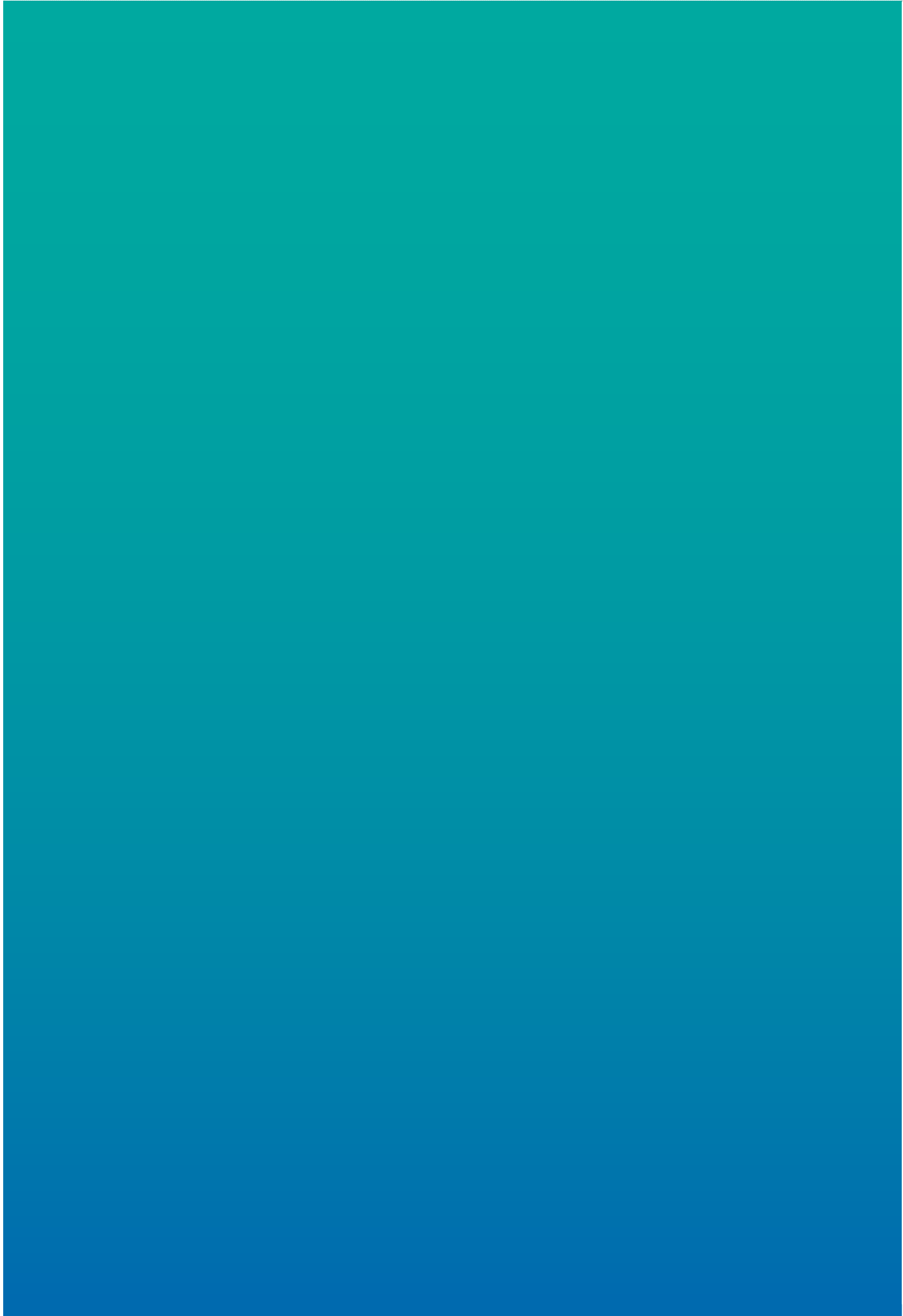


# Consultation on The Scottish Government Commitments to Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill

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# Ministerial Foreword

Consultation Paper on Scottish  
Government Commitments to  
Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish  
Languages Bill

## Foreword, Cabinet Secretary

The Scottish Government has made a number of strong and ambitious commitments to Gaelic and Scots and your views are invited and welcome on the commitments in this consultation exercise. The views we receive will assist in the decisions that are taken on these commitments.

It has been a number of years since legislation was passed in support of the Gaelic language and we have an opportunity to reflect on how the Gaelic language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 have operated in practice. While steady progress has been made since this legislation was passed, we recognise that there is value in taking a fresh look at the measures that are in place. Up until now the Scots language has not benefitted from formal support through legislation and with growing support for the language I believe it time to consider what we can do in this regard.

Progress has been incremental and over recent decades there has been evidence of good progress. For example, there is now support for Gaelic found in community initiatives, in guidance and legislation, in national structures and in a wide range of projects. For the language to progress further we need to build on this diverse Gaelic infrastructure and support the community of speakers and learners wherever they are and whoever they may be.

The Scottish Government now has a Scots language policy. Further support for Scots is found in the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and in the valuable information obtained from the Scots question in the last census. Scots features prominently in education, publishing and the arts and a number of small bodies, with support from Government, are working closely to make further progress for Scots. This consultation exercise will help inform the next steps for Scots.

