

NHS Scotland Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2017

Foreword

I am very pleased to support this NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan which has been produced under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

NHS Boards with significant numbers of Gaelic speakers, including NHS Western Isles and NHS Highland have already prepared plans to ensure they embed Gaelic appropriately across their core functions, including in health service delivery. This Plan covers the main corporate functions of NHSScotland, under the headings of Identity, Communications and Workforce. These functions are primarily the responsibility of our national health boards.

In the current financial climate it is vital that we use NHS resources appropriately. This Gaelic Language Plan outlines the measures which we plan to put in place to support the promotion of Gaelic throughout NHSScotland through existing activity and resources. These measures are aimed at raising the status, promoting the use, and encouraging the learning of Gaelic.

Gaelic belongs to the whole of Scotland. It is our heritage, it is part of the rich and diverse cultural life of Scotland and it is central to our national identity. We must ensure we take the necessary steps to secure its place in the future. The Scottish Government has committed to an ambitious programme of Gaelic commitments and I am confident that our NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan will help further support these commitments.

I commend to you our draft Gaelic Language Plan and look forward to receiving your comments

NICOLA STURGEON

CABINET SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CITIES STRATEGY

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

This is a critical time for the future of the Gaelic language. The survival of Gaelic as a living language in Scotland is threatened with declining numbers of those speaking Gaelic fluently in the language's traditional heartlands. The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is that it established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as the Scottish Government's principal Gaelic development body to increase understanding, use of and access to the Gaelic language and culture. The Bòrd na Gàidhlig (henceforth described as the Bòrd) produced the National Plan for Gaelic which offers an overview of Gaelic development needs, covering language acquisition, language usage, language status and language corpus. It sets out priorities for Gaelic development and identifies bodies which can contribute to achieving them.

The National Plan for Gaelic promotes the principle of equal respect in recognition of the fact that users of the Gaelic language aspire to use Gaelic as normally as possible in their lives. The Plan encourages a generosity of spirit towards Gaelic across Scotland, and requests that the language should not suffer from any lack of respect either at an individual or corporate level. The Bòrd states that giving Gaelic equal respect does not automatically mean identical treatment for Gaelic and English, or that a particular level of Gaelic provision must be made available in all circumstances. Instead, the Bòrd encourages public bodies to endeavour, whatever the particular linguistic landscape they face, to be supportive and generous to Gaelic development, and to facilitate the use of Gaelic to the greatest extent that is appropriate to their individual circumstances. Where services are delivered in Gaelic, they must be of a comparable standard and quality as those provided in English.

The Bòrd's statutory guidance¹ on the preparation of Gaelic Language Plans provides advice on structure and content. Gaelic Language Plans should be comprehensive, consistent and appropriate to the particular circumstances of the public body preparing it and should consider factors such as the existing number of speakers within their area of operation and their potential to develop the use of the language.

The Bòrd has authority to issue a statutory requirement for public bodies to develop a Gaelic Language Plan and at the time of writing a number of public bodies including councils, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament have already had plans approved and published². NHSScotland is now required to develop our Gaelic Language Plan in order to set out how we will play our part in creating a sustainable future for the Gaelic language in Scotland by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use. The 2005 Act also requires public bodies to bring the preparation of its Gaelic Language Plan to the attention of those with an interest in it and to this end, consultation on the draft NHSScotland Plan will begin in January 2012 with the final Plan published in April 2012.

¹ Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2007. Guidance on development of Gaelic Language Plans

<http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/en/our-work/gaelic-language-plans.html>

² See Bòrd na Gàidhlig website as above

1.2 The NHS in Scotland

NHSScotland is the publicly funded healthcare system for Scotland. Provision of healthcare is organised through 14 geographically-based health boards and eight national health boards, sometimes called special health boards. The geographical health boards manage acute and contracted services mostly through hospitals, facilities and contracts with independent providers such as GPs and pharmacists. The health boards also provide community services through local Community Health Partnerships, or Community Health and Care Partnerships where health and social care are integrated. Health boards and local partnerships also co-ordinate with the local authorities and voluntary sector organisations which share their boundaries. As at 30 September 2011 the NHS in Scotland had around 161,400 staff, including more than 65,000 nurses and midwives and approximately 13,300 medical and dental staff including over 4,700 consultants. There are also nearly 5,000 general medical practitioners and more than 3,000 general dental practitioners and around 11,300 allied health professionals³.

