In 2024 there were 29 *Gaelcholáistí* or IM post-primary schools outside the Gaeltacht, with a total of 10,533 pupils. A further 1,577 pupils were in IM units or streams in EM schools (Department of Education 2025: 13). Post-primary provision is much less extensive than primary: 6.6% of primary pupils outside the Gaeltacht are in IME but only 2.8% of post-primary pupils (Gaeloideachas 2025).⁷ Although there are IM primary schools in all 26 counties, as of 2020 thirteen counties have no *Gaelcholáistí*, and seven of those counties also have no IM units (Department of Education 2022: 23-24).

In 2020, only 35.7% of pupils who had transitioned to post-primary school from the final year of an IM primary enrolled in a *Gaelcholáiste*, while 12.4% went on to an EM school with a IM unit. The majority of pupils (51.9%) went to EM schools, where Irish is only offered as a subject. Remarkably from a Scottish perspective, of the pupils enrolling in the first year at *Gaelcholáistí* 18.9% came from EM primary schools (Department of Education 2022: 33). Because all pupils study Irish throughout primary education, some pupils will be sufficiently confident in the language to move to an IM post-primary.

There are several reasons for the low rate of progression to IM post-primary schools. Most obviously, there may be no provision in pupils' home area or travelling to the nearest school may be unduly inconvenient. Some parents may prefer an EM post-primary school to access a wider range of subjects or because they are concerned that IM education will not

⁷ The figures for the Republic as a whole (including the Gaeltacht) were 7.9% and 3.8% respectively.

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prepare them effectively for EM university courses (Ní Ghréacháin 2025; Department of Education 2025: 49).

In 2009, the Department of Education introduced a new system for deciding when to open new schools that has greatly slowed the opening of new IM post-primary schools and promoted instead the development of IM units within EM schools. Between 2007 and 2025 only four new *Gaelcholáistí* have opened and only one since 2016, while the number of units has doubled from 7 to 14 over the same period (Gaeloideachas 2025).

The Department of Education carries out an annual national demographic/population review to determine where it believes that additional school provision is required. When the Department determines the need for a new school, it invites potential 'patrons' to submit proposals to run the school. The patron is the authority in charge of school management. Patrons provide guidance and support for school principals and boards of management, and the patron is responsible for the promotion of the school's ethos. Within this system, proposals for IM schools are effectively in competition with EM schools, which serve a much larger base. In some cases, patrons have included a proposal for an IM unit within their plans, even if this is peripheral to their overall plan.

Gaeloideachas, the national organisation with responsibility for promoting IME, has adopted a policy on best practice in relation to IM post-primary units, including the recommendation that they work towards transition to full IM schools (Gaeloideachas 2020). Recent research has identified a range of deficiencies in the unit model (Ó Ceallaigh et al. 2024) and Irish language organisations have urged the Department of Education to adopt a more proactive policy in relation to the expansion of the IM sector and the establishment of new dedicated schools (*Education Magazine* 2025). The recently published *Policy for Irish Medium Education outside of the Gaeltacht* sets out a broad range of recommendations, but advocates have expressed frustration that key decisions were being postponed by being assigned to a new Taskforce on Models of Provision for Irish-medium Education (Department of Education 2025: 26; *Tuairisc* 2025).

Because education is administered on a national basis and LA boundaries have no relevance in relation to school organisation, pupils may travel to a different county to access IMSE, and secondary schools may designate feeder schools in a different county. In addition, pupils living outside the Gaeltacht may travel to attend a school located within the Gaeltacht.

A3.3.3 Provision in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, there is a broad general duty on the Department of Education 'to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education' (*Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, s. 89(1)*). There is also an established legal definition of an 'Irish speaking school':

A school is an Irish speaking school if more than one half of the teaching of—

(a) religious education; and

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(b) the minimum content of the areas of learning other than that called Language and literacy,

is conducted (wholly or partly) in Irish, and “school” includes part of a school (*Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, s. 3(2)*).

In 2023-24, there were two IM post-primary schools and three IM units in EM schools, with a total of 1,856 pupils (Gaeloideachas n.d.). Geographical provision is patchy, so that some pupils are unable to access post-primary provision, and there is substantial unmet demand (BBC News 2025). In 2023-24 there were 4,632 primary pupils in 35 IM schools (Gaeloideachas n.d.).

Decisions about opening new schools are made by the Education Authority in coordination with a range of bodies, including Comhairle na Gaelscolaiochta, the organisation charged with the promotion of IM education in the North. The current Operational Plan includes proposals for two additional IM post-primary schools, in Belfast and the western area, as part of the ‘medium term work stream’ (Education Authority 2025: 54, 70). However, these proposals were also included in the previous plan and were not progressed (BBC News 2025).

As in the Republic, council boundaries are not relevant to the delivery of IME and decisions about where pupils can access it. Some pupils travel across the border from Strabane in Co. Tyrone to attend the Irish-medium secondary in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal but this is a small-scale and provisional arrangement (BBC News 2025).

Module B**Meetings with local authority officers, national organisations and parents and young people***B1 Introduction and overview*

Overall, 66 meetings were arranged to gather evidence during the project, which began in July 2025 and was completed in February 2026. Meetings took place with the following:

- a) Representatives of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta and the Gaelic and Scots Division within the Scottish Government.
- b) LA Gaelic Education lead officers (plus an additional briefing session and informal response opportunity in September 2025 for the Gaelic Local Authority Network, which includes all LAs with Gaelic provision).
- c) Representatives of national organisations
- d) Meetings with parents and young people in GMSE

The great majority of interviews were conducted on Teams, but school visits were conducted at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and James Gillespie's High School, involving face to face meetings with young people and with teaching staff. In general meetings with officers and the representatives of national organisations were one hour long, with a few interviews extended by 30 minutes (a small number were extended by arranging a second interview generally lasting 30-45 minutes).

All interviewees were given a Project Information Sheet; this is attached as Appendix 2. Interviewees were also given a Participant Consent Form and asked to sign and return this in advance of the interview. The consent form had slightly different versions, to ensure it was appropriate for young people, parents and representatives of Gaelic organisations, LAs or other bodies; the first provides for a higher level of anonymity than the latter. The consent forms are attached in Appendix 3.

In general, a framework of questions was made available to interviewees prior to meetings and interviewees were informed they were free to raise any issues they considered relevant. The framework was adapted for each constituency to ensure that parents and young people and LA officers were provided with an appropriate framework for the interview. A sample question framework is attached as Appendix 4.

Correspondence and discussion with Gaelic-speaking officers and representatives was always undertaken in Gaelic. Interviews with officers, representatives and parents were conducted in English (to enable Teams transcription which is currently not available in Gaelic). Interviews with young people in GMSE were always conducted in Gaelic (with a voice recording maintained)

Contacting LA officers and representatives of national organisations was at times challenging. The research team were conscious of timescales to ensure that a draft report was provided for Bòrd na Gàidhlig in December 2025 and a final report provided in early February 2026. The research team began working on the project in July 2025, but there were additional challenges relating to school sessions and holidays (in July, August and October). A full list of participating

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LAs and national organisations is given below. The research team is greatly indebted to the widespread willingness of LA officers to participate and to national organisation representatives for their dedicated professional approach to arranging interviews within their very demanding diaries. The extensive nature of engagement evidences that within Scottish education there is a firm appreciation of the need to reflect strategically on the needs of the GMSE sector and a desire for change.

Participating Local Authorities (23)

Aberdeen City

Angus

Argyll and Bute

Borders

East Ayrshire

East Dunbartonshire

East Lothian

East Renfrewshire

Edinburgh

Eilean Siar

Falkirk

Fife

Glasgow

Highland

Inverclyde

Midlothian

North Ayrshire

North Lanarkshire

Perth and Kinross

Renfrewshire

South Lanarkshire

Stirling

West Lothian

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Participating national organisations (19)

ADES (Association of Directors of Education Scotland)

CLAS (Comann Luchd-teagaisg Àrd-sgoile)

Comann na Gàidhlig

Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta

COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)

Education Scotland (including additional meeting with Curriculum Improvement Cycle team)

e-Sgoil

Educational Institute of Scotland

Fèisean nan Gàidheal

GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland)

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (additional meeting organised)

Scottish Government, Gaelic and Scots Division – (additional meeting organised)

Scottish Qualifications Authority

SCILT (Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research)

Scottish Funding Council

Skills Development Scotland

Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig

Tobar an Dualchais

University of Strathclyde (additional meeting organised)

During the project HMIE provided assistance relating to inspection evidence. The research team attended a national seminar on HMIE evidence on 16 December 2025.

Information for Module A2 was provided by Gaeloideachas and the Welsh Government.

Parents and Young People

1. An extended interview (2 hours) was provided by the National Committee of Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta.
2. Meetings with different cohorts of young people at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and James Gillespie's High School
3. Online interviews were conducted with groups of parents (2-6 in each group), representing parents using the GMSE provision in Edinburgh, the GMSE provision in Glasgow and GMSE provision in a few other LAs in Central Scotland.

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4. Face to face and simultaneous online meeting attended by 34 parents with attendees from North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire.

Evidence from all sources in Module B has been collated along with related recommendations under the following headings:

B2 Vision and Leadership and Local Authority issues

A fundamental issue discussed in the interviews was the very varied provision of GMSE across the country and even within individual LAs. GME Primary and Early Years Education is understood as being equivalent to EM provision, following similar curriculum structures, with of course a focus on immersion and acquiring Gaelic fluency. In addition, the GMPE and Early Years sector deliver a wide range of Gaelic cultural opportunities for young people. GMSE provision ranges from a considerable delivery of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic (particularly in the BGE phase) or essentially just Gàidhlig as a subject. Àrd-sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu provides the most comprehensive level of delivery, with most of the class time in the BGE delivered in Gaelic. Across the country the provision of the wider curriculum and cultural activities through the medium of Gaelic is very varied. In some settings Comann na Gàidhlig (www.cnag.org/) provides youth work support, which is valued by LAs and teachers and widens the opportunities to use Gaelic beyond the classroom setting (other organisations such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal (www.feisean.org) are also supporting the sector with additional cultural input)

In seeking to establish an agreed national understanding of what GMSE is, there were a range of opinions expressed, summarised as follows:

- Education Scotland were of the view that the national definition of GMSE is contained in the Advice on Gaelic Education (Education Scotland 2022 [2015]).
- LAs generally indicated that they would welcome some further clarity around what GMSE delivery is and what is expected. Many LA officers were clear that the ultimate goal was the delivery of the entire curriculum through the medium of Gaelic on an equal basis to the provision within EM education. It was made very clear, however, that this was an aspiration and a long-term vision for the sector. It was also raised that in clarifying provision, LAs must take account of local circumstances and that unrealistic expectations should not impede progress towards ultimate goals.
- Some national organisations were of the view that the Advice on Gaelic Education could be strengthened and include more clearly issues relating to bilingualism and its benefits. A number of respondents indicated clearly that they would welcome much greater clarity in the Advice on Gaelic Education in relation to what is expected in the delivery of immersion in the BGE and Senior Phase. It is noteworthy that the Irish Department of Education's *Policy on Irish-medium Education outside the Gaeltacht* has charged a taskforce to 'ensure that there is common understanding and transparency across the sector – and for parents and students – of the expectations for Irish medium education' (Department of Education 2025: 30). It was also raised by some representatives of national agencies that a refocus on Gaelic fluency at the heart of GMSE would be highly beneficial.

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Human Resources issues were raised across different interviews with teachers and LA officers and parents. It was raised by some LA officers with GME responsibility that GME teacher recruitment and staffing required specific expertise and knowledge that was not always available at LA level within HR teams. Specific actions by LAs were noted, such as the inclusion of GME in the Edinburgh relocation support package and the particular work done by Argyll and Bute relating to housing for GME staff. The Edinburgh relocation package, which normally only applies to senior level posts in the authority, has recently been amended to include GME posts as there was a recognition that more had to be done to attract teachers to the city. It is also clear that additional attention to creating promoted posts has been undertaken for GME to make posts more attractive and strengthen recruitment and retention of staff. The potential to develop several case studies highlighting effective HR practice was raised by some LA Officers. Some parents also noted that in their view there had not been adequate consideration by LAs of how best to develop the GMSE teaching workforce. It was felt by some parents that contracts were not always suitably attractive (e.g. not permanent, or part-time) to attract more teachers into the sector.

Some LA officers raised the issue of providing appropriate CLPL opportunities for teachers, particularly where the number of GMSE teachers in a particular authority may be small. CLPL for School Leadership Teams, where the remitted senior member of staff may not speak Gaelic or have a background in GME and immersion practice, were also identified as a concern by some LA officers (and some teachers and representatives of national agencies).

Supporting greater fluency and confidence in Gaelic amongst GMSE teachers was raised by some LAs and representatives of national agencies. This includes expertise regarding agreement on Gaelic technical language specific to a subject and the creation of new terminology which the An Seòtal project operated by Stòrlann Nàiseanta is addressing (including creating completely new terms such as a Gaelic word for phishing – *iasgochd* – as noted by Stòrlann in their interview). There is also an issue for some teachers in relation to their own literacy skills in Gaelic. At present Gaelic language certification at any level is not mandatory for GMSE employment (a teacher may have Gaelic as a first language but not have qualifications, for example). Edinburgh has also provided teachers who wish to improve their fluency in Gaelic with additional support enabling their having protected time during the school day to learn, paying for additional courses and ensuring that Senior Leadership Team remits include providing support for teachers improving their Gaelic.

Overall, there has been very little uptake by LAs for the teacher immersion scheme operated by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (supporting year-long secondments of English-medium teachers on immersion programmes provided by Glasgow University and SMO in the past five years. A range of factors impacted on this, including difficulties in securing a definite post in GME on return from immersion, costs not being fully met by the Bòrd scheme (Bòrd na Gàidhlig provides 80% of the salary cost for the supply cover) and securing a supply teacher to replace the secondee. It was further noted that the inability of some interested teachers to attend immersion course distant from where they live was an obstacle to participation in the scheme. Some officers proposed greater flexibility in delivery of teacher immersion. This could involve the creation of a hybrid digital / face-to-face course, for example. The EIS, in their written statement provided to the research team, also highlighted the issue of supply teacher shortages in general in English-

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medium impacting on the ability of LAs to release teachers for full-time immersion courses (see p. 49).

1. LA officers (and some parents and teachers) raised the issue of the importance of GMSE teachers having GTCS registration for more than one subject and of the recruitment of GM primary teachers to deliver courses in the BGE. This was felt to be a potential area where GMSE could be developed more quickly. It was noted that North Lanarkshire had successfully supported teachers to gain the necessary credits to add subjects to their registration and then begin delivery in GMSE.
2. Some parents were of the view that there was an absence of strategic vision for how the GMSE sector can be developed both at a local and a national level. It was felt that decisions were often reactive and did not display a coherent understanding of how a set of key aims might be realised. The provision under the Scottish Languages Act for a National Gaelic Language Strategy / standards for Gaelic education, with ministerial responsibility, and the role for Bòrd na Gàidhlig in monitoring implementation were noted in discussion.

Recommendations

Local Authorities

1. LAs should review their GMSE staff teams and identify whether teachers are dually qualified and whether additional support can be provided to enhance teachers' qualifications. In addition, LAs should review current delivery and identify how recruitment of GM primary teachers can enhance provision (this might also be on a shared basis with current GMPE provision in the authority).
2. LAs should ensure that they formulate a clear plan to implement the forthcoming National Gaelic Language Strategy / Standards for Gaelic Education framework and that they provide Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which will monitor implementation, with appropriate evidence for progress within the LA context.
3. There continue to be some issues around confidence in Gaelic amongst some GME teachers. This is in part related to there being no mandatory Gaelic qualification or fluency level for employment in the GME sector – assessment of fluency generally takes place at interviews for GME posts. Even teachers who have had Gaelic as their first language or who are functionally bilingual may recognise that they have gaps in their skill set relating to formal, standard Gaelic or newer technical terms coming into the language. LAs should ensure that the GMSE school has up-to-date audits of current staff teams, relating to any Gaelic-language supports teachers or support staff identify they would need and that appropriate support is in place to meet these needs. This should include providing funding support for courses and appropriate time for this aspect of CLPL within the working day. It will be useful for HMIE to include best practice examples of Gaelic Language CLPL developed in individual schools as part of the inspection process.

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Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life national working party with representation from LAs and national immersion providers to review current practice, identify challenges and deliver a new, refreshed teacher immersion option for teachers.
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life working party of LA HR officers and LA Lead Officers for Gaelic to identify key challenges and successes in supporting GME and GMSE recruitment and retention and agree recommendations with the group on how best practice can be shared and how high-quality HR support for the GMSE sector can be sustained. The group should deliberate on how more attractive contract offers can be made (e.g. how might a current part-time contract be augmented to full-time, potentially as an inter-authority agreement or to enable wider sectoral support such as joint working with e-Sgoil etc.).

Scottish Government

1. The new National Gaelic Language Strategy / standards for Gaelic education framework should address the key point regarding what the vision is for the sector in the medium and long-term and should outline how this vision will be achieved. Consultation should be undertaken with all key stakeholders, including parents, to ensure there is broad support for the strategy. It will also be of benefit for the Scottish Government to reflect on how the provision of CLPL can be included in the national standards framework.
2. The Scottish Government should explicitly welcome applications for funding support through the Specific Grant funding stream for initiatives which will improve CLPL provision for the sector. This may include inter-authority applications (including examples such as the enhanced Principal Teacher post delivered by Highland and Argyll and Bute working in partnership), initiatives from national organisations such as SCILT and from other providers such as universities.