With the Scottish Government's commitments and the work that will follow this consultation there is another opportunity to build on the good progress that has been made and to strengthen Gaelic and Scots in Scotland by increasing the numbers of people learning, speaking and using these languages in Scotland. To this end your contributions to this consultation exercise are welcome.



**Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP**

The Cabinet Secretary for  
Education and Skills

# Introduction

The Scottish Government has an ambitious and wide-ranging set of commitments to the Gaelic and Scots languages. This consultation exercise and the views received will assist with the progress that we will make with these commitments.

## Scottish Government Commitments

The Scottish Government has made a number of commitments to the Gaelic and Scots languages. Among these there are four key commitments which can be regarded as particularly significant with the other commitments falling under these broad areas. The four key commitments are: to establish a new strategic approach to GME, to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd, to review the structure and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG), and to take action on the Scots language. Where primary legislation is needed for these, the commitment to a Scottish Languages Bill could serve as the legislative vehicle that will enable progress to be made with these commitments.

Over recent years there has been good support for Gaelic. A range of projects and initiatives have been put in place and important legislation has been supported in the Scottish Parliament. There has also been an increase in support for Scots and growth in resources available. With these new commitments and the growing evidence of support for these languages the Scottish Government would like to take additional steps in support of Gaelic and Scots.

The consultation paper will take each of the key commitments in turn, describing the key commitment and those subsidiary commitments which we consider as being connected to or falling under these broad areas. We will try to set the scene by providing a range of views that have been shared with us thus far through informal consultation with a range of stakeholders.

This is designed to stimulate further discussion, ideas and engagement with all relevant interests. No decisions have as yet been taken on how to make progress for Gaelic and Scots and we are actively seeking contributions from across all communities. We are seeking views on how further progress can be made and the views that we receive will assist in shaping the actions taken immediately and over the longer term to deliver on these commitments.

We are aware that there are links and interdependencies between the various Gaelic commitments. For example, it is likely that GME will feature in any discussion relating to the exploration of a Gàidhealtachd. Similarly, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has a role in relation to education; changes to education or indeed the exploration of a Gàidhealtachd will involve consideration of the functions that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should have to support changes in those area and therefore will overlap with the review of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's own structure and functions.

The commitments above do not specifically mention MG ALBA but we are aware that the wide and diverse contribution of MG ALBA adds value to a number of important areas of Gaelic activity. The Scottish Government's support for MG ALBA has enabled this body and BBC ALBA to add to Gaelic learning, arts, community activity, skills and the economy. For this reason we would expect that MG ALBA will feature prominently in these discussions.

# Gaelic Medium Education

This section will consider a new national strategic approach to Gaelic medium education which is essential if we are to see the faster rates of progress we seek for Gaelic.

The Scottish Government has committed to make further progress with Gaelic medium education (GME) by means of a new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education. This will involve ensuring that the GME experience is truly immersive, aiming also to increase the range of subjects that can be taught in GME at both levels of broad general education and senior phase of secondary school. It will involve encouraging the creation of new GME primary and secondary schools across Scotland, backed by further investment to increase the number of teachers who can teach in the medium of Gaelic.

There are a number of local authorities and bodies that make a vital contribution to Gaelic medium education in Scotland. Along with these, the Scottish Government will ensure that e-Sgoil and Stòrlann continue to be supported in order to help with school education, adult learning, teacher support, community learning and provide access to good quality Gaelic education resources. We will also ensure that Sabhal Mòr Ostaig continues to be a centre of excellence for the provision of Gaelic learning, with dedicated funding to offer Further Education and Higher Education courses through the medium of Gaelic. We recognise that Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has a key role in supporting GME at all levels and a wide range of Gaelic community initiatives.

The Scottish Government recognises that these issues above are essential if we are to see the faster rates of progress we seek for Gaelic. The Scottish Government is committed to maintaining support for Gaelic education, arts and broadcasting with MG ALBA having a key role. We also recognise that there are interdependencies across these sectors which support one another and contribute to the overall aim of increasing the numbers speaking, using and learning the language.

### **Overview of Gaelic Education in Scotland**

Gaelic medium education is an established sector in Scottish education. A link to Gaelic education data is available from Bòrd na Gàidhlig at the following link: [Education Data - Bòrd na Gàidhlig \(gaidhlig.scot\)](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/education-data) The aim of GME is for young people to be able to operate confidently and fluently in two languages as they progress from early years, through primary education and into secondary education. GME from nursery to the end of primary school is a form of immersion education. With this form of education, Gaelic is the sole language of learning, teaching and assessment in the first three years of primary school, referred to as the immersion phase.

From P4 to P7, immersion education will continue but, at this stage, learning through the medium of the English language will be introduced. From P4 onwards and following the introduction of English, Gaelic should remain the predominant language of the classroom. GME is delivered to children and young people who come from families where Gaelic is spoken as well as those from families with little or no background in Gaelic.