The 14 geographically-based health boards are supported by the eight national health boards described below:

- NHS Education Scotland: responsible for developing and delivering education and training for those who work in NHSScotland.
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland: came into existence on the 1st April 2011, and builds on work previously done by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and the Care Commission
- NHS National Services Scotland: provides a wide range of services including Information Services, Health Protection and Health Facilities.
- NHS Health Scotland: the national agency for health improvement and reduction of health inequalities
- Scottish Ambulance Service: the single public emergency ambulance service in Scotland
- NHS National Waiting Times Centre: a special NHS Board in Scotland with the purpose of reducing waiting times, located at the Golden Jubilee Hospital at Clydebank.
- The State Hospitals Board for Scotland - responsible for the State Hospital at Carstairs, which provides high security services for mentally disordered offenders and others who pose a high risk to themselves or others.
- NHS24: Provides out of hours access to healthcare and includes the patient information service, NHS Inform.

A '2020 Vision' was agreed in September 2011 for NHSScotland as follows⁴:

'By 2020 we will have a healthcare system where we have integrated primary and social care, a focus on prevention, anticipation and supported self management in order that everyone is able to live longer healthier lives at home, or in the community as long as possible. When hospital treatment is required, and cannot be provided in a community setting, day case treatment will be the norm. Whatever the setting, care will be provided to the highest standards of quality and safety, with the person at the centre of all decisions. There will be a focus on ensuring that people get back into

³ Scottish Government Health Analytical Services 2011.

⁴ NHSScotland, 2011

their home or community environment as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk of re-admission.'

Underpinning the delivery of health and care services in Scotland is the NHS *Quality Strategy*. The three overarching quality ambitions of safe, effective and person-centred care describe the aims to be met through change and improvement. The emphasis is on partnerships between patients, their families and those delivering healthcare services that are respectful of individual needs and values, and are based on clear communication. Promoting respect of and familiarity with the Gaelic language within NHSScotland service provision concurs with these ambitions, ensuring that a quality health service is extended to users of Gaelic in their own language as well as contributing to the survival of the Gaelic language in Scotland.

1.3 Gaelic in the NHSScotland Area of Operation

The 2001 UK Census showed that a total of 58,652 people aged three years old and over (1.2% of the Scottish population) had some Gaelic language ability⁵. The council areas with the largest populations with Gaelic language ability were Eilean Siar (18,420), Highland (18,360) and Argyll & Bute (6,520) with Eilean Siar having the greatest proportion of the population familiar with Gaelic at 72%. The Census also found that 10% of Gaelic speakers in Scotland lived in Glasgow. The pattern of use of the Gaelic language changed between the Census years of 1991 and 2001, suggesting that it is moving from being a predominantly oral language to being a language spoken, read and written. There was a decline in those who could speak, read **or** write Gaelic of 3,800 (6%), while the number with more extensive Gaelic ability, who could speak, read **and** write the language, rose by 1,800 (6%). However, only 430 more young people aged five to nine could speak Gaelic in 2001 than in 1991. Support has been identified in the Scottish population for the Gaelic language with a 2011 survey⁶ finding that almost 80% of respondents agreed that the Gaelic language was important to Scottish culture and traditions and that these should not be lost.

Healthcare services are expected in legislation to consider how they might ensure that patients and the public with a first language other than English do not experience a language barrier to accessing services. That can apply to Gaelic as for any other language. In addition, the Gaelic Language Plan asks that public bodies help to increase the visibility of Gaelic in public life by taking opportunities to use Gaelic in a way that gives it the same status as English. NHSScotland has a reach that extends to every area and community in Scotland and is a major employer in many areas. By adopting the Gaelic language where there are appropriate opportunities to do so, we will contribute to promoting the Gaelic language to staff and patients as an intrinsic element of Scottish public life.