B3 Curriculum Development

A wide range of issues arose across all the interviews relates to the challenges and opportunities relating to developing the GMSE curriculum. Obviously, there are many inter-related factors such as resourcing, teacher recruitment and retention, parental confidence in the GMSE sector etc. This section will outline some of the principal issues raised by interviewees:

1. The wider curriculum in GMSE was recognised by a comprehensive range of parents, teachers, national organisations and LAs as a core issue, both a vital opportunity to strengthen Gaelic culture and fluency but also a challenge in delivering a high-quality set of experiences in every GMSE provision. It was also identified by parents as a particular asset to GMSE, making it an attractive option for them. The provision of support from the youth work team at CnaG was noted by parents and LA officers (and young people themselves) as an important support for the GMSE system and in particular a key factor in building greater fluency and supporting young people's connection with Gaelic culture. Activities through the medium of Gaelic such as sports and arts opportunities helped young people foster connections with the language, bringing it alive outside the classroom setting. Lunchtime clubs and after-school events

all were noted by various interviewees as important opportunities to develop greater fluency in relaxed, informal settings.

Residential experiences were noted by parents and LA officers as being particularly valuable, bringing young people together from different provisions and connecting them to traditional communities where Gaelic is more commonly spoken. In addition, opportunities where young people in smaller rural provisions visited larger urban GMSE provision were cited as being mutually beneficial.

Where LAs have Gaelic Development Workers or Gaelic Family Liaison Officers it was noted that these workers can provide important support for GMSE provision.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Tobar an Dualchais (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/) are two important agencies who have provided GMSE with important opportunities to develop the wider curriculum. This was raised by parents, representatives of national agencies and LA officers and teachers. Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Tobar an Dualchais both cited educational projects which had provided support (including the Aiseag project operated by Tobar an Dualchais and the community-centred project operated by Fèisean, which has linked fluent speakers in the community with schools). Tobar an Dualchais currently has around 35,000 Gaelic recordings, which has the potential to impact positively on GMSE.

2. Comunn na Gàidhlig is currently compiling a National Gaelic Youth Strategy. This will include a review of current frameworks supporting GMSE, such as Spòrs Gàidhlig and the Gaelic Youth Worker network. LA officers, parents and teachers have identified the current youth work provision provided by CnaG and linked to GMSE as an important factor in delivering the wider curriculum through Gaelic. CnaG raised the examples of youth-based residential centres in Wales and the impact that this provision has on strengthening the Welsh language and expressed the view that the creation of a similar resource, easily accessible to as much of the GMSE system as possible, would be an extremely valuable for the sector as a whole.
3. LA officers, teachers and parents noted very varied levels of clarity around the GMSE curriculum offer available in each provision, curriculum pathways and the provision of the wider curriculum. Some teachers noted that work was underway in expanding the curriculum offer to include more varied vocational offers (through the medium of Gaelic). Some parents raised concerns about Gaelic Learners and GMSE young people being taught in the same class and were unclear as to how immersion strategies could work in this arrangement. Some LA officers highlighted that work was underway in linking the curriculum offer and learning pathways to employment opportunities for Gaelic speakers (e.g. teaching, health and social care, media etc). There has been some development of modern apprenticeships and some LA and national agency representatives were of the view that this requires to be expanded further. At LA level some officers were reflecting on whether the GMSE curriculum offer might be expanded to deliver options not currently provided by English-medium in a particular school (rather than always mirroring the English-medium offer).
4. Teachers and representatives of national agencies highlighted the importance of expanding the curriculum in GMSE with a focus on literacy-rich areas of the curriculum – arguably all areas require literacy skills but some respondents were of the view that

expanding the curriculum should always take into consideration how the additional curricular area or experience will advance the fluency in Gaelic of young people.

5. Discussion arose with a range of respondents – teachers, parents and representatives of organisations, around the potential benefit of there being a Gaelic Awareness module within the GMSE curriculum as standard practice across the system. Often this is perceived as a useful addition to the curriculum in the English-medium sector but overall there was support for there being input which would enable young people to understand better their bilingualism, the advantages they have as Gaelic-speakers and more proactively help them develop a sense of self-worth and identity as young Gaelic-speakers in modern Scotland.
6. Internal structures within schools were cited by parents as potential challenges to curriculum uptake. Column structures were noted as sometimes making GMSE choices extremely difficult when Gaelic is placed in a column with highly desired subjects. Some LA representatives acknowledged that further thought was required as to where Gaelic or GMSE subjects sat in the curriculum structure operating in some schools (e.g. should Gaelic sit within a literacy framework and be required across the BGE and into Senior Phase as in some provision or be in the languages portfolio alongside other modern languages and Gaelic (Learners)). Clearly different schools have different contexts but there was a general desire expressed to solve challenges, so that the uptake of Gaelic and GMSE subjects increases.
7. Representatives of national agencies and LAs highlighted that curriculum development and developing pedagogical expertise is now to the forefront in Scottish education. The Curriculum Improvement Cycle processes and the Centre for Teaching Excellence (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/teaching-excellence/>) were noted as drivers in delivering change. Both of these developments have had GME considered as a factor from their inception and this was recognised by teachers and representatives of agencies as being of vital importance.
8. Some discussions took place with teachers and representatives of national agencies and LAs regarding the importance of linking the GMSE curriculum offer to employability. It was felt more could be done to encourage a wider understanding amongst young people about how their bilingualism and Gaelic language skills increase their employment options. The recent careers fair at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu at which fifteen organisations provided displays and in person support was noted as a particular success in encouraging young people to appreciate more fully their ability to speak Gaelic as an employability advantage.
9. The Strategic Board for Teacher Education (<https://www.gov.scot/groups/strategic-board-for-teacher-education/>) is a Scottish Government body whose remit includes reviewing standards in teaching and teaching education and evaluating reforms. It has a number of short-life sub-groups including groups relating to Diversity, Newly registered Teachers and Professional Learning. There are also specific workstreams developed on issues such as Diversity. There are 24 members on the Board, some of whom will have some knowledge of GME but there was no specific expertise in GME listed in the membership. The research team were unable to find any evidence of the Board reviewing the needs of the GME sector on the Scottish Government website.

10. Bòrd na Gàidhlig does not fund statutory provision of education (teachers' salaries, building costs etc) but it does provide vital resource for agencies that support the wider curriculum in the GMSE sector and there are also some community-based projects taking place around GME provision which meet the criteria for funding. In the past five years, £56k was provided through various funding initiatives for community-based projects in 21 schools, of which 13 were in the GMSE sector. Considerable funding is provided each year by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to CnaG (for youth work with a strong linkage to GMSE), Film G, the Deasbad Nàiseanta and Fèisean nan Gàidheal (for cultural development with strong links to GMSE). As an example, in 2024-25 CnaG received £750k, Film G £17.5 k and the Deasbad Nàiseanta £5.7k in response to funding applications (see recommendation on pp. 53 and 67).
11. The Scottish Government provides crucial funding for GME, most notably through the Gaelic Specific Grants Scheme and the Gaelic Capital Fund. These two funding streams are widely recognised by LAs in particular as impacting very positively on provision. In discussion with Scottish Government representatives, it was agreed that it would be a complex issue to try to isolate GMSE support provided through Specific Grant as often applications were for GME as a whole (e.g. transport to GME Primary and Secondary, additional development officers who may work partially with all sectors etc). It was more realistic to analyse the Gaelic Capital Fund, though in some instances funding support under this scheme also impacts on more than one sector. In the period 2009-2019 approximately £21m was provided to LAs through the Gaelic Capital Fund, of which around 25% was directly attributable to GMSE support and the remainder overwhelmingly attributable to GMPE development (approximately 59%) (see recommendation on pp. 58 and 69).

Recommendations

National Agencies

1. Tobar an Dualchais and Fèisean nan Gàidheal should create educational development plans with a clear focus on GMSE. Their plan should include securing education development workers. In the light of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025* and its provisions, Scottish Government and funding bodies should review funding for these agencies and partnership proposals they may develop (partnerships have been developed at LA level and with Stòrlann Nàiseanta).
2. CnaG should identify clearly in the new National Gaelic Youth strategy what is being proposed to develop further support for the GMSE sector and national funding bodies should align their funding commitments with proposals which will evidentially impact on enhanced GMSE provision. As part of the National Gaelic Youth Strategy or as a discrete project, CnaG should create a fully costed and time-lined proposal for a GME residential centre with clear information on how this will impact on the GMSE sector as a whole. It should then seek funding partners, including the Scottish Government's Gaelic Capital Fund to begin a staged development (as has been delivered in South Uist at Cnoc Soilleir, for example).

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

3. Stòrlann Nàiseanta should liaise with the GMSE sector and relevant national agencies such as Education Scotland and Fèisean nan Gàidheal to produce a Gaelic Awareness module tailored to the GMSE sector.
4. Stòrlann Nàiseanta should review the current progress of the An Seòtal project and create a strategic plan for additional output at a faster rate. Stòrlann should inform all potential funders of what additional resource will provide and seek to deliver an expanded terminology at a much faster pace.
5. National developments such as the Curriculum Improvement Cycle should ensure that when they evaluate their own impact, they include information on improvements in the GMSE curriculum offer and improvements in uptake.
6. Skills Development Scotland should audit the current provision of careers fairs and events focused on the GMSE sector. All young people should experience career events input within the BGE prior to any subject choices to ensure they understand the benefits of Gaelic. LAs, schools and Skills Development Scotland should work together to ensure this is delivered and Skills Development Scotland should report annually on progress. Furthermore, Skills Development Scotland should link its planned supports for the GMSE sector to the curriculum offer and pathways available in each school. Case studies of how young people can successfully develop skills in GMSE to secure employment should be created and publicised. As the national standards stemming from the Scottish Languages Act are agreed and enacted, Skills Development Scotland should ensure that its support for the GMSE sector is carefully aligned with relevant standards.

Local Authorities

1. A clear obstacle to expanding the Fèisean nan Gàidheal programme, as stated by the organisation, has been the costs of hiring venues (including LA venues). As part of the LA support for GMSE and GME Wider Curriculum delivery, LAs should review their charging policies and exempt bodies such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal from charges where there is sufficient evidence that projects are providing wider curriculum opportunities for their GMSE provision.
2. LAs should monitor closely the uptake of the GMSE curriculum offer and the uptake of curriculum pathways resulting in additional GMSE experiences and certification. Each provision should be supported to deliver continuous improvement in uptake of the GMSE curriculum offer, GMSE wider curriculum offer and the GMSE certification programme provided by each provision. Annual School Improvement Planning and SQ Reporting should be monitored closely to ensure that GMSE has high-quality strategic leadership driving the system forward. The establishment of GME parent forums in LAs will provide an opportunity for schools and LAs to evaluate their progress in improving provision.

B4 GMSE – Young People and Parents

It should be recorded that teachers and LA officers commented that parents were very often very enthusiastic about GME and that their enthusiasm was a great advantage for the system as a whole. Their energy and commitment have been responsible for the creation of GME and have been a key element in developing opportunities across the country.

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

Parents raised the following issues:

1. Parents were concerned that the GMSE identity was not strong enough in many dual-language schools. Although there may be external signage, for example, they were of the view that there was often very little other signage internally. They raised a concern overall regarding the small numbers of GMSE pupils in these schools who were being educated along with large numbers of young people in EME. They expressed a view that sometimes insufficient regard was taken by the larger EM school of the needs of GMSE young people being educated along with EM cohorts. Overall many parents raised concerns regarding the ethos of these dual-language provisions and were not confident that GMSE was adequately promoted.
2. Meeting additional support needs within GMSE was a concern raised by parents. This related to a range of issues including the provision of specialist staffing, resourcing the GMSE curriculum to meet all learners' needs and the assessment of learners' needs in the GMSE . Some parents expressed very clearly their concerns regarding how additional support needs were being met in the GMSE sector; for some parents this was their foremost concern.
3. Parents acknowledged the challenge for English-speakers who may be the Senior Leadership Team member with responsibility for GMSE and would like to see more training for these teachers.
4. Parents were aware of the advantages young people enjoy in the wider curriculum programme on offer in GMSE and they acknowledged how important this was in delivering Gaelic fluency, awareness of Gaelic culture and the development of a Gaelic identity for young people. The CnaG youth workers, Spòrs Gàidhlig and the work of Fèisean nan Gàidheal were highlighted. It was apparent that parents would welcome more development of wider curriculum opportunities for young people in GMSE. They also commented that residential experiences such as those offered by Comann na Gàidhlig can be oversubscribed very quickly. They would like to see the opportunities for immersive residential experiences greatly increased.
5. Many parents were of the view that the GMSE offer was very unclear. They had very limited knowledge of curriculum pathways and there was considerable concern expressed by parents in some LAs about a lack of clarity around precisely what was being delivered at present in the BGE and Senior Phase, what next steps the LA was planning to improve provision and what national examinations would be offered through the medium of Gaelic (and what GMSE certification the LA was planning to introduce next). These issues were also raised by parents in LAs with GMPE but currently without GMSE, where parents said the lack of clarity around what a GMSE offer would be was impacting on their decision-making and confidence in the system.
6. Parents who were in LAs with parent forums were supportive of the opportunity to liaise with officers, but some also stated that the forum met infrequently or irregularly.
7. Resourcing GMSE and the amount of time teachers are spending on translating materials and creating their own resources was raised by a considerable number of parents, who were acutely aware of how this impacts on the GMSE system.

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

8. Some parents were aware that wider LA initiatives supporting secondary education, such as Active Schools programmes, were not being delivered in Gaelic and they felt more could be done by LAs to work towards parity of provision with English-medium.
9. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of greater inter-authority cooperation to deliver enhanced GMSE provision. Bringing smaller numbers of young people and their teachers together in jointly delivered GMSE provision would provide a greater critical mass and make it more cost-effective to develop enlarged services. Transport and travelling distances would obviously be factors but overall, there was confidence amongst parents that these challenges could be overcome with appropriate planning and liaison.
10. Some parents were concerned about their children's fluency level and confidence in Gaelic and some also commented that this impacted on their confidently sitting a national examination through the medium of Gaelic.

Young people in GMSE raised the following points:

1. Young people expressed a commitment to Gaelic and were very appreciative of the support they got from teachers and the sense of community they felt in GMSE. They were generally aware of the benefits of being in GMSE and the potential employment opportunities opened up by being able to speak Gaelic. Young people were also encouraged by the opportunities they are currently enjoying for part-time employment because they can speak Gaelic. In general, they thought a Gaelic Awareness module in GMSE would be useful, particularly if it was relevant to where they lived.
2. They welcomed extending all opportunities to have more Gaelic on offer in the curriculum. Some young people mentioned Maths as a subject that would be attractive to have in Gaelic. They understood that Gaelic-language examinations and certification were part of the GMSE system, but many were of the view that sitting national examinations in Gaelic was more difficult.
3. Many young people mentioned issues around learning resources in Gaelic. They very much supported a greater supply of varied resources for courses they were taking. In addition, young people talked about there being some problems accessing tech resources which were available (e.g. spellcheckers). Young people were generally of the view that the available range of Gaelic personal reading materials was weighted towards younger people or adults and that there was a need to expand the number and range of books in Gaelic aimed at young people of GMSE age.
4. There was clear support for the current range of opportunities to use and enjoy Gaelic outside of the formal classroom setting. The work of the CnaG youth workers and the work of Fèisean nan Gàidheal were noted as being important to them. They understood clearly how more opportunities to use Gaelic helped their confidence and fluency in Gaelic to improve. Some young people thought that their confidence and fluency was not as strong as it had been in the primary GME sector (the young people interviewed had been in GMPE standalone schools).

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

LA officers raised the following issues relating to working with parents:

1. Some LAs had formal arrangements in place to meet with parents and discuss issues. These included parent liaison forums mentioned by 5 LAs (and one other considering setting up a forum). Edinburgh has the most advanced structure, with clear linkage into the LA committee structure. In Renfrewshire the Gaelic Parent Forum is included in the authority's Parent Council Chairs' Group, thus linking GME parents with parent representatives from English-medium provision. North Lanarkshire has a Gaelic Improvement Group which links community representatives, including parents, to the officer team. In West Lothian, which does not as yet deliver GME, a Gaelic Gathering has been set up linking teachers with an interest in Gaelic, members of the local community and officers as they develop Gaelic Language Plan aims.
2. Some LA officers noted that Comann nam Pàrant has been an important organisation to engage with and acknowledged that it has provided them with valuable support and additional knowledge and expertise.
3. In engaging with parents around important transitions such as the P7-S1 transition some LA officers acknowledged that work should begin earlier and that a more coherent 3-18 vision would strengthen the system. They were of the view that decisions were often made prior to P6 or P7 regarding secondary. Many parents, however, expressed the view that they were fully committed to the 3-18 pathway in GME (this may relate of course to the likelihood that parents agreeing to provide interviews would be most likely to be committed to GME as a whole).
4. Parental auditing had been undertaken in a few LAs. In the Western Isles active liaison with parents is currently underway regarding GMSE provision and further consultation is expected to take place in 2026.
5. Teachers and LA officers noted that demographic change is taking place in GME and in GMSE with greater diversity amongst the families choosing the sector. This includes enrolment from different socio-economic groups and cultural backgrounds e.g. in Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu provision is made for Muslim young people in the school's contemplative space.
6. Some LA officers noted that parental expectations can be challenging. This can be particularly difficult when education budgets are under pressure overall. They also noted that sometimes planning GMSE can be challenging as parents may not opt for this as the secondary option for their child despite attendance at a GME primary.
7. Some LA officers, parents and teachers raised the issue of careers in Gaelic and how they are promoted. It was noted that widening the knowledge about the employment advantages there are for young people who speak Gaelic will support greater uptake of GMSE and of Gaelic national qualifications.