Gaelic medium primary education (GMPE) is currently available in 14 out of 32 education authority areas across Scotland. There are also a growing number of Gaelic medium schools in Scotland and dual stream (Gaelic and English) primary schools where GME is in the majority. There are also a number of Gaelic medium early years centres and cròileagain (playgroups) operating across Scotland.

Gaelic medium secondary education (GMSE) is also available in 33 secondary schools in Scotland. In these schools, Gaelic is typically offered as a subject, with some schools delivering a further proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic. Gaelic learner education (GLE) is distinct from GME in that it is delivered to those who are in English medium education as an additional language. GLE provides young people with an introduction to Gaelic language and culture.

Education agencies and public bodies in Scotland also have a vital role to play in supporting and developing Gaelic education in Scotland. Teacher education institutions also make an essential contribution to the promotion, support and growth of Gaelic education in Scotland. Along with these bodies, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig supports pupils, teachers and parents through its role in providing resources for Gaelic education.

Building on the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Scottish Parliament has passed a number of pieces of legislation which are important for the delivery of education including the delivery of Gaelic education in Scotland's schools. These include the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and related Guidance.

## Growth and Progress of GME

**The Scottish Government would like to hear from Gaelic education interests what they consider to be the barriers or obstacles that need to be addressed to allow GME to make further progress. We would also like to hear your views on possible solutions to these issues.**

Over recent years there have been reports on GME and GME consultation responses which have had a common theme. This theme has been that there are certain barriers or obstacles that need to be addressed in order to enable GME to make good progress. In order to stimulate further discussion and engagement with stakeholders some of these issues are set out below. However, the Scottish Government wants to hear your views on where attention is needed in order to enable and assist with further progress of GME in Scotland. We want to elicit your ideas on options to bring about improvements, and as such when responding to this consultation you may wish to provide your views in some of these areas but you should not feel constrained or limited to these topics. We are open to and welcome additional views and ideas.

## Areas of concern may include:

- GME provision, access to provision and local authority promotion of GME,
- GME as a 3-18 experience and GME continuity,
- GME subject choice, curriculum and assessment arrangements,
- GME teacher recruitment, placement, retention and professional learning,
- Teacher and pupil support and resources,
- 0-3, early years provision and linguistic acquisition,
- Class sizes, language assistants, immersion and fluency,
- Taking account of GME when setting national expectations and in activity around School Inspection,
- Inclusion of GME in the planning for and reporting by schools where GME is provided as part of a dual stream school.

These areas above are listed as broad headings but each could contain further detailed issues. For example under the heading of access, we are aware many parents have had issues with gaining a GME place where there is limited or no provision. This may also be the case where demand is outstripping places available. Some parents can be disadvantaged or unable to take up a place where transport issues are dependent on catchment arrangements and by the locally established policies around transport. Again, under the broad category of subject choice there may be concern about GME subject provision in the senior phase. Each of the points listed above can be subdivided into other more detailed and specific examples.

The aim of any new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education will be to support growth and development and ensure that GME delivers a good quality educational experience for all the young people in GME. In order to achieve this every effort must be made to bring improvements where a particular issue is identified as a barrier to growth. Therefore we ask you to consider what steps, in your view, need to be taken to make progress or provide solutions. For example solutions may involve:

- A review and changes to the duties on local authorities with regard to GME,
- Clarification of the nature of the 3-18 GME experience and of what parents can expect from it,
- Further measures to support GME teacher recruitment and professional development,
- Ensuring that GME early years provision is in place and supported,
- Establishing how national bodies and agencies can better work together to support GME.

Solutions identified as part of the new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education may be delivered through the current legislation, amendments to it and an update of the guidance on GME. It is also necessary to ensure that account is taken of the wider education reform agenda across Scottish education and the inclusion of GME at that heart of that reform. Where you identify an issue you may wish to suggest what action you consider could enable progress to be made in GME.

As mentioned, although a number of broad headings have been listed above, there is no presumption that consultation views should be limited to these points. Views are welcome on other barriers and suggested solutions.

## Consultation Questions

Consultation responses are invited on the question of a new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education.

Thinking of barriers, obstacles and solutions – What are the key aspects you feel should be included in a new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education?

What steps do you think should be taken to support and promote Gaelic education and to ensure that any new strategic approach to GME is implemented?

Are there any other points you would like to make about the provision of Gaelic medium education and Gaelic learner education in Scottish education?

# Gàidhealtachd

This section will consider whether the Gàidhealtachd commitment should have a principal focus on location and how it is defined or on Gaelic speakers wherever they are and how they are supported.

The Scottish Government's wish is to strengthen the language and support Gaelic speakers in communities wherever they may be in Scotland. Our aim will be to raise levels of language use, provide more services through the medium of Gaelic and extend opportunities. In particular, our aim includes the wish to see an increase of Gaelic language use in the vital areas of both home and community. Associated with this is a commitment to have a focus on arresting language shift in areas with significant speaker numbers.

Traditionally the Gàidhealtachd has been a term used for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. At certain points in our history the language and culture of this region would have been predominantly Gaelic. Although the term Gàidhealtachd has not featured in Gaelic policy in Scotland, the aim of this commitment will be to consider what further steps can be taken to support and promote Gaelic and to increase the numbers speaking, using and learning the language. The focus of this section of the consultation paper will be the commitment to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd.

