

**CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GAELIC EDUCATION GUIDANCE
EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL RESPONSE
22 NOVEMBER 2004**

Rationale

While the emphasis in the Guidance on Gaelic medium education rightly indicates its importance to the survival of Gaelic language and culture, any Guidance on Gaelic education should take into account the growing importance of the provision needed for Gaelic learners of all ages, including the growing population of Gaelic learners in primary schools. The emphasis on lifelong learning in the National Priorities for Education should be reiterated in the Guidance on Gaelic education.

Issues For Consultation

1 Do you agree that local authorities should be required to develop a policy statement to guide the development of Gaelic medium education in their area?

Local authorities should be required to state their Gaelic policy and to include within that policy statement both Gaelic medium education and Gaelic education for learners.

2 Are there any issues beyond those set out in the draft guidance which local authorities should have regard to when developing that policy statement?

Policy statements should include an action plan, with clearly set-out priorities for the next 3-5 years, and should set targets for the development of:

- Gaelic Medium Education in the primary sector
- Gaelic Medium Education in the secondary sector
- Gaelic Learners in preschool, primary and secondary sectors
- Adult Gaelic Learners

3 Should standardisation to reporting on the development of Gaelic medium education under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 be introduced?

Local authorities new to Gaelic education would undoubtedly appreciate a standardised reporting format.

4 Are there any issues beyond those set out in the draft guidance which local authorities should have regard to when reporting on Gaelic medium education under the 2000 Act?

The requirement on local authorities to report only on their success in meeting "written requests" for Gaelic Medium Education should be removed. Local authorities should be required to state in an annual report the provision made for:

- Gaelic Medium Education in the primary sector
- Gaelic Medium Education in the secondary sector

- Gaelic Learners in preschool, primary and secondary sectors
- Adult Gaelic Learners

5 Should the draft guidance apply only to those local authorities in receipt of Specific Grant for the development of Gaelic medium education?

All local authorities should be required to state their Gaelic policy and to include within that statement both Gaelic medium education and Gaelic education for learners.

6 Should Bòrd na Gàidhlig have access to the reports produced by local authorities under the 2000 Act?

Local authority policies, action plans and annual reports should be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. However, in order to establish its credibility in the view of local authorities which have more than twenty years' experience in the field of Gaelic education, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should establish an Education Committee made up of recognised experts in all sectors of Gaelic education from all sources, including local authorities, HMIE and Coman na Gàidhlig, to evaluate documentation submitted to it.

7 Are there any further issues which you consider should be addressed in this draft guidance?

SEED and Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be required to maintain a database of information on Gaelic provision in Scotland and to use information gathered in an annual national report on progress in the development of Gaelic education. HMIE should be required to hold an annual seminar to report and review progress.