Recommendations

Local Authorities

1. All LAs with GMSE should consider formal arrangements to consult with parents in the sector. They should also consider how GME forums feed into the structures in the LA to ensure that there are regular meetings across each session.
2. See Curriculum Pathway Recommendations in various sections.

3. See School Planning and Reporting recommendation on page 14.

B5 Teachers and Initial Teacher Education

Teachers raised the following issues in our meetings:

1. Resource creation and translating existing English-language remain of paramount concern to teachers. In some instances, teachers noted they had spent hundreds of hours translating course materials. They also acknowledged that sometimes teachers were duplicating work and that much greater development of sharing created materials within the GMSE sector was a priority. Overall, this was raised as a very significant issue by both teachers, parents and LA officers. The provision of prelim exam papers by Stòrlann Nàiseanta was highlighted by teachers and young people in GMSE as being a significant support to the sector. It was also noted that resource programmes provided by the Scottish Government do not always include Gaelic-language materials. The Respect Me programme, for example, has a range of resources available for schools which are only provided in English. There was some interest in establishing common courses for some subject areas which could then be resourced more easily on a national basis.
2. Teachers very much welcomed the inclusion of GME in the Centre for Teaching Excellence initiative announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Jenny Gilruth and in Education Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle initiative. GME has been recognised as a distinct issue from the inception of both these developments and teachers felt that this was vitally important (rather than an add on at some future point). The impact on the GMSE sector is already apparent, with well-attended seminars being delivered in 2025, further work planned for 2026 and research briefs already being made available from the Centre for Teaching Excellence – operated for GME by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Seconded teachers are also in place now, ensuring teams are now working on both initiatives, the Centre for Teaching Excellence and the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.
3. Teachers in many GMSE provisions were either working as the sole GMSE teacher or in very small teams (of one to three). This created a degree of isolation and may impact further on workloads where a single teacher within an LA would be planning and delivering courses without a wider support network. Moderation has been highlighted as an issue, although some teachers mentioned innovative digital links they have with teachers of the same subject across LAs (holding online moderation meetings). In addition, subject teachers are often the only GMSE subject specialist in the authority, again impacting on teacher isolation. This can also impact on the delivery of subjects and courses through the medium of Gaelic being perceived as fragile (dependent on one member of staff). Parents raised the fragility of provision as an issue impacting on confidence in the system, with delivery sometimes changing annually due to teachers leaving schools (conversely, of course, this can result in new delivery being introduced when a teacher takes up a new contract in a school).
4. Teachers welcomed the support that had been provided by the SQA team and the recent agreement to provide young people sitting GMSE national examinations with additional time. They raised concerns around the lack of Understanding Standards materials for

GMSE subjects, some errors which have occurred in GMSE examination papers (relating to translation into Gaelic) and issues around ensuring Gaelic-language papers are marked by Gaelic-speaking markers.

5. The issue of recognising formally the expertise of GME and GMSE teachers was discussed by teachers, some LA officers and representatives of national organisations. At present GTCS registration (according to sector) is the only requirement for employment, with selection of suitable teachers an LA responsibility. The GTCS is planning a review of the potential for a national programme of Accredited Specialism linked to GTCS registration. This may include teachers of visually impaired children and young people, for example. Representatives of the GTCS raised the issue of evidencing Accredited Specialism registration for GME teachers. Discussion took place around the potential for evidence of accredited specialism within GME coming from the M. Ed programme being delivered by SMO and the GME ITE programmes offered by the SMO and the Universities of Strathclyde and Edinburgh, for example.
6. Teachers noted that the different school contexts were significant factors in determining what a school will plan to deliver next (e.g. contrasts between urban and rural provision or provision in areas where Gaelic is spoken by a sizeable number of people and areas where this is not the case). Some teachers did, however, raise the issue that some provision in some schools was more advanced than in others and that where provision had not improved, this inhibited schools with more advanced provision from making further progress. Therefore, if only a very small number of schools offer some subjects through the medium of Gaelic this inhibits faster progress in creating and offering national examinations through the medium of Gaelic. School and LA strategic planning to improve GMSE provision is therefore essential.
7. The discrepancies that exist relating to the GTCS and Scottish Government data were a focus of discussion between the research team and representatives from the GTCS. This can be explained partly by the methodology used – whereby the GTCS gathers data based on teachers self-identifying whilst Scottish Government data is generally gathered at census points during the school session. The wider issues relating to data are included in the recommendations for the Scottish Government in this section.
8. A number of national agencies such as the GTCS and SFC along with universities sit on the Teacher Workforce Planning Group. This is convened by the Scottish Government and has a remit to review a range of strategic issues such as the workforce planning process, teacher vacancies across the system and the provision of advice on teacher recruitment publicity activity. It has 20 members, some of whom have knowledge of issues relating to GME though there was no specific GME expertise in the group's membership. It was unclear from materials on the Scottish Government website whether there has been consistent, focussed reflection on the needs of GME.
9. The GTCS produces national standards for Provisional Registration and Full Registration of Teachers. It also produces the Standard for Headship and the Standard for Middle Leadership.

The Standards for Provisional and Full Registration include specific references to GME relating to issues such as professional commitment, curriculum design and curriculum planning and creating an ethos within which GME thrives (GTCS 2021a: 5, 7, 8, 9 and 2021b: 5, 7, 8, 9).

The Standards for Middle Leadership and Headship include specific references to GME relating to professional commitment, critically engaging with research and curriculum development to inform planning, curriculum design and the vision, values and ethos that will support GME (GTCS 2021c: 5, 7, 10, 11 and 2021d: 5, 7, 10, 11).

HMIE have been advising in inspection reports and in their recent publication *Evaluating the Quality of Gaelic Education* (HMIE 2026) that the GTCS Standards should be more widely used to impact on practice. It is of some concern that there were rarely any mentions of the GTCS Standards in interviews with key stakeholders such as teachers and LA officers.

10. Transitions between GME Primary and GMSE were identified by teachers as crucial factors in providing more effective delivery and encouraging greater uptake. Some LA officers noted that they would like to start this work earlier (promoting a 3-18 ethos within the authority and ensuring parents and young people understood that immersion was a feature of both primary and secondary provision). In some GMSE provision transition is being supported through devising curriculum inputs in S1 e.g. special intensive courses being provided in Gaelic at the start of S1.
11. Some GMSE teachers reported that there was not a cohesive, supportive ethos in all dual-language secondary provision. Accommodation and timetabling challenges were impacting on development and there was not always a full understanding of GMSE priorities and developmental needs at school Senior Leadership Team level or at LA level.
12. Some teachers and representatives of national agencies felt that the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes should be revised to take better account of a wider set of issues relating to Gaelic fluency and how this can be built up across GME with high-quality immersion practice. It was also raised that the Advice on Gaelic Education should be strengthened and be more explicit around GMSE and best practice.
13. Teachers raised concerns regarding the numbers of ASN support staff working in the GMSE sector. It was stated that there was not parity of provision between English-medium and Gaelic-medium regarding classroom assistants, support for learning assistants and ASN teachers. It was felt that this impacts across the sector and requires attention. Parents also raised provision of specialist staffing (including Gaelic-speaking support staff) and specialist ASN resources in Gaelic as being a significant concern.
14. Despite there being a national expectation that GME is a 3-18 provision, teachers raised concerns that this was not always being provided, where even Gaelic language is seen as optional during the BGE in some settings. Tracking and monitoring of young people in the BGE and Senior Phase in their uptake of Gaelic or Gaelic-medium subjects are inconsistent. As noted in section A1.6 above, many young people still leave Scottish education after early years and primary GME without qualifications in Gaelic or subjects through the medium of Gaelic. Parents also expressed concerns regarding what their children will achieve from many years in Gaelic immersion and how their experience in GME can be recognised formally.
15. Teachers acknowledged the importance of the wider curriculum and the importance of developing an appreciation of the diverse cultural factors surrounding Gaelic. Often this enlivened the whole provision of GMSE and enabled young people to form a more

secure identity as the new Gaelic-speaking generation. It was noted, however, that more cohesive guidance on what this should look would improve delivery.

16. Teachers and parents raised various issues relating to incentivisation to attract and retain more GMSE teachers. Salary incentivisation is a complex issue but it was also recognised that conditions such as class size limits, translation support and protected time can also impact on making GMSE an attractive option for teachers.
17. The EIS, which represents the overwhelming majority of Scottish teachers across sectors, helpfully provided the following statement on digital learning and immersion courses for EM teachers:

The EIS has clear policy in relation to online learning. The National Scheme of Conditions of Service contained within the SNCT Handbook does not provide for digital delivery of teaching and learning beyond a classroom setting. As such there is no contractual requirement for teachers to deliver live lessons via electronic or other means to pupils who are not present in the same classroom as the teacher.

Teaching is a human-centred endeavour and is most effective when delivered face-to-face in a classroom. The EIS accepts that remote delivery of teaching and learning can be used in some limited circumstances to provide additionality. If teaching is being delivered remotely, a GTCS registered teacher must be present in the receiving class for legal and pedagogical reasons. Furthermore, in line with a Court of Session decision, that teacher must be employed in accordance with the relevant category of registration and therefore, be the appropriate subject specialist in the area being taught. Only through such engagement, can there be 'adequate and efficient' provision of education.

The EIS position is based on legislative provisions, such as the Education Act (1980), the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, and the Requirement for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005; GIRFEC policy; and the GTCS Professional Standards and Values. The EIS concludes that effective pedagogy and assessment of learners' needs is delivered through face-to-face delivery in the classroom.

The EIS advocates for greater investment in core education to support the delivery of quality education in all areas of the curriculum, underpinned by principles of inclusion and equity. In discussing the challenges around the curriculum offer in GME, the EIS recognises the shortage of teachers to deliver GME. To address this shortage, the EIS would advocate that this forms part of effective national strategic workforce planning, with consideration given to wider availability of and participation in, immersion programmes. This would require additional funding to ensure that those registered teachers in English-medium provision wishing to deliver GME can access immersion courses, with the supply costs for Local Authorities being fully realised.

Initial Teacher Education in GMSE providers noted the following points:

1. The issue of securing appropriate placements for student teachers on ITE courses remains a major challenge to developing provision further. On occasion applicants have not been accommodated on GME ITE courses because the subject is not taught within the system through the medium of Gaelic (psychology for example) or placement options are very limited and the applicant could not be placed in a GME provision (PE was cited as an example). Discussion took place regarding whether a hybrid GME and EME placement could be devised but it was felt by ITE providers that this would be very complex and might be seen as “watering down” GME focused ITE and preparation for immersion education. If a GME ITE course did not fully deliver a GME experience it was also noted that this might prevent the GME ITE course from being used as evidence for Additional Accreditation were that to be agreed by the GTCS following the review it is planning to undertake in 2026. Providers also raised issues around additional costs associated with delivering ITE placements in rural areas and/or areas located a considerable distance from the university campus. This can involve student teachers requiring accommodation and universities incurring additional costs relating to staff supporting the placement. The potential for devising a model whereby placement with e-Sgoil may be appropriate was raised in discussion. This could involve additional ITE input on effective digital pedagogy. It was also raised that some schools could be designated as GME ITE hubs and structures and support built around particular provisions. This would ensure that expertise in particular schools could be developed and a more stable national infrastructure created for GME ITE provision.
2. The National ITE Placement Group, which brings together ITE providers and LAs, was viewed by ITE providers as a very useful forum within which planning placements can be successfully undertaken. There had been some issues in the group being convened in the session 2024-25 but it was hoped this had been resolved.
3. It was noted by representatives of ITE providers that GMSE student teacher numbers were overall consistent over the past five years but in total in single figures per year. There has been little evidence of growth over the past five years. ITE numbers for subjects through the medium of Gaelic were not consistent, however. In some years there were candidates for a particular subject (e.g. History or Modern Studies) whilst in other years the subject would have no admissions.

CLPL as a career-long issue was raised in discussions with both universities and the GTCS. It was recognised that high-quality ITE courses were vital to the GMSE system but were the first step in developing a highly effective workforce. The M.Ed. programme at SMO and the recently started work of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team and the Centre for Teaching Excellence were felt to be important developments. Incentivisation was raised in the context of ITE as potentially being able to attract and retain more teachers and ITE applicants (recommendations around class sizes, translating support, ASN support assistants and protected time for GMSE teachers are examples of incentivisation recommended in this report). Bòrd na Gàidhlig also provides additional grants to all GMSE ITE students which provides a further incentive. The Tabhartasan Foghlaim scheme operated by Bòrd na Gàidhlig provided grant support totalling £41,500 to 34 candidates on secondary courses over the past five years (out of 165 grants which were provided in total).

Recommendations:

Local Authorities

1. Local Authorities should develop planning to provide GMSE teachers with protected time to work on the additional tasks they have to undertake in both supplementing resources because commercial options are not available in Gaelic and in devising new materials. CLPL activities in particular relating to immersion pedagogy are additional to the teacher workloads in GMSE. Inter-authority working and working between GMSE provisions in the same authority should also be facilitated by agreeing protected time for GMSE teachers. Protected time will also enable further support from the relatively small GMSE teacher cohort for two crucial initiatives: the Curriculum Improvement Cycle and the Centre for Teaching Excellence. It should be noted that protected time has already been agreed at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu to support teachers with marking and other duties. Protected time has also been introduced for specific developments at the Nicolson Institute. Protected time could also help facilitate online moderation, which in the GMSE sector requires additional planning (e.g. inter-authority meetings, preparing examples for moderation online etc.)
2. As a matter of urgency, consideration should actively be given by schools and LAs to the initiative at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu whereby a translator has been employed to support resource creation. This could be considered on an inter-authority basis or for a group of schools coming together within an authority and would begin to alleviate a really serious overburdening of GMSE teachers.
3. As stated, all GMSE provision should have annual improvement planning and quality reporting in place as a matter of urgency. All dual-language provision should have a clear Gaelic policy which outlines both the GMSE provision (including curriculum pathways, subjects and national examinations available through the medium of Gaelic etc.). The policy should clearly identify how the school as a whole delivers a dual-language ethos and how the entire staff team supports delivery in two languages. There should be a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team in dual language schools who has responsibility for strategic development of GMSE.
4. Strategic planning should be undertaken to deliver amended class sizes in more GMSE subject areas, following the initiative at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu whereby practical class size limits are implemented for Social Subjects through the medium of Gaelic at certain stages. This additional measure recognises the dual requirements of the GMSE classroom – the delivery of both subject content and immersion in Gaelic to support fluency.
5. Local Authorities should audit the GMSE provision in each of their schools and review the number of assistants supporting ASN needs in both English-medium and Gaelic-medium and devise a plan to ensure that there is parity between both sectors. LAs should also review the provision of ASN teachers within the authority and prioritise recruitment of Gaelic-speaking ASN teachers, again with a view to providing parity between English-medium and Gaelic-medium provision.
6. All LAs with GMSE should monitor transitions from GMPE to GMSE and seek to ensure all young people continue their GME learning journey on a 3-18 pathway. All LAs should track and monitor uptake of the courses on the GMSE curriculum offer in each school

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and attainment in Gaelic or through Gaelic. LAs and GMSE delivering schools should evidence that all young people in the sector are leaving with appropriate GMSE qualifications. It should be the stated aim of the LA that all young people leave the GMSE system with an appropriate qualification in at least Gaelic, as would be the aim for Literacy (English) and Numeracy.

7. Local Authorities provide teacher induction programmes for newly qualified teachers and CLPL programmes for all teachers, including middle leaders and head teachers. This provision should be audited as a matter of urgency to ensure that the programmes support GMSE teachers and Senior Leadership Team members with GMSE responsibility to meet the Standards for Registration in full. Programmes could also be usefully delivered on an inter-authority basis and using support from universities and in particular from SMO.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should liaise directly with Comann Luchd-teagaisg Àrd-sgoile (CLAS), the organisation for Gaelic secondary teachers, to agree a development plan for the organisation. This should aim to greatly increase the percentage of GMSE teachers in the group so that nationally the body can represent the sector more effectively (at present around 25% of GMSE teachers are active in CLAS). This should include investigating the feasibility of funding to enable a teacher or teachers to work on building CLAS as an organisation and its ability to support all GMSE teachers. The secondee could work on building networking (in liaison with Stòrlann Nàiseanta), moderation groups, subject development networks etc. A CLAS secondee might also be able to foster greater sharing of resources created by teachers (again working with Stòrlann Nàiseanta).
2. In its monitoring role relating to Gaelic Language Plans under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the new developments taking place around the provisions of the Scottish Languages Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should monitor and report very closely on improvements in GMSE provision in each local authority.
3. Working with the ITE providers, the Scottish Funding Council and other relevant partners, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short-life working party to review current ITE provision for GMSE and identify where there could be increased provision (e.g. the University of Edinburgh delivers a Primary Education with Gaelic degree course with inbuilt immersion. This could be reviewed as a potential option for piloting a PGDE Secondary with inbuilt immersion). A report should be compiled within a short period of time with summary details of all pathways into GMSE teaching and the recommendations for new development. This may include recommending PGDE provision for Gaelic-medium at Aberdeen University and including PGDE Secondary GME in the PGDE programme available at Edinburgh University.
4. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should regularly audit funding streams such as the Tabhartasan Foghlaim scheme, community grants etc to be satisfied that appropriate support continues to be provided for the GMSE sector (as happens at present).