## **Ireland's Gaeltacht**

The Irish Gaeltacht areas have been recognised since the 1920s and these were areas where the Irish language was prominent and supported. The most recent legislation has been the Gaeltacht Act of 2012. The Act redefined the traditional Irish-speaking areas in Ireland on linguistic criteria instead of on geographic areas which had been the position until 2012.

In the Republic of Ireland, this term is more closely associated with language support and policy implementation. The Republic of Ireland has used an equivalent term through the last century but even that system has evolved and developed over that period and it does not provide a clear or a static solution for us to import in answer to the question of what may constitute a Gàidhealtachd. To stimulate consideration and discussion however an overview of the current arrangements are referenced below.

The Irish language was once widely spoken throughout the island of Ireland, but now approximately only 2% of Ireland's population live in the Gaeltacht, the areas where Irish lives as a community language.

The Gaeltacht Act 2012 provides the statutory footing for language planning process. Under the process, Gaeltacht communities in addition to communities in Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks are being afforded the opportunity to prepare and implement language plans at a community level with ongoing support. Such communities are therefore being offered the opportunity to play a key role in addressing the challenges facing the Irish language as identified at community level. The Language Planning Guidelines give a comprehensive overview into the process and how it operates.

Under the language planning process, Údarás na Gaeltachta is charged with facilitating the implementation of the process in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and Gaeltacht Service Towns located within the Gaeltacht, while Foras na Gaeilge has similar responsibility for the implementation of the process outside the Gaeltacht insofar as it relates to Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks.

Under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the Gaeltacht has been divided into 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas which have been given the opportunity to prepare and implement language plans at community level. Gaeltacht Service Towns are towns in, or adjacent to Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas which play a significant role in the delivery of public services and leisure, social and commercial amenities to those areas. Irish Language Networks are areas outside the Gaeltacht which have a basic critical mass of community and State support for the Irish language.

## **Gàidhealtachd Discussion**

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland has traditionally and historically been regarded as the Scottish Gàidhealtachd. However, in terms of the policy application of this term, there are differing views and responses. Some of these have been referred to below and these may help with responses to this consultation.

Some regard the term Gàidhealtachd as a specific location to be geographically designated. They would see the aim of this commitment to be to strengthen Gaelic in geographical areas where it is spoken by a significant percentage of the population. The presumption being that there are certain areas where the Gaelic language has a higher profile and that certain language support initiatives should happen in these areas.

At the same time a number of interest groups did not view the delivery of this commitment as a straightforward task. There were questions raised about how this commitment sat with the concept that Gaelic should be for all of Scotland and should be a national language. This was linked to the concern about ongoing support for Gaelic in other areas, such as Glasgow or Edinburgh, that might be defined as non-Gàidhealtachd. There were suggestions that this approach might be divisive, might be difficult for the allocation of grants and if a line was to be drawn on a map it would be difficult to reach agreement on the criteria for this decision.

Others considered that the focus should be on providing support for those learning and speaking the language and in the networks and communities they belong to, wherever they are. These options are not mutually exclusive and consideration may need to be given to how all can be better supported. In addition to this, we must keep in mind the importance of on-line, digital resources that Gaelic speakers and learners have access to and the communities that result from this.

## Gàidhealtachd Options

For the purpose of this consultation exercise, this section will include a focus on geographical areas where there is a significant proportion of Gaelic speakers and where there is significant Gaelic activity.

Where there is a focus on a significant proportion of Gaelic speakers there would be the challenge of how to define such an area and to ask what percentage of the population would need to be Gaelic speakers for an area to be defined as Gàidhealtachd. The question to follow would be what Gaelic measures should be secured in this area – for example should:

- GME be available in all schools?
- bodies adopt a bilingual approach?
- a measure of community support be available for Gaelic?
- public bodies and authorities make clear commitments on how they intend to improve support for Gaelic and provide for Gaelic speakers in Gàidhealtachd areas?

There will also be questions of whether any additional resources could be allocated to this area and how this could be monitored or regulated. This commitment may also involve questions about enterprise activity and how sectors such as employment, health, housing, transport, connectivity, community matters and more can support Gaelic in such communities. There will also be questions of what this will require of other Scottish Government policy areas.

Separately, certain areas could be defined by virtue of a level of Gaelic activity. The case could be made, for example, that in areas where Gaelic medium education schools and units are located, this creates certain networks and levels of Gaelic activity. If recognition was given on this basis then again some thought would have to be given to what activities in support of Gaelic should be located, encouraged and established in such areas. In communities where GME exists there will often be other Gaelic projects and activities which could include Fèisean and other Gaelic arts activities, Gaelic adult learning opportunities and the work of Gaelic community development officers. It is the existence of GME that often leads to the other activities in support of the language.

An option for making progress with this commitment could be by means of a review of the Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. For example, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and associated Guidance encourages a proportionate application of Gaelic plans. There are powers under the 2005 Act for regulations to be made which make further provisions for what certain Gaelic Language Plans should contain. In other words, commitments should be stronger where there are more Gaelic speakers. In addition, there have been commitments in the National Plans for Gaelic that certain things should happen in areas with a higher percentage of Gaelic speakers. The policy approach of the National Islands Plan with its Island Communities Impact Assessment is also relevant here as is the potential to create local community Plans.