⁵ GROS Report on Gaelic language from the 2001 Census: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/press/news2005/scotlands-census-2001-gaelic-report.html>

⁶ C. West and A. Graham, "Attitudes Towards the Gaelic Language", *The Scottish Government* (2011)

1.4 The NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan

This plan considers the role of Gaelic language in NHSScotland identity, written information and in staff training with the aim of promoting familiarity with the Gaelic language and supporting access to high quality service provision for Gaelic speakers and readers.

It is important to note that NHSScotland is not a standalone public body, rather, it is the collective name given to the public healthcare system in Scotland. As described above, most NHS funding in Scotland is devolved to health boards which are individually accountable public bodies, with their own governance structures for decision making within terms agreed nationally. Some funding or professional decisions are made nationally, and this NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan, with the agreement of the Bòrd na Gàidhlig, relates only to decisions made about some key services at a national level. As such, it has jurisdiction over a separate set of services from those provided by geographical boards and to some of the services provided by national health boards.

Gaelic Language Plans developed by individual health boards, if required to do so, would cover different services than this plan developed for NHSScotland. The geographical health boards with the largest populations of Gaelic users have already been required to develop their own plans to cover local service provision and the NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan will complement these plans. For example, the services that NHSScotland can directly influence in relation to the Gaelic Language Plan include:

- National procurement agreements
- workforce development and education
- Key information about the NHS in Scotland for patients and the public.

Examples of services or decisions that are made by local or national health boards and therefore that NHSScotland does not have direct control over include the following:

- National procurement agreements
- workforce development and education
- Key information about the NHS in Scotland for patients and the public.

Examples of services or decisions that are made by local or special boards and therefore that NHSScotland does not have direct control over include the following:

- Information leaflets about local services
- Decisions about local service provision for example, hospital signage (although decisions with major funding or cross- population implications, such as hospital closure, are usually referred back to ministers for confirmation)
- Local training and information sessions
- Staff recruitment

2. NHSScotland Commitments

We have developed a set of proposed actions under the headings of Identity, Communications and Workforce, taking into consideration the structures that can be influenced nationally. We have taken an incremental approach given the current financial constraints, and anticipate building on existing resources wherever possible.

2.1 Identity

Why identity is important for NHSScotland

The NHS has become an established part of life in Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom since it was created over 60 years ago. Making sure that the public know they are in safe hands in the NHS is an important part of healthcare, building trust instantly using symbols that people recognise straight away. In today's world of continuous streams of information, such as news and advertising, visual cues are ever more important.

A key part of the NHSScotland brand is the visual identity or 'logo'. This is a recognisable element of a brand that people in Scotland have come to rely on and trust. The logo allows people to identify services provided by NHSScotland and represents our ambitions for the highest quality healthcare – care that is safe, effective and person-centred. The NHSScotland brand is used by all Health Boards in Scotland. It consists of a number of elements: the letters 'NHS' sitting above an element known as the 'caring device'. Below this, in the case of the national NHSScotland brand, is the word 'Scotland'.



This national variant of the logo is used for all NHSScotland-wide communications and is used by some of the national Special Health Boards such as the Scottish Ambulance Service. The geographical health boards and most of the national health boards have their own variants of the NHSScotland logo where the word 'Scotland' is replaced with the area, such as 'Greater Glasgow and Clyde' or the name of the Board, such as 'National Services Scotland':



The visual identity is instantly recognisable and allows people in Scotland to know that the healthcare they are receiving is provided by the National Health Service no matter where they are or what part of the organisation they come into contact with.

Why identity is important for the Gaelic language

The National Plan for Gaelic describes enhanced recognition as a key element in developing a minority language. Sustaining a vibrant Gaelic language includes increasing its visibility and creating a positive image for Gaelic in Scottish public life.