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National Agencies

1. Qualifications Scotland, the successor agency to the SQA, should set up a short life working party to identify all current concerns relating to the GMSE examination diet and ensure that solutions are found for all concerns. The working party should include representation of a broad range of teachers, including representation from CLAS and the GMSE schools currently with the most developed Curriculum Offers.
2. Qualifications Scotland should embed GMSE in its strategic plan as have the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Education Scotland (in the Curriculum Improvement Cycle strategy). The embedding of GMSE from the outset has been seen as impacting positively on development. Qualifications Scotland should publish annual plans detailing the improvements that are being made each year. Additional qualifications through the medium of Gaelic should be progressively more available across all areas of the curriculum.
3. The GTCS should include GME and GMSE as part of the context for Accredited Specialism registration and consult with SMO and relevant universities regarding evidencing specialism within the sector.
4. The national ITE Placement Group should conduct a review of GME ITE placements in liaison with SFC, e-Sgoil and LAs to create a new agreement which will address some of the issues re placements raised in this report. It should ensure that its meetings are regular as required by participants and it should expand its remit to include reflection on whether innovative approaches to placements might solve some of the challenges and maximise uptake. In addition, ITE GME courses should all include input from agencies such as Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Tobar an Dualchais and other relevant community organisations which provide valuable assistance to schools in the delivery of the wider curriculum and achievement opportunities.
5. Stòrlann Nàiseanta should lead and convene a National Working Party to identify the persistent challenges around resourcing and make clear, timed recommendations to improve provision. The working party should include representation from CLAS, other GMSE teachers and LAs across the country (it should ensure that the GMSE schools with the most developed Curriculum Offers are also represented). Links should be established with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team at Education Scotland and with the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Qualifications Scotland. If additional funding is identified as an issue, clear recommendations should be made to funders with precise information relating to what will be produced for the sector and when resources will be available. As part of its deliberation the Working Party should explore the idea of nationally agreed courses e.g. in social subjects in the BGE (all or part of it) and if there is consensus, Stòrlann Nàiseanta should lead the pursuit of an inter-authority course agreement and the provision of an associated extended resource package for agreed courses.
6. Education Scotland should continue to develop the work of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team, which has been recognised already. In liaison with key stakeholders (including the Centre for Teaching Excellence), consideration should be given to updating the Advice on Gaelic Education (specifically in relation to GMSE) and reviewing whether the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes for GME

should be updated. The context of the Scottish Languages Act may also impact on whether the Advice on Gaelic Education should now be reviewed (e.g. with new national standards for Gaelic education being produced and a new National Gaelic Language Strategy. There may also be the need for increased guidance on immersion pedagogy – this might form part of a revision of the Advice on Gaelic Education or be provided by Education Scotland as a discrete policy paper with additional support materials and case studies. It is noteworthy that the Irish Department of Education's *Policy on Irish-medium Education outside the Gaeltacht* has charged a taskforce to 'ensure that there is common understanding and transparency across the sector – and for parents and students – of the expectations for Irish medium education' (Department of Education 2025: 30).

7. Education Scotland should liaise with practitioners and agencies such as the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Gaelic-language agencies such as Comann na Gàidhlig and Fèisean nan Gàidheal to produce policy guidelines and support materials for the GMSE sector relating to how Gaelic culture should be fostered and supported.

Scottish Government

1. The Scottish Government should ensure that the new National Gaelic Language Strategy and the standards for Gaelic education contain clear references to the need for annual improvements in the provision of GMSE within LAs. This will include, for example, expanding the curriculum offer and improving curriculum pathways in each provision and developing the wider curriculum offer in each provision, increasing the GMSE staffing team to deliver improvements etc.
2. The Scottish Government provides official data across a range of issuers which support evaluation of Scottish education as a whole. As a matter of urgency, the Scottish Government should review all the educational data it produces and in consultation with LAs, ITE providers, the SFC, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other interested parties identify where there are gaps in the data relating to GME and agree a development plan to rectify gaps as soon as possible. The Scottish Languages Act now contextualises the work of the Scottish Government and this new understanding that Gaelic now has official status should demonstrably impact on its work, including the compilation of appropriate national data for both English-medium and Gaelic-medium education.
3. The Strategic Board for Teacher Education should include GME as a workstream, reflect on the main issues and report on progress. It was unclear how the Board is currently functioning, as the last published minutes are dated June 2024. It is vital that specific expertise relating to the GME sector is included in the Board's membership, so that the Board as a whole is supported in reflecting on the strategic issues impacting on the GME sector.
4. The Teacher Workforce Planning Group should be formally remitted to consider the specific context of the GME sector and make recommendations for progress in resolving identified issues. Data processes should be reviewed urgently to ensure that appropriate data is provided relating to both GME and EME. Statistical modelling should always include clear reference to both the GM and EM sectors.
5. Scottish Government Curriculum Unit and Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Progress reporting should include clear reference to progress in both GME and EME.

There is only a single mention of GME in the June 2025 report on Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Reform, stating only that there will be a review cycle for Gaelic (Scottish Government 2025c: 3). Future progress reports should include consistent, clear and comprehensive reporting of how the Curriculum, the Qualifications programme and Assessment Development is taking place across the GME sector.

6. As noted in section A1.9 above, the Scottish Government's Teaching Bursary in Scotland provides support for some ITE candidates, including those planning to work in GME. It was raised that this is sometimes a complicated process and that closing dates for application are not synchronised with university deadlines. The Scottish Government should liaise with GME ITE providers, potentially through the ITE Placement Group, to resolve the issues so that the bursary scheme works appropriately for GME ITE entry.
7. The Scottish Government should ensure that all resource programmes are provided in both Gaelic and English. The Scottish Languages Act should guide resource provision so that parity of esteem is evidenced by the Scottish Government for both EM and GM provision.

B6 National organisations and the Scottish Government

The Scottish Languages Act is a landmark step in the history of Gaelic and in Scotland's relationship with English, Gaelic and Scots. Across a wide range of interviews there was an acknowledgement that it may potentially impact very significantly on Gaelic. The National Gaelic Language Strategy, standards for Gaelic education and Areas of Linguistic Significance were discussed by most interviewees. Overall, there was a positive response across all interviews for what the Act might bring to improve GMSE provision. Local authority officers in particular raised the importance of publishing as soon as possible a publicly available timetable for how each part of the Act will be implemented. There was also a clear expression of the view that if there are additional or new responsibilities these should be supported by additional resource.

Some discussion took place, particularly with LA officers and teachers, about the impact of Areas of Linguistic Significance. To promote cohesion, it was suggested that amongst the criteria to be established for Areas of Linguistic Significance should be that they provide support for young people and their families, in areas not defined as areas of ALS. Some LA officers also noted that strengthening the language in more traditional Gaelic-speaking areas also has the potential for growing the GME and GMSE workforce nationally, with more people taking up opportunities in traditional communities then opting for careers in GMSE teaching.

A number of LA officers raised the potential for there being a part-time seconded liaison officer working with Gaelic Local Authority Network, LAs and the Scottish Government to provide all officers with support and advice around the delivery of the provisions of the Scottish Languages Act. It was felt that would be best provided by someone with expertise in local government, Gaelic-medium and strategic planning that is linked to the Scottish Government's priorities.

B7 Inter-authority cooperation

- 1) All Local Authority officers and, where appropriate, representatives of national agencies were asked whether there were any examples of inter-authority statutory education provision of which they were aware. There were no examples cited by respondents. Examples which might have appeared to be inter-authority statutory education delivery, such as Calderwood Lodge Primary School, the Jewish denominational primary school (Glasgow and East Renfrewshire) and the School of Sport and School of Dance are all provision where formal entry is by placing request. There are some examples of school catchment areas for Roman Catholic secondary provision which are cross-authority. However, formal joint agreements covering school staffing and other costs are not part of these arrangements. There are of course a range of examples of inter-authority cooperation around CLPL, for example, and when the Regional Improvement Collaborative structure was in place many Local Authorities had inter-authority planning in place.

Issues arising from the research:

1. South-East Scotland Regional GME Planning

Discussions and information gathering are underway to explore possible shared GMPE provision across the south-east regional authorities. As of January 2026, initial discussions have taken place between some responsible officers. A paper will go to the East Lothian Education and Children's Services Committee early in the Spring of 2026, and formal agreement is being sought to proceed with further planning. Although this proposal is at a very early pre-planning stage, it is potentially of great significance for the provision of GME in this part of Scotland and could be an example of best practice that other Local Authorities in similar situations might learn from. Given that inter-authority delivery of statutory education has not been a feature of Scottish Education as a whole, a project of this nature could have significant impact on the development of wider inter-authority agreements, for example in the provision of additional support provision.

2. Argyll and Bute / Highland Council

Argyll and Bute and Highland Council have a joint CLPL delivery in place whereby Argyll and Bute pay part of the costs for a Principal Teacher post at Inverness Royal Academy in Highland Council, which provides dedicated CLPL for GME provision in Argyll and Bute. Thus, costs are shared and a service is delivered across two LAs.

3. A considerable number of LAs agreed that in principle they would be willing to discuss inter-authority agreements relating to delivering GMSE. There were clear advantages noted by LA officers around sharing costs, building staff teams, increasing the numbers of GMSE pupils learning in a central place and building CLPL programmes for GMSE staffing who would be concentrated in one particular provision. There may also be the potential to build an expanded service with LAs pooling resources. Teacher isolation could also be potentially reduced in larger inter-authority provisions.

4. There are examples of inter-authority delivery of specific courses online. An example would be the virtual academy provided by Dundee, Perth and Kinross and Angus which enables young

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people to take Advanced Higher courses in subjects with a smaller uptake at S6. Some teachers and LA officers also noted that S6 might be more suited to piloting additional GMSE delivery as timetabling restrictions can be less impacting at that stage.

5. As noted, parents were generally very receptive to ideas around inter-authority provision provided travelling times were felt to be reasonable. They recognised that inter-authority provision, particularly where there are currently smaller numbers of children in GME, would be beneficial in supporting young people's social development (through being part of a larger cohort), be more cost-effective and potentially be more attractive options for teachers who would be working within a GMSE team rather than as a single member of staff. Parents also raised the importance of consultation and good communication regarding any inter-authority planning for jointly delivered GMSE services.

Recommendations

Local Authorities

1. It is recommended that the following LAs set up short-life working parties to look at the feasibility of providing an inter-authority GMSE provision:
North Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Ayrshire (Glasgow may also wish to consider involvement).
2. Perth and Kinross and Angus should reflect on how an inter-authority GMSE provision might work between the two LAs.
3. East Lothian, Midlothian and Edinburgh with an invite to Borders Council should continue to develop the GME Primary Inter-authority project and begin to develop an understanding of what might be planned to deliver GMSE within these LAs in the light of GMPE development.
4. East Renfrewshire should consider closely whether they wish to develop their own provision or elect to form a partnership with a neighbouring LA to provide GMSE jointly.
5. All LAs with GMSE provision should review current provision and consider how a development such as that agreed by Argyll and Bute and Highland Council could be developed within their authority to increase the number of promoted posts in GMSE (built on shared costs) and ensure that curriculum development and CLPL programmes are extended.
6. It is vital that inter-authority cooperation is focussed on delivering high-quality education using the Advice on Gaelic Education and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education. Any inter-authority proposal for GMSE service delivery should clearly outline how the proposal will deliver a high-quality service using these frameworks, so that parents and young people can make informed choices.
7. LAs should also review provision to assess whether the GMSE curriculum on offer in the LA can be developed further through digital delivery of courses in the BGE or Senior Phase. As noted, pilot projects relating to GMSE courses may be easier to deliver at S6.
8. The research team heard arguments from officers and some national organisations in favour of expanded digital learning opportunities within the GMSE sector. The EIS took a contrary position and advocated that teaching and learning should always be a human-centred, face to face experience. It is recommended that should there be any wider agreements on expanding digital learning within Scottish education, these should

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always take place in the context of providing equal provision for both English-medium and Gaelic-medium delivery.

Scottish Government

1. Scottish Government should review GME funding streams and ensure that inter-authority applications for funding support through, for example, Specific Grant funding stream or the Gaelic Capital Grant Fund are prioritised. Applicants for support through these funding schemes should be made aware that inter-authority applications will be prioritised to promote this form of joint working in relation to GMSE. Furthermore, in general the Specific Grant scheme and Gaelic Capital Fund should be audited regularly so that appropriate balances between the sectors can be arrived at. It may help to introduce sector tagging for LA applications so that audits can be conducted more easily.
2. Scottish Government should offer tailored support to the South-east Scotland Regional GME Planning project, should it go ahead, and identify how this might be piloted as an innovative development in Scottish education more widely. The success of the proposal could have reverberations across Scottish education whereby similar projects might impact positively on other provision (for example in developing specialist provision on an inter-authority basis).
3. The Scottish Government should review with LAs the opportunity to include additional expertise in the roll-out of the various aspects of the Scottish Languages Act. A part-time seconded officer could support LAs in developing further strategic leadership amongst GME remitted officers to enable the requirements of the Scottish Languages Act to be fully implemented across the country more effectively. The seconded officer could collate best practice examples and case studies and provide dedicated CLPL for LA officers on all aspects of the Act.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should provide professional support and advice for inter-authority GMSE development projects and for GMSE Inter-authority Working Parties.

B8 Some additional issues relating to Local Government delivery

1. Across various interviews the issue of stand-alone GMSE schools and dual language schools was raised. There is currently only one GMSE stand-alone school in the country (in Glasgow), with all other provision in dual language schools. CNES have commissioned a feasibility study into establishing a GMSE standalone school in the Western Isles, with the report expected to be published in 2026. A feasibility study for a standalone 3-18 school in Inverness was carried out in 2024. Kate Forbes, the Minister for Gaelic in reply to a question from Jamie Hepburn MSP regarding a 3-18 GME campus proposal in Cumbernauld (North Lanarkshire) in the Scottish Parliament on 10th December 2025, supported the proposal and noted the potential funding support the Scottish Government supplies to LAs.

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Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the following LAs, which currently have sizeable GMSE delivery, should reflect carefully on current provision and publish their findings on how they will develop stand-alone provision (either GMSE only or in a campus with Early Years, Primary and Secondary provision):

Edinburgh

Highland Council

North Lanarkshire

CNES has already begun this process.

Module C: Recommendations

Recommendations for each sector set out in Module B are collated as follows:

*Part 1: Recommendations for Local Authorities*A1.10.2 Planning and reporting

1. All local authorities should ensure that there is GMSE Improvement Planning and SQ Reporting in place. This could be in the form of a discrete plan or through a standard section in the pro forma used by all schools within the local authority (as provided by Argyll and Bute and used in most Highland Council provision). This may be an annual or biannual process which is understood by all stakeholders, ensuring that processes are clear. GME Improvement Planning should be available on school websites so that parents can be informed of development aims and national agencies such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig can use these materials to compile national summaries. It should be noted that Argyll and Bute are the only local authority nationally that ensures that GMSE providing schools have school improvement planning in place as this is integrated as an essential element in the pro forma used by all schools in the authority. We would recommend this practice as a way to ensure all GMSE delivering schools have GMSE improvement planning in place.

2. The responsibility for leadership of improvement planning and quality reporting relating to GMSE provision should be clearly remitted to the senior leadership team. Appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure workloads for GMSE staff are not increased but instead focused on issues relating to the GMSE sector. There may also be the opportunity to develop inter-authority planning and/or collegiate working on priorities by different GMSE provisions within a single authority.

3. LAs should ensure that the senior leadership team member with responsibility for GMSE has received appropriate CLPL support and understands fully his/her role in providing strategic leadership for the sector. LAs may wish to consider inter-authority training and networking so that strategic leads at school level develop appropriate skills and knowledge.

B2 Vision, Leadership and Local Authority Issues

4. LAs should review their GMSE staff teams and identify whether teachers are dually qualified and whether additional support can be provided to enhance teachers' qualifications. In addition, LAs should review current delivery and identify how recruitment of GM primary teachers can enhance provision (this might also be on a shared basis with current GMPE provision in the authority).
5. LAs should ensure that they formulate a clear plan to implement the forthcoming National Gaelic Language Strategy / Standards for Gaelic Education framework and that they provide Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which will monitor implementation, with appropriate evidence for progress within the LA context.
6. There continue to be some issues around confidence in Gaelic amongst some GME teachers. This is in part related to there being no mandatory Gaelic qualification or fluency level for employment in the GME sector – assessment of fluency generally takes

place at interviews for GME posts. Even teachers who have had Gaelic as their first language or who are functionally bilingual may recognise that they have gaps in their skill set relating to formal, standard Gaelic or newer technical terms coming into the language. LAs should ensure that the GMSE school has up-to-date audits of current staff teams, relating to any Gaelic-language supports teachers or support staff identify they would need and that appropriate support is in place to meet these needs. This should include providing funding support for courses and appropriate time for this aspect of CLPL within the working day. It will be useful for HMIE to include best practice examples of Gaelic Language CLPL developed in individual schools as part of the inspection process.

B3 Curriculum Development

1. A clear obstacle to expanding the Fèisean nan Gàidheal programme, as stated by the organisation, has been the costs of hiring venues (including LA venues). As part of the LA support for GMSE and GME Wider Curriculum delivery, LAs should review their charging policies and exempt bodies such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal from charges where there is sufficient evidence that projects are providing wider curriculum opportunities for their GMSE provision.
2. LAs should monitor closely the uptake of the GMSE curriculum offer and the uptake of curriculum pathways resulting in additional GMSE experiences and certification. Each provision should be supported to deliver continuous improvement in uptake of the GMSE curriculum offer, GMSE wider curriculum offer and the GMSE certification programme provided by each provision. Annual School Improvement Planning and SQ Reporting should be monitored closely to ensure that GMSE has high-quality strategic leadership driving the system forward. The establishment of GME parent forums in LAs will provide an opportunity for schools and LAs to evaluate their progress in improving provision.

B4 GMSE – Young People and Parents

1. All LAs with GMSE should consider formal arrangements to consult with parents in the sector. They should also consider how GME forums feed into the structures in the LA to ensure that there are regular meetings across each session.