### **On-line and Digital**

Gaelic on-line activity would have to be seen as an essential element of any attempt to look at the best way to support Gaelic speakers. Gaelic on-line activity is central to all attempts to support Gaelic whether in towns and cities or in areas of low population.

### **Regulation and Enforcement**

The question of how requirements in any Gàidhealtachd area could be implemented and monitored is also an important part of this commitment. This was another theme that emerged clearly in Scottish Government's informal consultation work, where questions were asked about the powers which Bòrd na Gàidhlig had to monitor and enforce requirements set out in Gaelic Language Plans or in their Guidance. The question of monitoring and enforcement and where this function should sit, overlaps with the commitment on the review of the functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

## Consultation Questions

Consultation responses are invited on the question of exploring the creation of a Gàidhealtachd.

Do you have views on what measures should be in place to support Gaelic speakers in areas with significant numbers of speakers?

Do you have views on how such areas should be defined?

How would you balance the commitment to put measures in place in areas where there are significant Gaelic speakers with the principle that Gaelic should be a national language for all of Scotland?

Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd and the associated commitments relating to Gaelic use in family and community?

## **Bòrd na Gàidhlig**

This section will discuss the commitment to review the functions and structures of Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure Scotland has an effective leadership body and network of organisations for the promotion of Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The Scottish Government now intends to review Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure that Scotland has the most effective leadership body in place for Gaelic with the most appropriate powers for the promotion of Gaelic. The review will involve seeking views of stakeholders as part of this consultation and will include working alongside Bòrd na Gàidhlig to take their views on opportunities they identify for system improvement. With reference to the sections of this consultation on Gaelic Medium Education and exploring a Gàidhealtachd it will be also necessary to reflect on whether suggestions which emerge from responses to those sections will necessitate further changes to the functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig provide support to a wide network of organisations which work in support of Gaelic and consideration will be given to how to provide this support most effectively and efficiently. Our ambitions for Gaelic include the contributions of public authorities and bodies and in particular our wish is that bodies with functions in arts, tourism and heritage consider how they can contribute to achieving faster rates of progress for Gaelic. The review will look at the current structure, functions and operation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and at the network of funded Gaelic organisations, with a view to asking if this is still the right structure to effectively promote and support Gaelic in Scotland.

A wide range of views have been expressed on this subject and this is probably a measure of the importance to the community of having a national body to promote the language. Again these views are referred to here in order to stimulate reflection and discussion. However stakeholders should not feel constrained by these topics and are invited as part of this consultation to offer a full range of views and their suggestions on any system changes that they would like to see.

For example views have been expressed on a need to rebrand and relocate Bòrd na Gàidhlig; on the level of Bòrd na Gàidhlig funding of Gaelic bodies; on the operation of the Gaelic language plans system including its implementation, on the status and content of the documents Bòrd na Gàidhlig produce including the National Plan for Gaelic and the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans. Some Gaelic speakers and learners recognise the key leadership role Bòrd na Gàidhlig has in promoting the Gaelic language and community confidence in the language. Others focus on Bòrd na Gàidhlig's role in requiring other public bodies to be more aware of and impactful for Gaelic and in supporting Gaelic funded bodies across the sector.

Opinions have been expressed about whether Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be closer to the Scottish Government and at the same time that it should be closer to the community and to Gaelic organisations. There have been comments about regulation and enforcement and about the corporate and administrative pressures on a small public body and how this can be addressed or alleviated.

There is an awareness that the other Scottish Government commitments may have implications for the structure and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig but mainly there is an acknowledgement that, given Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established over seventeen years ago, the time is right to review how it is performing and assess whether the functions it was established with in 2005 are still suitable for what Gaelic requires of it at this point in time.

Some consultees may comment on the detailed operation of the current Bòrd na Gàidhlig functions, including their own experiences of how those operate in practice. Others may wish to reflect and comment on the structure of the body, including where it sits in the public body landscape.

Questions of how Gaelic plans should be regulated and monitored have also featured in informal consultations, and while responses on that may be offered in the context of exploring a Gàidhealtachd we would welcome any suggestions as to how the Gaelic Plans System could be amended to make stronger, faster progress for Gaelic.

## **Bòrd na Gàidhlig Functions**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has as its founding legislation the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It also has a Framework Document which sets out its relationship with Government together with respective roles and responsibilities.

The general functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as set out in the 2005 Act, can be summarised as relating to the Gaelic language, Gaelic education and Gaelic culture. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has duties to promote and facilitate the promotion of the use and understanding of the language. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has functions to provide advice on language, education and culture to Scottish Ministers and other public bodies. In addition, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has power to advise, on request, other persons on matters relating to the Gaelic language, Gaelic Education and Gaelic culture.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is also responsible for duties relating to Gaelic plans and for the preparation of the National Plan for Gaelic. The Bòrd can require public authorities to produce a Gaelic Language Plan setting out what that body will do in relation to Gaelic, can agree the content of the plan with them and request reports on progress on how that is implemented. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is also required to prepare Guidance on Gaelic language plans and on Gaelic education. A significant percentage of the funding allocated to Bòrd na Gàidhlig is distributed through grants by them to other bodies and projects related to support for the Gaelic language.

