

I would like to comment briefly on the draft Plan for Gaelic. I found the document a little difficult to follow, but as far as I could see, it does not include any mandatory responsibilities on local Councils to offer secondary level education through the medium of Gaelic. I have 3 children, 2 currently in GME and one due to start once he is 5, and am concerned that there appears to be little to support them in continuing Gaelic at secondary level. All they will be able to do is study it as a subject, which I feel will not be sufficient to maintain the fluency they are developing at primary level. I would like to see a stronger level of provision, such as at least a certain number of subjects being available through the medium of Gaelic.

I would also like to see greater support for parents who are not native speakers but are trying to learn along with their children. This seems to be entirely at the discretion of individual Councils; having just attended a weekend school for An Cursa Inntrigeadh at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, I was surprised to learn that some people are funded by their local Council, while others like myself are not. To encourage as many people as possible to learn Gaelic, I feel it is important that financial barriers are removed.

I hope these comments are helpful. Personally I am very concerned that when I visit even traditionally Gaelic-speaking areas such as the Western Isles, I now hear very few young people speaking Gaelic, so I really hope that this plan can help address this situation.

Catherine Downie
Edinburgh