B5 Teachers and Initial Teacher Education

8. LAs should develop planning to provide GMSE teachers with protected time to work on the additional tasks they have to undertake in both supplementing resources because commercial options are not available in Gaelic and in devising new materials. CLPL activities in particular relating to immersion pedagogy are additional to the teacher workloads in GMSE. Inter-authority working and working between GMSE provisions in the same authority should also be facilitated by agreeing protected time for GMSE teachers. Protected time will also enable further support from the relatively small GMSE teacher cohort for two crucial initiatives: the Curriculum Improvement Cycle and the Centre for Teaching Excellence. It should be noted that protected time has already been agreed at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu to support teachers with marking and other duties. Protected time has also been introduced for specific developments at the

Nicolson Institute. Protected time could also help facilitate online moderation, which in the GMSE sector requires additional planning (e.g. inter-authority meetings, preparing examples for moderation online etc.)

9. As a matter of urgency, consideration should actively be given by schools and LAs to the initiative at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu whereby a translator has been employed to support resource creation. This could be considered on an inter-authority basis or for a group of schools coming together within an authority and would begin to alleviate a really serious overburdening of GMSE teachers.
10. As stated, all GMSE provision should have annual improvement planning and quality reporting in place as a matter of urgency. All dual-language provision should have a clear Gaelic policy which outlines both the GMSE provision (including curriculum pathways, subjects and national examinations available through the medium of Gaelic etc.). The policy should clearly identify how the school as a whole delivers a dual-language ethos and how the entire staff team supports delivery in two languages. There should be a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team in dual language schools who has responsibility for strategic development of GMSE.
11. Strategic planning should be undertaken to deliver amended class sizes in more GMSE subject areas, following the initiative at Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu whereby practical class size limits are implemented for Social Subjects through the medium of Gaelic at certain stages. This additional measure recognises the dual requirements of the GMSE classroom – the delivery of both subject content and immersion in Gaelic to support fluency.
12. Local Authorities should audit the GMSE provision in each of their schools and review the number of assistants supporting ASN needs in both English-medium and Gaelic-medium and devise a plan to ensure that there is parity between both sectors. LAs should also review the provision of ASN teachers within the authority and prioritise recruitment of Gaelic-speaking ASN teachers, again with a view to providing parity between English-medium and Gaelic-medium provision.
13. All LAs with GMSE should monitor transitions from GMPE to GMSE and seek to ensure all young people continue their GME learning journey on a 3-18 pathway. All LAs should track and monitor uptake of the courses on the GMSE curriculum offer in each school and attainment in Gaelic or through Gaelic. LAs and GMSE delivering schools should evidence that all young people in the sector are leaving with appropriate GMSE qualifications. It should be the stated aim of the LA that all young people leave the GMSE system with an appropriate qualification in at least Gaelic, as would be the aim for Literacy (English) and Numeracy.
14. Local Authorities provide teacher induction programmes for newly qualified teachers and CLPL programmes for all teachers, including middle leaders and head teachers. This provision should be audited as a matter of urgency to ensure that the programmes support GMSE teachers and Senior Leadership Team members with GMSE responsibility to meet the Standards for Registration in full. Programmes could also be usefully delivered on an inter-authority basis and using support from universities and in particular from SMO.

B7 Inter-Authority Cooperation

1. The Scottish Government should ensure that the new National Gaelic Language Strategy and the standards for Gaelic education contain clear references to the need for annual improvements in the provision of GMSE within LAs. This will include, for example, expanding the curriculum offer and improving curriculum pathways in each provision and developing the wider curriculum offer in each provision, increasing the GMSE staffing team to deliver improvements etc.
2. The Scottish Government provides official data across a range of issuers which support evaluation of Scottish education as a whole. As a matter of urgency, the Scottish Government should review all the educational data it produces and in consultation with LAs, ITE providers, the SFC, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other interested parties identify where there are gaps in the data relating to GME and agree a development plan to rectify gaps as soon as possible. The Scottish Languages Act now contextualises the work of the Scottish Government and this new understanding that Gaelic now has official status should demonstrably impact on its work, including the compilation of appropriate national data for both English-medium and Gaelic-medium education.
3. The Strategic Board for Teacher Education should include GME as a workstream, reflect on the main issues and report on progress. It was unclear how the Board is currently functioning, as the last published minutes are dated June 2024. It is vital that specific expertise relating to the GME sector is included in the Board's membership, so that the Board as a whole is supported in reflecting on the strategic issues impacting on the GME sector.
4. The Teacher Workforce Planning Group should be formally remitted to consider the specific context of the GME sector and make recommendations for progress in resolving identified issues. Data processes should be reviewed urgently to ensure that appropriate data is provided relating to both GME and EME. Statistical modelling should always include clear reference to both the GM and EM sectors.
5. Scottish Government Curriculum Unit and Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Progress reporting should include clear reference to progress in both GME and EME. There is only a single mention of GME in the June 2025 report on Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Reform, stating only that there will be a review cycle for Gaelic (Scottish Government 2025c: 3). Future progress reports should include consistent, clear and comprehensive reporting of how the Curriculum, the Qualifications programme and Assessment Development is taking place across the GME sector.
6. As noted in section A1.9 above, the Scottish Government's Teaching Bursary in Scotland provides support for some ITE candidates, including those planning to work in GME. It was raised that this is sometimes a complicated process and that closing dates for application are not synchronised with university deadlines. The Scottish Government should liaise with GME ITE providers, potentially through the ITE Placement Group, to resolve the issues so that the bursary scheme works appropriately for GME ITE entry.
7. The Scottish Government should ensure that all resource programmes are provided in both Gaelic and English. The Scottish Languages Act should guide resource provision so

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that parity of esteem is evidenced by the Scottish Government for both EM and GM provision.

B8 Some additional issues relating to Local Authority delivery

1. It is recommended that the following LAs, which currently have sizeable GMSE delivery, should reflect carefully on current provision and publish their findings on how they will develop stand-alone provision (either GMSE only or in a campus with Early Years, Primary and Secondary provision):

Edinburgh

Highland Council

North Lanarkshire

CNES has already begun this process.

Part 2: Recommendations for national organisations

Education Scotland

A1.10.2 Planning and reporting

1. The **Education Scotland** Team should produce an annual or biannual summary of development planning and quality reporting and publish it on their website to enable wider strategic use of the school-based information by national organisations such as Stòrlann Nàiseanta, Qualifications Scotland, Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government. A national summary of issues GMSE teams are working on will also support the work of the Curriculum Improvement Team, synchronising their work with school-based development. Given the continuing difficulties in accessing SIPs and SQ reports it would be hoped that schools would respond positively to requests for information from Education Scotland.

B3 Curriculum Development

1. **Tobar an Dualchais** and **Fèisean nan Gàidheal** should create educational development plans with a clear focus on GMSE. Their plan should include securing education development workers. In the light of the *Scottish Languages Act 2025* and its provisions, Scottish Government and funding bodies should review funding for these agencies and partnership proposals they may develop (partnerships have been developed at LA level and with Stòrlann Nàiseanta).
2. **CnaG** should identify clearly in the new National Gaelic Youth strategy what is being proposed to develop further support for the GMSE sector and national funding bodies should align their funding commitments with proposals which will evidentially impact on enhanced GMSE provision. As part of the National Gaelic Youth Strategy or as a discrete project, CnaG should create a fully costed and time-lined proposal for a GME residential centre with clear information on how this will impact on the GMSE sector as a whole. It should then seek funding partners, including the Scottish Government's Gaelic Capital Fund to begin a staged development (as has been delivered in South Uist at Cnoc Soilleir, for example).

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3. **Stòrlann Nàiseanta** should liaise with the GMSE sector and relevant national agencies such as Education Scotland and Fèisean nan Gàidheal to produce a Gaelic Awareness module tailored to the GMSE sector.
4. **Stòrlann Nàiseanta** should review the current progress of the An Seòtal project and create a strategic plan for additional output at a faster rate. Stòrlann should inform all potential funders of what additional resource will provide and seek to deliver an expanded terminology at a much faster pace.
5. National developments such as the **Curriculum Improvement Cycle** should ensure that when they evaluate their own impact, they include information on improvements in the GMSE curriculum offer and improvements in uptake.
6. **Skills Development Scotland** should audit the current provision of careers fairs and events focused on the GMSE sector. All young people should experience career events input within the BGE prior to any subject choices to ensure they understand the benefits of Gaelic. LAs, schools and Skills Development Scotland should work together to ensure this is delivered and Skills Development Scotland should report annually on progress. Furthermore, Skills Development Scotland should link its planned supports for the GMSE sector to the curriculum offer and pathways available in each school. Case studies of how young people can successfully develop skills in GMSE to secure employment should be created and publicised. As the national standards stemming from the Scottish Languages Act are agreed and enacted, Skills Development Scotland should ensure that its support for the GMSE sector is carefully aligned with relevant standards.

B5 Teachers and Initial Teacher Education

1. **Qualifications Scotland**, the successor agency to the SQA, should set up a short life working party to identify all current concerns relating to the GMSE examination diet and ensure that solutions are found for all concerns. The working party should include representation of a broad range of teachers, including representation from CLAS and the GMSE schools currently with the most developed Curriculum Offers.
2. **Qualifications Scotland** should embed GMSE in its strategic plan as have the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Education Scotland (in the Curriculum Improvement Cycle strategy). The embedding of GMSE from the outset has been seen as impacting positively on development. Qualifications Scotland should publish annual plans detailing the improvements that are being made each year. Additional qualifications through the medium of Gaelic should be progressively more available across all areas of the curriculum.
3. The **GTCS** should include GME and GMSE as part of the context for Accredited Specialism registration and consult with SMO and relevant universities regarding evidencing specialism within the sector.
4. The national **ITE Placement Group** should conduct a review of GME ITE placements in liaison with SFC, e-Sgoil and LAs to create a new agreement which will address some of the issues re placements raised in this report. It should ensure that its meetings are regular as required by participants and it should expand its remit to include reflection on whether innovative approaches to placements might solve some of the challenges and maximise uptake. In addition, ITE GME courses should all include input from agencies

such as Comunn na Gàidhlig, Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Tobar an Dualchais and other relevant community organisations which provide valuable assistance to schools in the delivery of the wider curriculum and achievement opportunities.

5. **Stòrlann Nàiseanta** should lead and convene a National Working Party to identify the persistent challenges around resourcing and make clear, timed recommendations to improve provision. The working party should include representation from CLAS, other GMSE teachers and LAs across the country (it should ensure that the GMSE schools with the most developed Curriculum Offers are also represented). Links should be established with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team at Education Scotland and with the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Qualifications Scotland. If additional funding is identified as an issue, clear recommendations should be made to funders with precise information relating to what will be produced for the sector and when resources will be available. As part of its deliberation the Working Party should explore the idea of nationally agreed courses e.g. in Social Subjects in the BGE (all or part of it) and if there is consensus, Stòrlann Nàiseanta should lead the pursuit of an inter-authority course agreement and the provision of an associated extended resource package for agreed courses.
6. **Education Scotland** should continue to develop the work of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team, which has been recognised already. In liaison with key stakeholders (including the Centre for Teaching Excellence), consideration should be given to updating the Advice on Gaelic Education (specifically in relation to GMSE) and reviewing whether the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes for GME should be updated. The context of the Scottish Languages Act may also impact on whether the Advice on Gaelic Education should now be reviewed (e.g. with new national standards for Gaelic education being produced and a new National Gaelic Language Strategy. There may also be the need for increased guidance on immersion pedagogy – this may form part of a revision of the Advice on Gaelic Education or be provided by Education Scotland as a discrete policy paper with additional support materials and case studies. It is noteworthy that the Irish Department of Education's *Policy on Irish-medium Education outside the Gaeltacht* has charged a taskforce to 'ensure that there is common understanding and transparency across the sector – and for parents and students – of the expectations for Irish medium education' (Department of Education 2025: 30).
7. **Education Scotland** should liaise with practitioners and agencies such as the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Gaelic-language agencies such as Comann na Gàidhlig and Fèisean nan Gàidheal to produce policy guidelines and support materials for the GMSE sector relating to how Gaelic culture should be fostered and supported.

*Part 3: Recommendations for Bòrd na Gàidhlig*B2 Vision, Leadership and Local Authority Issues

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life national working party with representation from LAs and national immersion providers to review current practice, identify challenges and deliver a new, refreshed teacher immersion option for teachers.
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short life working party of LA HR officers and LA Lead Officers for Gaelic to identify key challenges and successes in supporting GME and GMSE recruitment and retention and agree recommendations with the group on how best practice can be shared and how high-quality HR support for the GMSE sector can be sustained. The group should deliberate on how more attractive contract offers can be made (e.g. how might a current part-time contract be augmented to full-time, potentially as an inter-authority agreement or to enable wider sectoral support such as joint working with e-Sgoil etc.).

B5 Teachers and Initial Teacher Education

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should liaise directly with Comann Luchd-teagaisg Àrd-sgoile (CLAS), the organisation for Gaelic secondary teachers, to agree a development plan for the organisation. This should aim to greatly increase the percentage of GMSE teachers in the group so that nationally the body can represent the sector more effectively (at present around 25% of GMSE teachers are active in CLAS). This should include investigating the feasibility of funding to enable a teacher or teachers to work on building CLAS as an organisation and its ability to support all GMSE teachers. The secondee could work on building networking (in liaison with Stòrlann Nàiseanta), moderation groups, subject development networks etc. A CLAS secondee may also be able to foster greater sharing of resources created by teachers (again working with Stòrlann Nàiseanta).
2. In its monitoring role relating to Gaelic Language Plans under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the new developments taking place around the provisions of the Scottish Languages Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should monitor and report very closely on improvements in GMSE provision in each local authority.
3. Working with the ITE providers, the Scottish Funding Council and other relevant partners, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should set up a short-life working party to review current ITE provision for GMSE and identify where there could be increased provision (e.g. the University of Edinburgh delivers a Primary and Gaelic degree course with inbuilt immersion. This could be reviewed as a potential option for piloting a PGDE Secondary with inbuilt immersion). A report should be compiled within a short period of time with summary details of all pathways into GMSE teaching and the recommendations for new development. This may include recommencing PGDE provision for Gaelic-medium at Aberdeen University and including PGDE Secondary GME in the PGDE programme available at Edinburgh University.
4. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should regularly audit funding streams such as the Tabhartasan Foghlaim scheme, community grants etc to be satisfied that appropriate support continues to be provided for the GMSE sector (as happens at present).

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B7 Inter-authority Cooperation

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should provide professional support and advice for inter-authority GMSE development projects and for GMSE Inter-authority Working Parties.

Part 4: Recommendations for the Scottish Government

A1.10.2.2 Planning and reporting

1. To support further the national rollout of GMSE strategic planning and quality reporting, the Scottish Government should consider incorporating this into the standards on Gaelic education being developed under the Scottish Languages Act 2025 and the National Gaelic Language Strategy to be published under the same act.

B2 Vision, Leadership and Local Authority Issues

1. The new National Gaelic Language Strategy / Standards for Gaelic education framework should address the key point regarding what the vision is for the sector in the medium and long-term and should outline how this vision will be achieved. Consultation should be undertaken with all key stakeholders, including parents, to ensure there is broad support for the strategy. It will also be of benefit for the Scottish Government to reflect on how the provision of CLPL can be included in the national standards framework.
2. The Scottish Government should explicitly welcome applications for funding support through the Specific Grant funding stream for initiatives which will improve CLPL provision for the sector. This may include inter-authority applications (including examples such as the enhanced Principal Teacher post delivered by Highland and Argyll and Bute working in partnership), initiatives from national organisations such as SCILT and from other providers such as universities.

B5 Teachers and Initial Teacher Education

1. The Scottish Government should ensure that the new National Gaelic Language Strategy and the standards for Gaelic education contain clear references to the need for annual improvements in the provision of GMSE within LAs. This will include, for example, expanding the curriculum offer and improving curriculum pathways in each provision and developing the wider curriculum offer in each provision, increasing the GMSE staffing team to deliver improvements etc.
2. The Scottish Government provides official data across a range of issuers which support evaluation of Scottish education as a whole. As a matter of urgency, the Scottish Government should review all the educational data it produces and in consultation with LAs, ITE providers, the SFC, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other interested parties identify where there are gaps in the data relating to GME and agree a development plan to rectify gaps as soon as possible. The Scottish Languages Act now contextualises the work of the Scottish Government and this new understanding that Gaelic now has official status should demonstrably impact on its work, including the compilation of appropriate national data for both English-medium and Gaelic-medium education.

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

3. The Strategic Board for Teacher Education should include GME as a workstream, reflect on the main issues and report on progress. It was unclear how the Board is currently functioning, as the last published minutes are dated June 2024. It is vital that specific expertise relating to the GME sector is included in the Board's membership, so that the Board as a whole is supported in reflecting on the strategic issues impacting on the GME sector.
4. The Teacher Workforce Planning Group should be formally remitted to consider the specific context of the GME sector and make recommendations for progress in resolving identified issues. Data processes should be reviewed urgently to ensure that appropriate data is provided relating to both GME and EME. Statistical modelling should always include clear reference to both the GM and EM sectors.
5. Scottish Government Curriculum Unit and Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Progress reporting should include clear reference to progress in both GME and EME. There is a single mention of GME in the June 2025 report on Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment Reform, stating only that there will be a review cycle for Gaelic (Scottish Government 2025c: 3). Future progress reports should include consistent, clear and comprehensive reporting of how the Curriculum, the Qualifications programme and Assessment Development is taking place across the GME sector.
6. As noted in section A1.9 above, the Scottish Government's Teaching Bursary in Scotland provides support for some ITE candidates, including those planning to work in GME. It was raised that this is sometimes a complicated process and that closing dates for application are not synchronised with university deadlines. The Scottish Government should liaise with GME ITE providers, potentially through the ITE Placement Group, to resolve the issues so that the bursary scheme works appropriately for GME ITE entry.
7. The Scottish Government should ensure that all resource programmes are provided in both Gaelic and English. The Scottish Languages Act should guide resource provision so that parity of esteem is evidenced by the Scottish Government for both EM and GM provision.