The 2005 Act provides that the functions conferred on Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be exercised with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language through increasing the number of persons who are able to use and understand the Gaelic language.

### **Status as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is a Non-Departmental Public Body. NDPBs play an important role in the delivery of public services in Scotland, carrying out a wide range of functions on behalf of Government, with varying degrees of operational autonomy from Government.

NDPBs deliver ministers' priorities through the promotion, funding, regulation and scrutiny of services as well as by providing independent, expert advice to ministers and, often, strategic policy input to Government.

NDPBs should add value to Government through their specialist knowledge and skills, their focus on specific issues and connections with stakeholders and other interests. They are, by nature, delivery-focused and align their business to the Government's Purpose and National Outcomes.

In terms of structure, Bòrd na Gàidhlig could sit closer to Government and there are options to consider on how this could be done. There could be efficiencies in this in terms of legal, human resources, finance and corporate support. This could relieve some of the administrative burdens on a small body.

While Bòrd na Gàidhlig operates as a small public body, this allows it wherever possible to operate through the medium of Gaelic. We expect that there is wide support for the principle of having a public body to promote and support the Gaelic language and that it is considered important that this body should continue to operate in the Gaelic language.

### **Gaelic Language Plans**

Scottish Government would like to hear your views on whether the Gaelic language planning framework remains the best way to proceed for the protection of the Gaelic language or whether wider changes should feature as a result of this review. The current system of Gaelic plans has demonstrated progress but there is an opportunity to consider whether that system could be strengthened or whether there is a better mechanism for making further, faster progress for Gaelic. If you have experience of the Gaelic language planning framework we would ask you to consider whether it is as efficient as it could be, or whether you have any suggestions to make on how to achieve a less resource-intensive ways of making progress for Gaelic.

## Consultation Questions

Consultation responses are invited on the question of a review of the structure and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Do you have any views on the current duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any suggestions of how these could operate more effectively or efficiently?

Do you have any views on structural changes at Bòrd na Gàidhlig which could strengthen the promotion of and support for Gaelic in Scotland?

Are there any further points you would like to make about the review of the functions and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig which seeks to ensure Scotland has the most effective leadership body and network of organisations for the promotion of Gaelic?

## **Scots Language**

We will bring forward a new Scottish Languages Bill which takes further steps to support Gaelic, acts on the Scots language and recognises that Scotland is a multilingual society.

## Scots Language Policy Context

The Scottish Government has a Scots language policy which was officially launched in 2015. The Scottish Government is also committed to build on this and take further steps to support Scots. There are a number of other statements and commitments which demonstrate the policy context that Scots is set in and the level of priority being accorded by the Scottish Government to the Scots.

Scots is spoken throughout Scotland and the 2011 Census indicated that over 1.5 million people identified themselves as Scots speakers. The Council of Europe's Charter on Regional or Minority Languages recognises Scots. The Scots provisions include the undertakings that policies should be based on recognition of regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth. The undertakings include the need for resolute action to promote regional and minority languages such as Scots. The undertakings also include the facilitation and encouragement of the use of Scots in speech and writing, in public and private life, the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of Scots and more.

Scots has also received recognition in Scottish education. The Curriculum for Excellence makes clear that 'the languages, dialects and literature of Scotland provide a rich resource for children and young people to learn about Scotland's culture, identity and language. Through engaging with a wide range of texts they will develop an appreciation of Scotland's literary and linguistic heritage and its indigenous languages and dialects. This principle permeates the experiences and outcomes and it is expected that practitioners will build upon the diversity of language represented within the communities of Scotland, valuing the languages which children and young people bring to school.'

Following on from this, the Scottish Government in 2011 agreed to develop the concept of Scottish Studies in our schools. The Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) developed the Scottish Studies award and the Scots Language award aimed at creating a distinct strand of learning focused on Scotland incorporating Scottish history, Scottish literature, the Scots and Gaelic languages, wider culture and Scottish current affairs. All pupils have access to this strand at Primary and Secondary levels.

Research has been encouraged into attainment levels amongst students who are taking these awards. Creative writing in Scots is also encouraged and supported within Scottish Qualification Authority's (SQA) National Qualifications for English. There was a significant increase between 2018-2019 in the number of learners sitting and attaining these awards, in all levels from SCQF level 2-6.

The Scots Language Awards is an annual event and different from the Scottish Qualification Authority awards. These awards were first established in 2019 to celebrate the work that has been going on in Scots community for many years now. The main aims of the event is to raise the profile of the language and promote the work being done and to support it in the media. The awards also gives a platform to the many writers, organisations and performers to help promote themselves in their careers.

Education Scotland has provided good support for the place of Scots within education and has promoted and developed an online professional development course for teachers.