B7 Inter-Authority Cooperation

4. Scottish Government should review GME funding streams and ensure that inter-authority applications for funding support through, for example, Specific Grant Funding stream or the Gaelic Capital Grant Fund are prioritised. Applicants for support through these funding schemes should be made aware that inter-authority applications will be prioritised to promote this form of joint working in relation to GMSE. Furthermore, in general the Specific Grant Scheme and Gaelic Capital Fund should be audited regularly so that appropriate balances between the sectors can be arrived at. It may help to introduce sector tagging for LA applications so that audits can be conducted more easily.
5. Scottish Government should offer tailored support to the South-east Scotland Regional GME Planning project, should it go ahead, and identify how this might be piloted as an innovative development in Scottish education more widely. The success of the proposal could have reverberations across Scottish education whereby similar projects might impact positively on other provision (for example in developing specialist provision on an inter-authority basis).

6. The Scottish Government should review with LAs the opportunity to include additional expertise in the roll-out of the various aspects of the Scottish Languages Act. A part-time seconded officer could support LAs in developing further strategic leadership amongst GME remitted officers to enable the requirements of the Scottish Languages Act to be fully implemented across the country more effectively. The seconded officer could collate best practice examples and case studies and provide dedicated CLPL for Local Authority Officers on all aspects of the Act.

Part 5: Additional recommendations

1. A wide range of national organisations and LAs recommended that a national research project into Gaelic Learners' Education is commissioned. **Bòrd na Gàidhlig** should commission research on the national delivery of GLE on the same basis as this research project into GMSE.
2. It was also raised in interviews that the GME system as a whole required to be supported by research findings. It would be potentially complacent not to recognise that there are also many challenges in GMPE and GME Early Years delivery. There should therefore be a national plan for research into GME which ensures that as far as possible universities and researchers and Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other funders cooperate to produce research studies. The work of the Centre for Teaching Excellence and the Curriculum Improvement Cycle team will also impact on there being a continuously developing research database for GME. **Bòrd na Gàidhlig** should take the strategic leadership role in coordinating research development.

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Appendix 1

List of organisations interviewed as part of research

Participating Local Authorities (23)

Aberdeen

Angus

Argyll and Bute

Borders

East Ayrshire

East Dunbartonshire

East Lothian

East Renfrewshire

Edinburgh

Eilean Siar

Falkirk

Fife

Glasgow

Highland

Inverclyde

Midlothian

North Ayrshire

North Lanarkshire

Perth and Kinross

Renfrewshire

South Lanarkshire

Stirling

West Lothian

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Participating national organisations (19)

ADES (Association of Directors of Education Scotland)

CLAS (Comann Luchd-teagaisg Àrd-sgoile)

Comunn na Gàidhlig

Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta

COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)

Education Scotland (including additional meeting with Curriculum Improvement Cycle team)

e-Sgoil

Educational Institute of Scotland

Fèisean nan Gàidheal

GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland)

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (additional meeting organised)

Scottish Government, Gaelic and Scots Division – (additional meeting organised)

Scottish Qualifications Authority

SCILT (Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research)

Scottish Funding Council

Skills Development Scotland

Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig

Tobar an Dualchais

University of Strathclyde (additional meeting organised)

During the project HMIE provided assistance relating to inspection evidence. The research team attended a national seminar on HMIE evidence on 16 December 2025.

Parents and Young People

1. An extended interview (2 hours) was provided by the National Committee of Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta.
2. Meetings with different cohorts of young people at Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and James Gillespie's High School
3. Online interviews were conducted with three groups of parents (3-8 in each group), representing parents using the GMSE provision in Edinburgh, the GMSE provision in Glasgow and GMSE provision in a few other LAs in Central Scotland.
4. Face to face and simultaneous online meeting attended by 34 parents with attendees from North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire.

Appendix 2

Project Information Sheets

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education

You are being invited to take part in research on Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education that is being carried out on behalf of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This research is being conducted by Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod. Before you decide whether to take part it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the current provision of secondary Gaelic-medium education (GME) and the possibility of inter-local authority collaboration in delivery. It will also develop recommendations for the Scottish Government and local authorities to better meet the needs of parents opting for GME.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are invited to participate in this study because you have been involved in the organisation, management or delivery of GME.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No – it is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DECIDE TO TAKE PART?

If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet. You will be asked to complete and sign a Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate.

You will be asked a number of questions regarding your involvement in Gaelic-medium education in an individual interview. The interview will take place in a safe environment at a time that is convenient to you, likely by video call. Ideally, we would like to audio record your responses (and will require your consent for this). The interview should usually take around 45-60 minutes.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct personal benefits, but by sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping Bòrd na Gàidhlig, education authorities and schools make better arrangements for the delivery of secondary GME.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no significant risks associated with participation.

WILL MY TAKING PART BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All the information collected during the course of this research will be kept confidential and there are strict laws which safeguard your privacy at every stage.

HOW WILL WE USE THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

We will need to use information given during your interview for this research project.

This information will include:

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

- your name,
- any information given during the interview.

We will keep all information about you safe and secure.

Your name and other personal data will only be viewed by the researchers, Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod, and by any transcribers who they appoint to transcribe interviews. Any transcribers will sign legal agreements on confidentiality and data management practices.

If you are being interviewed as an employee of an organisation, it may be necessary to identify you as such in the project report. This will of course take place by agreement.

For other participants, your name and role will not be specified in the project report or in any publicly available research outputs, unless you indicate otherwise.

All electronic data will be stored in a password-protected file on a password-protected computer. No physical copies of your data will be produced. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHOICES ABOUT HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we may keep information about you that we already have.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study will be used in a project report for Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any subsequent presentations based upon the report.

If you would like a summary of the results of the study, please provide an email address on the Consent Form.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

This study has been organised by Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod, and it is being funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the researchers, Jim Whannel (jimgaidhlig@hotmail.com) or Wilson McLeod (wilsonmacleoid@gmail.com).

If you wish to make a complaint about this study, please contact:

Ealasaid MacDonald, Chief Executive, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, ealasaid@gaidhlig.scot

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education

You are being invited to take part in research on Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education that is being carried out on behalf of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This research is being conducted by Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod. Before you decide whether to take part it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the current provision of secondary Gaelic-medium education (GME) and to develop recommendations for the Scottish Government and local authorities to better meet the needs of parents opting for GME.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are invited to participate in this study because you have been involved in the organisation, management or delivery of GME as a student or parent.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No – it is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DECIDE TO TAKE PART?

If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet. You will be asked to complete and sign a Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate.

You will be asked a number of questions regarding your involvement in Gaelic-medium education, as part of a focus group. The focus group session will take place in a safe environment at a time that is convenient to you, in person or by video call. Ideally, we would like to audio record the session, including your own contributions (and will require your consent for this). The focus group session should usually take around 30-40 minutes.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct personal benefits, but by sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping Bòrd na Gàidhlig, education authorities and schools make better arrangements for the delivery of secondary GME.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no significant risks associated with participation.

WILL MY TAKING PART BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All the information collected during the course of this research will be kept confidential and there are strict laws which safeguard your privacy at every stage.

HOW WILL WE USE THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

We will need to use information given during your involvement in this research project.

This information will include:

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

- your name,
- any information given during the focus group session.

We will keep all information about you safe and secure.

Your name and other personal data will only be viewed by the researchers, Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod, and by any transcribers who they appoint to transcribe focus group sessions. Any transcribers will sign legal agreements on confidentiality and data management practices.

Your name and role will not be specified in the project report or in any publicly available research outputs, unless you indicate otherwise.

All electronic data will be stored in a password-protected file on a password-protected computer. No physical copies of your data will be produced. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHOICES ABOUT HOW YOUR INFORMATION IS USED?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we may keep information about you that we already have.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study will be used in a project report for Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any subsequent presentations based upon the report.

If you would like a summary of the results of the study, please provide an email address on the Consent Form.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

This study has been organised by Jim Whannel and Wilson McLeod, and it is being funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the researchers, Jim Whannel (jimgaidhlig@hotmail.com) or Wilson McLeod (wilsonmacleoid@gmail.com).

If you wish to make a complaint about this study, please contact:

Ealasaid MacDonald, Chief Executive, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, ealasaid@gaidhlig.scot

Appendix 3

Consent Forms

FOIRM-AONTA COM-PÀIRTICHE (OIFIGEARAN)**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (OFFICERS)****Roghainnean airson Libhrigeadh Foghlam Meadhan-Gàidhlig Àrd-sgoile**

Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education

**Cuiribh ur tùs-
litrichean sa bhocsa**
Please initial box

- 1. Tha mi a' dearbhadh gu bheil mi air an Duilleag Fiosrachaidh Com-Pàirtiche airson an rannsachaidh gu h-àrd a leughadh agus a thuigsinn.**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study.

- 2. Chaidh cothrom a thoirt dhomh beachdachadh air an fhiosrachadh a fhuair mi, ceistean fhaighneachd agus freagairtean ris na ceistean agam fhaighinn.**

I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered.

- 3. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gu bheil a' chom-pàirt agam saor-thoileach agus gum faod mi tarraing aiste aig àm sam bith gun adhbhar agus gun bhuaidh air na còirichean laghail agam.**

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my legal rights being affected.

- 4. Tha mi mi ag aontachadh gun tèid an t-agallamh no an seisean buidhne-fòcais agam a chlàradh.**

I agree that my interview will be recorded.

- 5. Tha mi a' tuigsinn nach nochd m' ainm no mion-fhiosrachadh mun ròl agam ann an aithisg a' phròiseict, ach gum faodar an dreuchd no roinn agam a shònrachadh agus às-earrannan bhon agallamh agam a chleachdadh.**

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

I understand that my name or specific details about my role will not appear in the project report, but that my post or sector may be identified and quotations from my interview may be used.

6. **Tha mi a' tuigsinn gun tèid an dàta gun urra agam a stòradh airson co-dhiù bliadhna agus gum faodar a chleachdadh ann an rannsachadh anns an àm ri teachd a tha a' cumail ri deagh chleachdadh beusach.**

I understand that my anonymised data will be stored for a minimum of 1 year and may be used in future ethically compliant research.

7. **Tha mi ag aontachadh pàirt a ghabhail anns an rannsachadh seo.**

I agree to take part in this study.

Ainm an neach a tha a' toirt seachad aonta

Ainm sgrìobhte

Ceann-Latha

Name of person giving consent

Signature

Date

Ma tha thu ag iarraidh geàrr-chunntas air toraidhean an rannsachaidh, cuir an seòladh puist-dealain an seo:

If you would like a summary of findings, please enter your email address here:

FOIRM-AONTA COM-PÀIRTICHE (PÀRANTAN AGUS SGOILEARAN)
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (PARENTS AND STUDENTS)

Roghainnean airson Libhrigeadh Foghlam Meadhan-Gàidhlig Àrd-sgoile

Options for the Delivery of Secondary Gaelic-Medium Education

**Cuiribh ur tùs-
litrichean sa bhocsa**
Please initial box

- 8. Tha mi a' dearbhadh gu bheil mi air an Duilleag Fiosrachaidh Com-Pàirtiche airson an rannsachaidh gu h-àrd a leughadh agus a thuigsinn.**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study.

- 9. Chaidh cothrom a thoirt dhomh beachdachadh air an fhiosrachadh a fhuair mi, ceistean fhaighneachd agus freagairtean ris na ceistean agam fhaighinn.**

I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered.

- 10. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gu bheil a' chom-pàirt agam saor-thoileach agus gum faod mi tarraing aiste aig àm sam bith gun adhbhar agus gun bhuidhe air na còirichean laghail agam.**

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my legal rights being affected.

- 11. Tha mi mi ag aontachadh gun tèid an t-agallamh no an seisean buidhne-fòcais agam a chlàradh.**

I agree that my focus group session will be recorded.

- 12. Tha mi a' tuigsinn nach nochd m' ainm ann an aithisg a' phròiseict, ach gum faodar an ròl agam (pàrant no sgoilear) a shònrachadh agus às-earrannan bhon agallamh no seisean buidhne-fòcais agam a chleachdadh**

I understand that my name will not appear in the project report, but that my role (parent or student) may be identified and quotations from my focus group session may be used.

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

- 13. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gun tèid an dàta gun urra agam a stòradh airson co-dhiù bliadhna agus gum faodar a chleachdadh ann an rannsachadh anns an àm ri teachd a tha a' cumail ri deagh chleachdadh beusach.**

I understand that my anonymised data will be stored for a minimum of 1 year and may be used in future ethically compliant research.

- 14. Tha mi ag aontachadh pàirt a ghabhail anns an rannsachadh seo.**

I agree to take part in this study.

Ainm an neach a tha a' toirt seachad aonta

Ainm sgrìobhte

Ceann-Latha

Name of person giving consent

Signature

Date

Ma tha thu ag iarraidh geàrr-chunntas air toraidhean an rannsachaidh, cuir an seòladh puist-dealain an seo:

If you would like a summary of findings, please enter your email address here:

Appendix 4

Interview questions

Questions for Officers

1. Tell us about your vision for GMSE – what do you understand by the term GMSE and what is the core philosophy of the Authority for GMSE?
2. Thinking about challenges and opportunities and we are aware that your Local Authority delivers a GMSE service along with GMPS provision, tell us about the following :
What are the main challenges facing the Local Authority as you implement the strategy to deliver GMSE?
What would you consider to be the main challenges facing the GMSE sector more widely?
What are the opportunities you see in the short-term / long-term for GMSE and the sector?
3. Are parents supportive of the strategies developed in the GMSE provision ? How do you know? How does the LA promote GMSE as an option for parents (you might also wish to note activity around GMPS provision)?
4. Has the LA used funded Teacher Immersion programmes in the past 5 years? How successful has this been?
5. Has the LA used e-Sgoil in the past 5 years – again how successful has this been?
6. Thinking about inter-authority delivery, are there any formal inter-authority GMSE agreements in place?
Are there any formal inter-authority agreements in place for any other aspects of education?
Are you aware of any inter-authority agreements relating to any wider education development?
What are your views on the potential for inter-authority GMSE cooperation – challenges and advantages?
Could innovative annual agreements be put in place e.g. A P1 entry in another LA guaranteed places into Àrd-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu for S1?
7. The Advice on Gaelic Education / Statutory Guidance and Scottish Languages Act (with Areas of Linguistic Significance, national standards etc. embedded in the Act) are important national contexts. What would support your work further as these frameworks are revised and developed?
8. Are there any other issues you would like to raise around GMSE in a wider sense or the specific context for your local authority, at the moment?

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

9.

Questions for young people in GMSE

1. Innsibh dhuinn mu dheidhinn nan cuspairean tro Ghàidhlig a tha a' còrdadh ribh agus carson – a' smaoinneachadh mu dheidhinn nan cuspairean a tha tro Bheurla an-dràsta fhèin, dè bhios math airson ionnsachadh tro Ghàidhlig aig àm air choireigin, san àm ri teachd?
2. Gu nàiseanta tha sinn an-còmhnaidh a' feuchainn ris a' churraicealaim tro Ghàidhlig a leudachadh – a bheil sibh mothachail air bacaidhean sam bith a' dh' fhaodas a bhith ann leis a' churraicealaim tro Ghàidhlig a leasachadh a bharrachd?
3. A' smaoinneachadh mu dheidhinn nan stuthan a tha sibh a' cleachdadh ann an Gàidhlig – a bheil iad uile feumail, inntinneach – a bheil dad sam bith ann dh' fhaodas a bhith nas fheàrr? (*is mathaid gum faod sinn stuthan digiteach a thogail an seo?*)
4. A bheil sibh an dùil gum faigh sibh teisteanasan tro Ghàidhlig? Ma tha, innsibh dhuinn mu dheidhinn nam buannachdan / duilgheadasan le deuchainnean tro Ghàidhlig agus mur eil, innsibh dhuinn carson.
5. A thaobh cultar tro Ghàidhlig – a bheil cothroman ann airson ionnsachadh mu dheidhinn cultar na cànan taobh a-muigh a' chlas? A' beachdachadh air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig taobh a-muigh a' chlas san fharsaingeachd – cuin' a tha sibh a' dèanamh sin agus a bheil cothroman ann airson seo a dhèanamh nas trice?
6. A' smaoinneachadh beagan a bharrachd air seo, a bheil sibh air gabhail pàirt ann an tachartasan tro Ghàidhlig sa choimhearsnachd m.e. Spòrs Gàidhlig, Fèisean is msaa? A bheil cothroman sam bith eile ann airson seo a dhèanamh nas fhasa dhuibh?
7. A' smaoinneachadh mu dheidhinn far a bheil sibh a' fuireach, a bheil duine sam bith eile san teaghlach agaibh le Gàidhlig? A bheil iad a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig leibh gu cunbhalach? A bheil sibh mothachail air taic sam bith a tha bhur pàrantan / luchd-glèidhidh a' faighinn airson Gàidhlig a chleachdadh aig an taigh no taic a thoirt dhuibh fhèin (obair dhachaigh 's dòcha is msaa)
8. A thaobh saoghal na h-obrach – a bheil sibh an dùil gum bi sibh a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, ann an dòigh sam bith, anns na dreuchdan agaibh? A bheil dad sam bith eile ann a dh' fhaodas sin a dhèanamh nas coltaiche?
9. A' smaoinneachadh mu dheidhinn na h-Alba agus rudan leithid Achd nan Cànanan Albannach agus soidhnichean tro Ghàidhlig is msaa - a bheil sibh a' smaoinneachadh gu bheil muinntir na h-Alba a' fàs nas taiceil don chànan? A bheil dad sam bith eile ann a bu chòir dhuinn a dhèanamh airson seo a neartachadh?

Pàipear 4.2 PT1

10. A bheil dad sam bith eile ann, nach do thog sinn, a dh' fhaodas a bhith feumail airson Gàidhlig a neartachadh sa choimhearsnachd agaibh fhèin, san sgoil seo agus tarsainn na dùthcha air fad?

Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle

An explainer for teachers and practitioners

Scotland's Curriculum is evolving

We are currently in the second year of a ten-year programme to strengthen the curriculum. This is called the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC)

The refreshed curriculum will start to be formally adopted in schools and settings from August 2028. It is being co-created by teachers, practitioners, partners, and children and young people. We anticipate draft curriculum guidance will be shared in the summer of 2026. It will provide greater clarity, strengthen the connections between knowledge, skills and understanding, and improve coherence from the ages of 3 to 18.

Why is the curriculum evolving?

An OECD report in 2021 made several recommendations for how Scotland's Curriculum should evolve. These included introducing a systematic review cycle and updating the curriculum to make more explicit the knowledge and skills children and young people should develop to build and deepen understanding as they progress through learning.

Scotland's Curriculum Framework



Image 1: The 'Why', 'What' and 'How' of Scotland's Curriculum

Is everything changing?

No. The Four Capacities (see image one above) have been endorsed and supported in recent consultation on curriculum in Scotland and will continue to define our core purpose, or 'Why'. The Four Contexts for Learning – the 'What' – which teachers and practitioners use to plan learning, will also remain in place and be strengthened. Scotland's Curriculum Making model – the 'How' – will also continue and will provide the foundation for the professional learning and capacity building planned, for 2026/27 and 2027/28, to support the enactment of the refreshed curriculum.

Pàipear 4.2 PT2

What will be different?

The main focus of the current phase of the 10-year cycle is evolving the technical framework, that supports the 'What' of curriculum: i.e. the documents and guidance that teachers and practitioners use to plan learning for and with children and young people and alongside communities and partners. This currently includes the Principles and Practice papers, the Experiences and Outcomes, Benchmarks and subject / Curriculum Area progression pathways. These will be phased out from August 2028 and be replaced by a new technical framework

What will the evolved technical framework look like?

A Know–Do–Understand approach (Image 2) will underpin the structure of the new technical framework. Over 1500 teachers and practitioners are contributing to its development, exploring what children and young people need to understand, know, and be able to do at developmentally appropriate stages in their learning.

The new guidance will set out big ideas and associated concepts that all children and young people need to help them be individuals, contributors, citizens and learners. At each level, it will clarify the knowledge and skills that will support children and young people in the development of key conceptual understanding.

Currently, the co-design groups are exploring how interconnected layers of big ideas, concepts, knowledge and skills could structure this clearly for teachers and practitioners.

This change will strengthen how we teach for deep conceptual understanding and should make progression clearer.

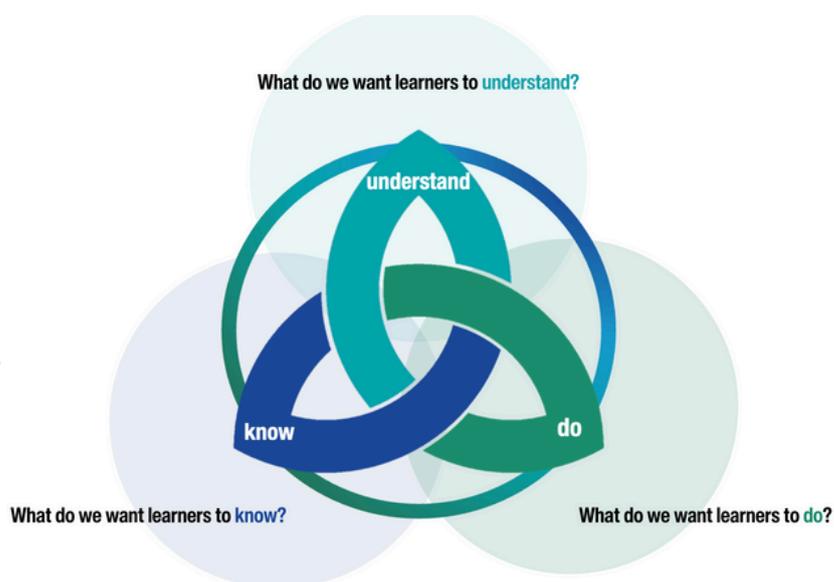


Image 2: The 'Know', 'Do', 'Understand' approach



During the 2025/26 session, we will share emerging outputs which show the latest thinking of the co-design groups as their work progresses.

These will not be, and won't look like, final curriculum documents. Their purpose is to share thinking as it develops and to invite feedback.

How will this affect me as a teacher or practitioner?

The technical framework you use to plan learning for and with children and young people will change. You will no longer use the Experiences and Outcomes or Benchmarks for Early to Fourth Level. Over the course of the 2026/27 and 2027/28 sessions, time and space will be created for you to engage with the new guidance and what it means for your practice. This new guidance will span ages 3 to 18 and will also provide clarity on the range of cross-curricular expectations.

You will be supported through a range of professional learning opportunities, collaboration activities and resources. This will build on the investment colleagues in schools and settings across Scotland have made in place-based curriculum design over the last few years.

If you work with Senior Phase learners, then you will also prepare to teach the next iteration of qualifications, which are commencing development.

What will be different for children and young people?

This work will provide the enabling environment to ensure that all children and young people experience a curriculum that is meaningful, purposeful, relevant, and up-to-date. Through a curriculum designed to support teaching for deeper conceptual understanding, learners will be better equipped to make sense of the world now and in the future.

A set of big ideas, spanning ages 3–18, will also help to address the disconnect between the Broad General Education (BGE) and the Senior Phase, ultimately enabling the Four Capacities.

How is the approach inclusive?

All co-design groups have been recruited to ensure representation from practitioners working across the 3-18 learner journey.

Additional Support Needs (ASN) and equity sit at the heart of the CIC and practitioners with experience and expertise in ASN, inclusion and equalities are part of the co-design groups.

Processes and activities are planned to ensure that all curriculum co-design groups take account of relevant policies and legislation in work across Curriculum Areas and Contexts.

The cross-curricular work will also strengthen the position of equalities across the curriculum.

It is important to note that the curriculum will be planned for and experienced in both English and Gaelic medium schools and settings in Scotland. Those teaching in Gaelic medium settings are involved not just in the planning of the Literacy and Gàidhlig curriculum but also across all Curriculum Areas.



Key Messages:

Pàipear 4.2 PT2

- The new, draft curriculum guidance will be available from summer 2026.
- Over 1500 teachers and practitioners are involved in groups working on this.
- During the remainder of session 2025/26, groups will share emerging outputs that demonstrate a snapshot of the thinking and ideas of these groups.
- These outputs are not intended to be drafts of the final curriculum documents or statements, and they will not represent the format or layout of the new guidance. Their purpose is to share emerging thinking beyond the co-design groups so that all teachers and practitioners have the opportunity to provide feedback.
- The new guidance will be formally adopted from August 2028.
- Professional learning and collaboration time, to support enactment, will take place for all teachers and practitioners over 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29.
- Emerging outputs and a feedback form will be on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle website, accessed via www.scotlandscurriculum.scot (QR code below)

The next phase...

This activity is taking place now because we are in Phase 2 of the CIC (see Image 3 below) , **Engaging and Co-creating**.

In January 2027 we will move into the first part of Phase 3, **Sharing, Learning and Adopting**.

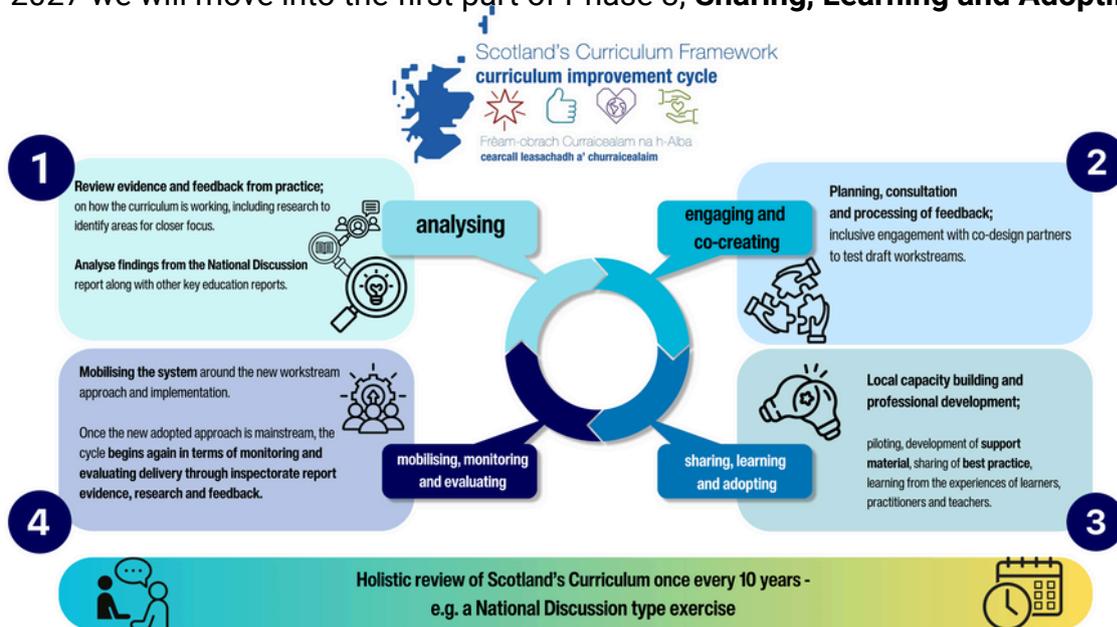


Image 3: The Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) Process



How can I be involved in the Curriculum Improvement Cycle?

Use this QR code to access further details of these changes, to sign up to receive our CIC Bulletin and to find out how the work is progressing.

Opportunities to be involved in co-creation work will be signposted here.



Pàipear 5.1

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-latha: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tiotal: | Rianachd Mhì-chinntean |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Ri Aontachadh |
| Àireamh pàipeir: | 5.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Nicola Pearson, Ceann an Ionmhais is Cùisean Corporra |
| Pàipearan-taice: | PT1 Clàr Mhì-chinntean Ro-innleachdail |

1. Adhbhar

- 1.1. Tha am pàipear a' taisbeanadh Clàr Mhì-chinntean Ro-innleachdail na buidhne.
- 1.2. Tha am pàipear sa Bheurla oir thèid ath-sgrùdadh leis an luchd-sgrùdaidh air an taobh a-staigh agus air an taobh a-muigh mar phàirt den obair aca.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Prìomh aithris

- 2.1. Tha an Clàr Mhì-chinntean Ro-innleachdail a' clàradh is a' sgrùdadh nam mì-chinntean as motha a tha mu choinneamh Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Tha e cuideachd a' clàradh nan gnìomhan lasachaidh agus adhartas leis na gnìomhan a chaidh a ghabhail gus ìre na mì-chinnt a lùghdachadh no gus smachd a chumail air.
- 2.2. Measar mì-chinntean gus faighinn a-mach dè cho cudromach 's a tha a' mhì-chinnt agus dè an ìre air am bu chòir dèiligeadh ris a' chunnart. Thèid a h-uile mì-chinnt a sgòradh mar fhìor àrd, àrd, meadhanach no ìosal stèidhichte air Buaidh na mì-chinnt x a' Choltachd gun tachair i. Gheibhear fiosrachadh mionaideach mu sgòradh san Ro-innleachd Rianachd Mhì-chinntean.
- 2.3. Air a' chlàr is e an Sgòr Iomlan an sgòr a chaidh a mheasadh mus deach na smachdan làithreach a chur an gnìomh, leis an Sgòr Lom na mheasadh cunnairt a tha a' gabhail a-steach nan smachdan a tha an sàs aig an àm seo.
- 2.4. Tha an clàr ag amas air fòcas a chur air na cunnartan (mì-chinntean, cothroman, agus droch bhuidhean) a bheir a' bhuidhean as ìriche air prìomhachasan Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 2.5. Chaidh an clàr ag ùrachadh mar a leanas:

| Mì-chinnt ↑ | Mì-chinnt ↓ | Eile |
|--|---|---|
| Cha deach ìre chunnart àrdachadh bhon lèirmheas mu dheireadh | Cha deach ìre sam bith ìsleachadh bhon lèirmheas mu dheireadh | 1. Chaidh grunn aithrisean ùrachadh 2. Chaidh cuid clàran-ama atharrachadh |



Pàipear 5.1

3. Moladh

3.1. Thathar ag iarraidh air buill a' Bhùird-stiùiridh:

- beachdachadh air a' chlàr agus molaidhean a dhèanamh mu mhì-chinntean a bharrachd agus mu bhith a' toirt air falbh mhì-chinntean.
- an clàr aontachadh

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdach

- 4.1. Buidhean air Ionmhas: Chan eil buaidh dhìreach ann ach tha e a' dèanamh cinnteach gum beachdaich a' bhuidheann air mì-chinntean ionmhasail.
- 4.2. Buidhean air Luchd-obrach: Tha an clàr mhì-chinntean a' toirt seachad stiùireadh air smachdan agus gnìomhan a chuir luchd-obrach an sàs.
- 4.3. Buidhean air Trèanadh: Thèid trèanadh rianachd mhì-chinntean a chur air dòigh san Fhoghair.
- 4.4. Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachdail agus Corporra: Bidh ar n-obair a' fiosrachadh agus a' toirt buaidh air leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus air poileasaidhean a bheir buaidh air a' Ghàidhlig.
- 4.5. Buidhean air Cliù: Tha riaghladh mhì-chinntean ro chudromach ann a bhith a' cumail deagh chliù mar bhuidheann phoblach èifeachdach.
- 4.6. Buidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: N/A
- 4.7. Buidhean Laghail: Tha e na riatanas ann an Leabhar-làimhe Ionmhas Poblach na h-Alba gum bi pròiseasan rianachd mhì-chinntean aig buidhnean poblach
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/risk-management/risk-management/>
- 4.8. Buidhean air Co-ionannachd: N/A
- 4.9. Buidhean air an Àrainneachd: N/A

5. Ceanglaichean ris an Fhrèam-obrach Coileanaidh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ionnsachadh | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail ùr-ghnàthach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |

6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

- 6.1. Aontaichte leis a' Chomataidh Sgrùdaidh is Dearbhachd air 24 Gearran 2026.
- 6.2. Air aontachadh leis an Sgioba Stiùiridh air 12 Gearran 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

- 7.1. 'S e pàipear fosgailte a tha seo.

Strategic Risk Register

| Strategic Aim 1: More people are using and benefiting from Gaelic at home and in the community | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|------------|
| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
| 1.1 | Inadequate resources to deliver the Corporate Plan | <p>SG temporary freeze on recruitment</p> <p>Medium and longer-term finances are not increased therefore Gaelic development is constrained</p> <p>BnG baseline has not increased in line with inflation, thereby is a real term decrease in funding</p> | <p>BnG's contribution to Gaelic development ceases to meet with demand</p> <p>We have insufficient staff capacity and/or capability to deliver our Corporate Plan</p> <p>Impact on wellbeing of staff and board Reputation is negatively impacted</p> | <p>25</p> <p>(5X5)</p> | <p>Implementation of multi-year funding agreements for main delivery partners which encourage collaboration</p> <p>Corporate Plan developed in line with new NGLP and approved by SG</p> <p>Programme designed for development of middle managers skills and knowledge</p> <p>Business case presented to SG and running costs cap increased for 25/26.</p> <p>MTFP updated annually and presented to Board</p> | <p>20</p> <p>(4x5)</p> | <p>Build in agility to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise</p> <p>Roll out Manager development programme</p> <p>Continue to make the case for increased funding for BnG</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Programme commenced and will be completed Apr '26</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | ED |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | <p>Effective recruitment, induction, training and development and performance management systems in place</p> <p>Budget management in place to comply with SG GiA requirements for running costs</p> <p>Review of staff resource to mitigate impact of vacant posts.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Risk Appetite: HIGH</p> | | <p><i>We acknowledge there is a challenging environment in public finance and continue to work closely with our sponsorship team in relation to resource.</i></p> | | | | | | | |

| Strategic Aim 1: More people are using and benefiting from Gaelic at home and in the community | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|------------|
| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
| 1.2 | <p>Failure to deliver objectives through partnerships and network organisations</p> <p>[BnG has effectively increased its partnership development and advisory function and this needs to be maintained]</p> | <p>Limited control over direction and impact of third-party delivery</p> <p>BnG strategies for engagement and/or relationships do not respond to stakeholders' needs</p> <p>Quality and reach of communication is insufficient to engage</p> <p>Failure to adapt to changes in primary or secondary legislation</p> | <p>Difficult for Delivery Partners to achieve anticipated outcomes</p> <p>Support for Gaelic is undermined</p> <p>Willingness to collaborate and engage with BnG is reduced</p> | <p>15</p> <p>[5x3]</p> | <p>Sustained effective communication with key delivery bodies</p> <p>Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans in place</p> <p>Change in GLP processes leading to engagement between BnG and public authorities</p> <p>Framework agreement with SG</p> <p>External Communications Strategy reporting to Board quarterly</p> | <p>12</p> <p>[4x3]</p> | <p>Reporting on corporate and operational plans will focus on outcomes with effective performance metrics thereby providing clearer direction internally and externally</p> <p>Gathering of key delivery bodies to review impact of multi-year funding</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Took place in Nov '25 and agreed ongoing engagement</p> | IMM |
| Risk appetite: HIGH | | <p><i>BnG delivers development activities in partnership with community-based organisations and bodies, and relies on those organisations to deliver on the plans they have submitted and have had approved by BnG. The arrangements are based on an agreed shared plan and are dependent on the capacity of partner organisations to deliver on these plans.</i></p> | | | | | | | |