In 2022, the Scottish Government is providing funding to the following organisations and other Scots projects:

- Scots Language Centre
- Dictionaries of the Scots Language
- Association for Scottish Literature
- Scots Hoose
- Scots Radio/Doric Film Festival
- Doric Board
- Scottish Book Trust (Scots Publishing Grant & Scots Bookbug app)
- YoungScot (Scottish Languages Panel)

## Informal Discussions

There have been informal discussions with Scots stakeholders and those with interest in the language. In these discussions a range of measures were suggested to strengthen Scots and raise the profile of the language. The focus was largely on education, arts, broadcasting and publishing. In addition, there was also discussion of what new structures may be needed to support the Scots language.

In these discussions, there was broad enthusiasm for Scots to be given increased recognition and for Scots to have a higher profile in education. Scots representatives also highlighted the potential for the use of Scots to increase in arts, broadcasting and publishing. A number of bodies could make a significant contribution in this area.

There were also suggestions received that the best way forward for the Scots language would be to build on the work and expertise of bodies that are already in place and receiving support. In order to assist with this discussion, a number of Scots bodies have been listed below with a brief description of their activity.

## Key Scots Bodies

### The Scots Language Centre

The Scots Language Centre (SLC) receives funding from the Scottish Government to provide information and advice on Scots, raise awareness of and promote the use of the Scots language, culture and education. It is one of the main online sources for educational resources for early years to secondary along with Scots Hoose. The Scots Language Centre also employ a General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) registered teacher as their educational specialist who maintains partnership working with Education Scotland, the SQA, and other educational organisations, developing professional learning and resources both collaboratively and in-house.

The Scots Language Centre routinely supports and expertly advises, on request, individuals, groups, organisations, and public bodies on issues across the whole range of language usage. The Scots Language Centre also lead on the “Aye Can” campaign aimed at creating awareness around the Scots language in relation to the Scots question in the 2022 Census. The Scots Language Centre has produced a new range of Scots online, interactive learning materials for use by learners 3-18, teachers and parents. In September 2021, the Scots Language Centre launched the “Scots Warks” guidance and resources aimed to help people gain confidence in their literacy skills, writing in Scots. This guidance was created in consultation with Scots speakers and developed through an expert working group, made up of several prominent Scots authors.

### Dictionaries of the Scots Language

The Scottish Government funds the Dictionaries of the Scots Language which is responsible for the major dictionaries of the Scots Language and undertakes a wide range of educational outreach work with people of all ages and abilities. The Dictionaries of the Scots Language has published articles about Scots words in the Herald newspaper to raise awareness and encourage discussion with the public. As part of Book Week Scotland in November 2019, the Dictionaries of the Scots Language launched the publication “100 Favourite Scots Words”. In early 2021, the Dictionaries of the Scots Language launched the free “Scots Dictionary for Schools app” available to all school pupils and learners alike. The new app features thousands of audio files to help learners with pronunciation. It was downloaded over 1000 times in its first week of launch and continues to be a valuable learning tool for schools and learners.

### Association of Scottish Literature

The Association of Scottish Literature (ASL) also receives funding from the Scottish Government. The Association of Scottish Literature provides professional development and support materials on Scottish literature and languages for teachers and pupils, publishes Scottish literature which has been neglected or warrants fresh presentation to a modern audience and also produces a series of school-college level study guides and resources. The Association of Scottish Literature also holds a Schools Conference providing Continued Professional Learning Development (CPLD) for teachers in secondary for English and Scots.

## Scots Hoose

Scots Hoose is the leading provider of free online Scots language education resources for schools. In 2022/23, the Scottish Government will provide funding to Scots Hoose; it produces much-needed films, animations, graphic novels, original poems, stories, songs and learning resources in Scots for early years, primary and secondary teachers and pupils. Its mission is to raise attainment by improving Scots provision for all of Scotland's young Scots speakers, with particular focus on young Scots speakers living in areas of deprivation. Scots Hoose has worked with a range of professional artists from different backgrounds and have involved schools in contributing to resources and even making their own short films.

## Scots Radio/Doric Film Festival

The Scottish Government provides funding to Scots Radio, who successfully established Aberdeenshire's first ever Doric Film Festival in 2018-2019. The festival, provides a high-profile platform for showcasing short films made by individuals, community groups and schools in the North East of Scotland. At the recent 2021 Celtic Media awards, Scots Radio won the Radio magazine show award. The Doric board was created with a strong focus to supporting local groups and projects by providing small grants to support Doric development and initiatives.

## Scottish Book Trust

In 2018, the Scots publication grant was launched, funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by the Scottish Book Trust. It was created to support Scots publishers and encourage Scots writers. The grant has proved a great success, producing a mix of several publications featuring poetry, fiction, children's and historical works. It shows the wealth of talent and interest in the language, and strengthens the case for the Scottish Government's support of Scots and those who wish to use it.

## The Commitment to Scots

The commitment to a Scottish Languages Bill will be the key legislative vehicle for delivery of any changes to primary legislation which may be needed to deliver the commitments on the Scots language and multilingual recognition. As noted earlier, there is broad enthusiasm for Scots to be given increased recognition and status and the discussion above has noted the possibility of an expanded role for current Scots bodies.

There is also a wish for Scots to have increased promotion and support in education. Similarly, a duty on bodies to promote and support Scots or to consider how they can take account of Scots in their work could be delivered through a bill.

## Consultation Questions

Consultation responses are invited on the question of support for the Scots language.