| Strategic Aim 2: Opportunities for people to develop their Gaelic skills at any age are increased and more accessible | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------|------------|
| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
| 2 | Supporting growth and promotion in Gaelic education is ineffective | <p>BnG advisory input is not of sufficient quality and impact</p> <p>Political decisions negatively impact perception of and support for Gaelic education</p> <p>Statutory Guidance on Gaelic education is not sufficiently strong</p> <p>Dependant on the wider support of external organisations</p> <p>Lack of a cohesive approach to 0-3 ELC nationally</p> | <p>Gaelic education is not normalised within Scotland, leading to reduced uptake, attainment and impact</p> <p>Gaelic is not normalised across Scottish society, increasing language loss and disaffection</p> | <p>20</p> <p>[5x4]</p> | <p>Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans in place</p> <p>Engagement with SG Gaelic and Scots Division in collaborative work</p> <p>Participation in regional and other for a to promote Gaelic</p> <p>Contribute to education focused consultations</p> <p>Statutory Guidance on Gaelic education in place</p> | <p>15</p> <p>[5x3]</p> | <p>Engagement with Scottish Government and key strategic agencies on the implementation of changes to legislation through the Education Reform Act 2025 & Scottish Languages Act 2025.</p> <p>Increased engagement with political parties on the importance of Gaelic education for normalising and growing Gaelic</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | CR |
| Risk appetite: MEDIUM | | <i>Advisory role to Scottish Government on Gaelic Education means impact not always guaranteed.</i> | | | | | | | |

| Strategic Aim 3: Our work informs and influences Gaelic development and policies which impact Gaelic | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|----------|------------|
| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
| 3 | People don't understand the role and functions of BnG | <p>The Scottish Languages Act changes the role and function of BnG.</p> <p>Timescales of the commencement of the Scottish Languages Act</p> <p>BnG strategies for engagement and/or relationships are ineffective</p> <p>Negative media - external and internal to Gaelic communities</p> <p>Insufficient communication on what BnG does to make a difference</p> | <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig unable to move forward with change and development programmes</p> <p>Reduced support for Gaelic development</p> <p>Gaelic speakers and learners lose confidence in BnG and therefore negative effect on the community leaving them disenfranchised</p> | <p>12</p> <p>[4x3]</p> | <p>Close engagement with the Gaelic and Scots team at the Scottish Government</p> <p>Continued work with organisations who receive funding to clearly acknowledge BnG support</p> <p>External Communications Strategy approved Oct 24</p> <p>Use NGLP and BnG Corporate Plan to reinforce the key messages of what we do</p> <p>Conaltradh work stream put in place.</p> <p>Expert engaged to deliver external comms priorities</p> | <p>9</p> <p>[3x3]</p> | <p>Continue to develop role of board members as ambassadors for BnG</p> | Ongoing | NP |
| Risk appetite: MEDIUM | | <i>Whilst BnG does what it can to explain and inform, it has to accept that there may always be misunderstanding around BnG's scope of work.</i> | | | | | | | |

Strategic Aim 3: Our work informs and influences Gaelic development and policies which impact on Gaelic

| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
|-----|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|------------|
| 4 | Failure to maximise the benefits from the work undertaken by our key stakeholders and delivery partners | <p>Communication strategy with our key stakeholders and delivery partners is ineffective</p> <p>Insufficient capacity and/or capability among our key stakeholders and delivery partners</p> <p>Delivery partners not necessarily delivering in line with BnG’s objectives.</p> | Damages the credibility and reputation of BnG. Ultimately this could lead to a reduction in support (financial and other) from Scottish Government, key partners and communities | 16 [4x4] | <p>Grant systems in place which provide monitoring</p> <p>New multi-year agreements developed</p> <p>Gaelic language plans system in place</p> <p>Increased social media and comms</p> <p>Presentation of progress reports to CPG</p> <p>Compliance with GLP Statutory Guidance monitored</p> <p>Participate in SG Gaelic Comms call</p> | 12 [4x3] | <p>Monitoring of NGLP and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Encourage stakeholders and key delivery partners to publicise their good news stories broadly</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | IMM |

Risk appetite: MEDIUM *Funding arrangements are based on Plans which outline how delivery partners will meet their own and BnG’s objectives and the provision of ongoing funding is dependent on the receipt of satisfactory monitoring reports.*

Strategic Aim 3: Our work informs and influences Gaelic development and policies which impact on Gaelic

| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|------------|
| 5 | The governance developments implemented in the organisation are not sustained | <p>Insufficient capacity and/or capability</p> <p>New responsibilities are allocated without commensurate resources</p> <p>Widening field of operations due to external or internal pressure.</p> | <p>Organisation does not meet stakeholders' expectations leading to disillusion and criticism; ultimately impacting on Gaelic development</p> | <p>16</p> <p>[4x4]</p> | <p>Continuous improvement planning system in place</p> <p>Increasing use of technology to assist in more administrative tasks</p> <p>Increased number of board members bringing additional skills and resilience</p> <p>Programme of internal audit in place.</p> <p>Work plan and training requirements identified for 25/26</p> | <p>12</p> <p>[3x4]</p> | <p>Review and update organisational Succession Plan</p> <p>Review work plan and training requirements</p> <p>Chair liaising with SG on public appointments</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | ED |

Risk appetite: MEDIUM Skills development is a priority, as is engagement, with matrix in place to monitor progress.

| Strategic Aim 3: Our work informs and influences Gaelic development and policies which impact on Gaelic | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|------------|
| Ref | Risk description | Cause | Impact | Gross score [prior to current controls] (I/L/S) | Current controls [systems already in place] | Net score [including current controls] (I/L/S) | Proposed actions and controls [tasks being undertaken to deal with arising risk] | Timeline | Risk Owner |
| 6 | Systems failure leading to data breach | Cyber security attack IT systems failure Human error | Organisation suffers reputational damage Inability to carry out statutory functions Lack of trust in operations Subject to Information Commissioner reporting and fine | 20 [4x5] | ICT contract in place with cyber threat alerts. Staff training and awareness sessions on cyber security. Annual testing of disaster recovery and business continuity plans. | 16 [4x4] | Staff training and awareness sessions Continue to foster relations with media Join relevant networks to share information on improvements. Development and testing of Cyber Incident Response Plan | Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Mar '26 | NP |
| Risk appetite: MEDIUM | | <i>Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognise this risk and puts mitigations in place, however the threat is ever evolving, and some risk must be accepted.</i> | | | | | | | |

Scoring

I/L/S = Impact (max 5) x Likelihood (max 5) = Score

Refer to Section 4 of [Risk Management Strategy](#) for detailed information.

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---|
| Very High | Risk Score 20-25 | Unacceptable level of risk exposure that requires immediate mitigating action and monthly monitoring |
| High | Risk Score 12-16 | Unacceptable level of risk which requires controls to be put in place to reduce exposure and monthly monitoring |
| Medium | Risk Score 6-10 | Controls can be put in place or the risk accepted. Subjected to quarterly monitoring. |
| Low | Risk Score 1-5 | Acceptable level of risk subject to six monthly monitoring |

Acronyms of people responsible:

ED – Ealasaid MacDonald, Ceannard

IMM – Iain Macmillan, Director

NP – Nicola Pearson, Head of Finance and Corporate Services

CR – Calum Rothach, Head of Education and Plans

Other acronyms and abbreviations

BnG – Bòrd na Gàidhlig

GLP – Gaelic Language Plan

Comms - Communications

SG – Scottish Government

MTEFP – Medium Term Financial Plan

ELC – Early Learning & Childcare

GiA – Grant in Aid

CPG – Comataidh Poileasaidh is Ghoireasan

NGLP – National Gaelic Language Plan

IT – Information Technology



Pàipear 6.1

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Èifeachdas is Trèanadh a' Bhùird-stiùiridh |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Airson Fiosrachadh |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 6.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard |
| Pàipearan-taic: | N/A |

1. Adhbhar

- 1.1. Tha am pàipear seo a' toirt mion-fhiosrachadh air na h-ullachaidhean airson ath-sgrùdadh èifeachdais bhon taobh a-muigh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig a thèid a dhèanamh eadar am Màrt agus an t-Ògmhios 2026.
- 1.2. Thèid an t-ath-sgrùdadh seo a dhèanamh an àite an sgrùdaidh bhliadhnail air èifeachdas a' bhùird.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Prìomh aithris

- 2.1. Bidh ath-sgrùdadh èifeachdais bhon taobh a-muigh air a' bhòrd a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil am bòrd a' coileanadh a dhleasan, ag obair gu h-èifeachdach, agus a' libhrigeadh riaghladh làidir. Bidh ath-sgrùdaidhean cunbhalach a' cuideachadh le bhith a' comharrachadh neartan agus raointean airson leasachadh ann an ceannardas, co-dhùnadh, agus sgrùdadh, a' leigeil leis a' bhòrd a choileanadh iomlan a leasachadh.
- 2.2. Thathar a' moladh gun tèid lèirmheasan èifeachdais bho thaobh a-muigh nam bùird a dhèanamh gu cunbhalach gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil bùird ag obair gu h-èifeachdach agus a' coileanadh an adhbhair. B' e 2022 an t-ath-sgrùdadh mu dheireadh air èifeachdas nam bùird bho thaobh a-muigh.
- 2.3. Às dèidh pròiseas leis an luach as fheàrr aig cridhe a' phròiseict, chaidh Onboard fhastadh gus ath-sgrùdadh èifeachdais a dhèanamh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Tòisichidh an t-ath-sgrùdadh sa Mhàrt agus thathar an dùil gun tèid a chrìochnachadh ro dheireadh an Ògmhios. Thèid an t-ath-sgrùdadh a dhealbhadh ann an co-comhairle le Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus tòisichidh e le coinneamhan leis a' Chathraiche, am Prìomh Oifigear agus Ceann an Ionmhais is Cùisean Corporra.

Bidh prìomh eileamaidean an ath-bhreithneachaidh mar a leanas:

- Ceisteachain agus mion-sgrùdadh dìomhair
- Agallamhan aon-ri-aon le buill a' Bhùird agus àrd-mhanaidsearan
- Amharc air coinneamh a' Bhùird
- Dreach agus aithisg dheireannach le co-dhùnaidhean soilleir



Pàipear 6.1

- Bùth-obrach leanmhainn gus sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air toraidhean agus aontachadh air gnìomhan

Thèid fios a chur gu dìreach gu buill a' bhùird a thaobh an ath-bhreithneachaidh nuair a bhios am pròiseas dealbhaidh deiseil.

3. Moladh

Gum bi buill a' bhùird a' toirt fa-near susbaint na h-aithisg.

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdach

- 4.1. Buidhean air Ionmhas: Chan eil gin ann
- 4.2. Buidhean air Luchd-obrach: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.3. Buidhean air Trèanadh: Tha seo a' cur ri leasachadh plana trèanaidh a' bhùird
- 4.4. Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra: Gum bi ar n-obair a' fiosrachadh agus a' toirt buaidh air leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus air poileasaidhean a bheir buaidh air a' Ghàidhlig
- 4.5. Buidhean air Cliù: Cuiridh seo ri cliù na buidhne le bhith fosgailte.
- 4.6. Buidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.7. Buidhean Laghail: Nì seo cinnteach gum bi modh-obrach iomchaidh ann a rèir Achd na Gàidhlig agus achdan eile a bhios a' bualadh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 4.8. Buidhean air Co-ionannachd: Chan eil gin ann
- 4.9. Buidhean air an Àrainneachd: Chan eil gin ann.

5. Ceanglaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnàthach | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

6.1. Thug an Sgioba Stiùiridh fa-near don phàipear seo air 24 Gearran 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

7.1. Tha am pàipear seo ri breithneachadh air san t-seisean fhosgailte den choinneimh.



Pàipear 7.1

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Coinneamh: | Bòrd-stiùiridh |
| Ceann-là: | 12 Màrt 2026 |
| Tìotal: | Plana Obrach a' Bhùird-stiùiridh |
| Gnìomh a dhìth: | Ri Aontachadh |
| Àireamh pàipear: | 7.1 |
| Neach-labhairt: | Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard |
| Pàipearan-taic: | PT1 Plana Obrach 2026/27 |

1. Adhbhar

1.1. Is e adhbhar na h-aithisge seo Plana Obrach a thoirt dhan Bhòrd-stiùiridh a tha a' mìneachadh nam prìomhan nithean air am feumar beachdachadh air thar na bliadhna.

2. Cùl-fhiosrachadh/Prìomh aithris

2.1. Tha e cudromach gum bi plana obrach aontaichte aig a' Bhòrd-stiùiridh airson na bliadhna air thoiseach. Thèid sùil a chumail air a' phlana obrach tron bhliadhna.

2.2. Chaidh beachdachadh air a' phlana obrach seo a thaobh clàr-ama nan coinneamhan agus chan eil atharrachaidhean sam bith air am moladh bhon a chaidh aontachadh mu dheireadh.

3. Moladh

3.1. Thathar ag iarraidh air buill aontachadh ris a' phlana-obrach

4. Prìomh Bhuidhean Ro-innleachdach

- 4.1. Buidhean air Ionmhas: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.2. Buidhean air Luchd-obrach: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.3. Buidhean air Trèanadh: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.4. Ceanglaichean ri Amasan Ro-innleachadh agus Corporra: Bidh seo a' cur ris an amas chorporra gun cùm Bòrd na Gàidhlig air a' leasachadh nan dòighean-obrach aca.
- 4.5. Buidhean air Cliù: Cuiridh seo ri cliù na buidhne le bhith fosgailte.
- 4.6. Buidhean air Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.7. Buidhean Laghail: Nì seo cinnteach gum bi modh-obrach iomchaidh ann a rèir Achd na Gàidhlig agus achdan eile a bhios a' bualadh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 4.8. Buidhean air Co-ionannachd: Chan eil gin ann.
- 4.9. Buidhean air an Àrainneachd: Chan eil gin ann.



Pàipear 7.1

5. Ceanglaichean ri Frèama-obrach Coileanadh Nàiseanta

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Còraichean Daonna | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clann is Òigridh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cultar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coimhearsnachdan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Àrainneachd | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bochdainn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slàinte | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eadar-nàiseanta | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foghlam | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eaconamaidh | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gnothachasan soirbheachail is ùr-ghnàthach | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |

6. Cùrsa Riaghlachais

6.1. Thug an Sgioba Stiùiridh fa-near don phàipear seo air 19 Gearran 2026.

7. Dearbhadh air Cuairteachadh Sgrìobhainn

7.1. 'S e pàipear fosgailte a tha seo.

| Plana Obrach a' Bhùird-stiùiridh 2026/27 | | Ògmhios 6/25/2026 | Damhair 10/8/2026 | Dùbhlachd 12/10/2026 | Màrt 3/11/2027 |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Puingean Stèidhichte | Cùisean Tòiseachaidh / Fàilte | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Nochdadh Com-pàirt | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Geàrr-chunntas | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Clàr-gnìomhan | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Aithisg air PCCan 25/26 | | √ | | √ |
| | Aithisg Ionmhas | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Clàr Mì-chinntean | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Geàrr-chunntasan nan Comataidhean | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Aithisg a' Chathraiche | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Aithisg a' Cheannard | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Am Plana Obrach | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Iarrtasan Taic-airgid £100,000+ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Conaltradh le luchd-uidh | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Fios as ùr air foghlam agus ionnsachaidh | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | Aithisg air adhartas air a' Phlana Nàiseanta | √ | | √ | |
| | Lèirmheas air a' choinneimh | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Priomhachasan Ro-innleachdail | Plana Corporra | √ | - | - | √ |
| Puingean Cunbhalach Bliadhnail | Plana Gnìomh | - | √ | - | - |
| | Buidseat na Bliadhna | - | - | - | √ |
| | Plana Ionmhas Meadhan-teirm | - | - | - | √ |
| | Riaghladh Ionmhas | - | √ | - | - |
| | Aonta Frèam-obrach | - | √ | - | - |
| | Aithisg Bhliadhnail na Comataidh Sgrùdaidh is Dearbhachd | √ | - | - | - |
| | Aithisg Bhliadhnail na Comataidh Poileasaidh is Ghoireasan | √ | - | - | - |
| | Aithisg Bhliadhnail is Cunntasan | - | √ | - | - |
| | Aithisg an Luchd-sgrùdaidh on Taobh a-muigh | - | √ | - | - |
| | Aithisg Luchd-obrach | √ | - | - | - |
| | Aithisg Slàinte is Sàbhailteachd | √ | - | - | - |
| | Èifeachdas is Trèanadh a' Bhùird-stiùiridh | - | √ | - | √ |
| | Plana Feachd-obrach | - | √ | - | - |
| | Plana Trèanaidh | - | √ | - | - |
| | Gnàth-Riaghailtean | √ | - | - | - |
| | Prògram coinneamhan a' Bhùird-stiùiridh | - | - | √ | - |
| | Maoineachadh nam Buidhnean Gàidhlig | - | - | √ | √ |
| Puingean Ad Hoc | Aithisg air Planaichean Gàidhlig | √ | - | - | - |