Thinking of the work of the key Scots bodies as referred to in the paper – What are your views on the work of the Scots bodies? How would you strengthen and add to the work of these bodies?

What are your views on the next steps that should be taken to support the Scots language?

Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to support the Scots language?

## Consultation arrangements – Responding to this Consultation

The Scottish Government is seeking views on its commitments towards Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government’s consultation hub, Citizen Space. Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/education-reform/gaelic-and-scots-scottish-languages-bill>

You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of Thursday 7th December 2022.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and send to: [GaelicAndScotsConsultation@gov.scot](mailto:GaelicAndScotsConsultation@gov.scot)

### Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise. If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

### Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email. Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us.

Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints: If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at [ConsultationPSC@gov.scot](mailto:ConsultationPSC@gov.scot)

## Scottish Government consultation process.

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work. You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot> Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review;
- inform the development of a particular policy;
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals;
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Scottish Government consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

The Scottish Government may make the responses to this consultation paper available to the public and to the Scottish Parliament.

Please complete the relevant sections in the response form to ensure that we will treat your response appropriately. All responses will be acknowledged, analysed and considered by the Scottish Government Gaelic & Scots Team.

Respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

# Respondent Information Form

## RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

**Information for organisations:**

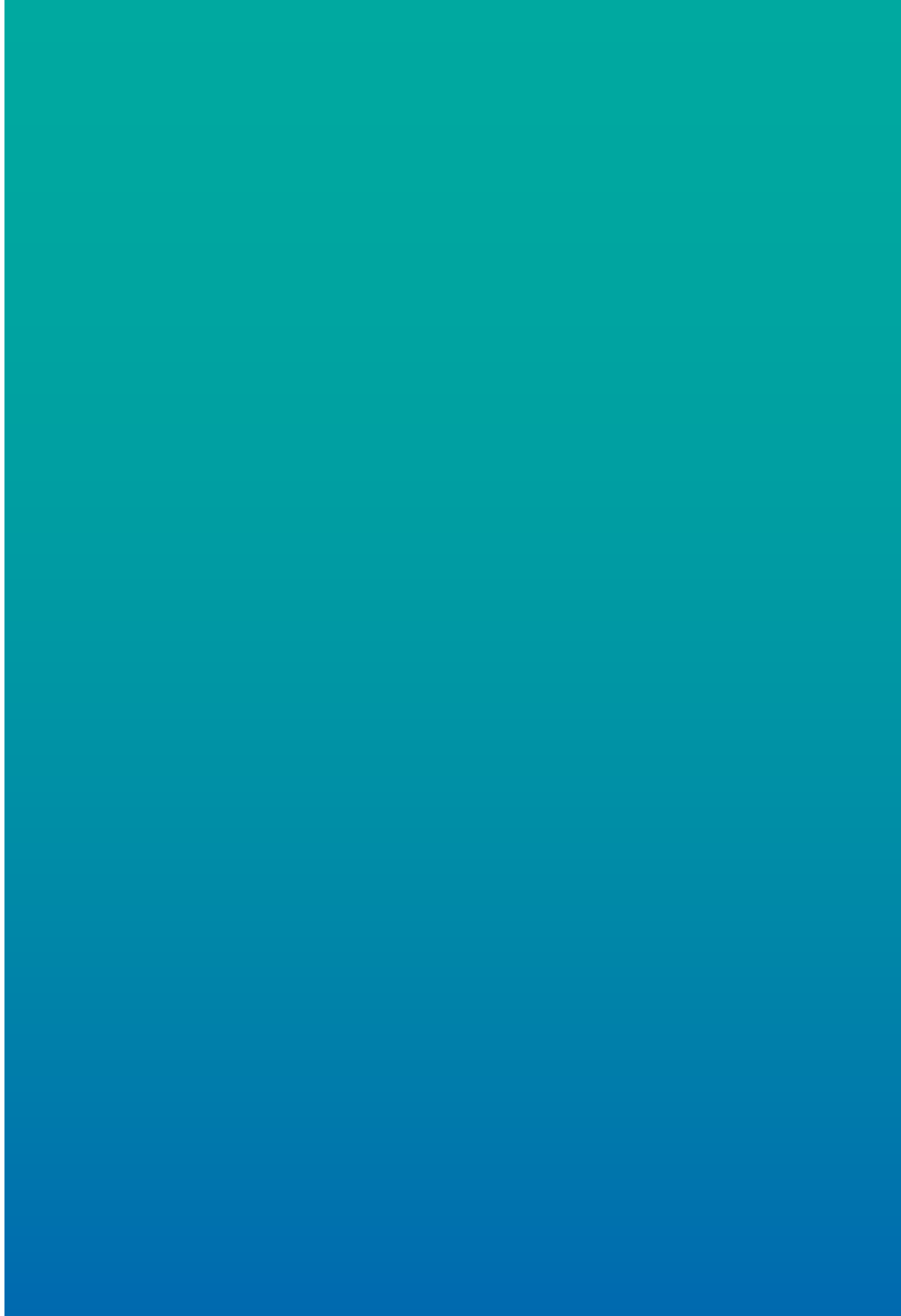
The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No





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