NHSScotland's opportunity to contribute

We recognise the significant contribution NHSScotland can make to securing the status of the Gaelic language in Scottish public life. NHSScotland is a structure recognised across Scotland and, taken as a whole, is the biggest single employer in Scotland. We play an important role in people's daily lives, caring for everyone throughout the life course. This gives us an unparalleled reach compared to other institutions and organisations in the daily lives of people in Scotland. We believe that using symbols that include Gaelic equally with English is the right thing to do and that including the Gaelic language in the NHSScotland logo would contribute to enhanced recognition of Gaelic in public life.

However, given the current financial constraints being placed on all public services, we do not think that the time is right at the moment to undertake a major rebranding exercise.

What we will do

During the course of this plan, we will undertake a full assessment of the the issue of dual language branding of the NHSScotland logo and the potential use and application of this across key communication channels. This will include consideration of:

- Having regard to status. Making changes to items of identity that are seen by a large number of people or that have important significance.
- Having regard to the number of Gaelic speakers in a geographical area. Making changes in sites / services first in areas where there are known to be significant numbers of Gaelic language users.
- Having regard to footfall. Making changes in sites / channels where there are known to be high numbers of Gaelic users / visitors first.

We will consider the potential use of dual branding throughout NHS communication channels in Scotland so that the public recognise the equal status of Gaelic and English in the day to day activities of NHSScotland. We will also consider the use of Gaelic in our new NHS uniforms.

During the course of this plan we will also liaise with all of NHSScotland's health boards on the potential development and use of bilingual logos. However it will be for health boards to make decisions separately about any potential use of bilingual versions of their logos.

	Action	Owner	Year
1	We will undertake an assessment of the development of a dual language version of the NHSScotland logo	Scottish Government (SG) Health and Social Care Directorates - Internal Communications	2012 - 2017
2	We will undertake an assessment of the cost and impact of a bilingual NHSScotland logo on a new and replacement basis for relevant NHSScotland communication channels, publications and signage	SG Health and Social Care Directorates and all NHS Boards which use the NHSScotland logo	2013 - 2017
3	We will consider current NHS branding guidance and implications for the use of bilingual logos	SG Health and Social Care Directorates - Internal Communications/Capital and Facilities	2012 - 2017
4	We will liaise with all Health Boards to consider the implications of dual language branding across their sites and services	SG Health and Social Care Directorates - Internal Communications/Capital and Facilities	2012 - 17
5	We will consider the potential cost and impact of using a NHSScotland bilingual logo in the uniform specification review	SG Health and Social Care - Health Workforce and Performance	2013

2.2 Communication

Why communication is important for NHSScotland

An important part of NHSScotland healthcare is that patients and the public are regarded as being partners with service providers, emphasised in the NHSScotland *Quality Strategy*. This means that patients, carers and service providers have all the information needed to make informed decisions about health and healthcare and that service providers have all the information about patients that they would need to communicate information effectively. For example, a patient or carer might want information about a health condition; someone moving to a new area might want to know where their nearest GP service is; members of a community might want to know what decisions are being made about providing local services; and service providers want to know patients' preferred language and ability for reading in English. Information for patients and the public can be obtained by reading leaflets, accessing websites, by word of mouth or other communication channels appropriate to needs and these communication methods can be maintained by or on behalf of NHSScotland or by local healthcare services. Good communication is essential for good health care to be delivered, for the best possible outcomes for patients and to make good quality decisions that meet the needs of patients, carers and communities.

Why communication is important for the Gaelic Language

Gaelic is a written and spoken living language. The national plan for Gaelic emphasises the importance of the written word and how it can help many goals of the national plan. More Gaelic in print, broadcast and online media will raise awareness of the language amongst everyone as well as to give new speakers an opportunity to use their skills. Fluent speakers can be sure their language is of equal status to the English language in Scotland and can access information appropriate to their language needs.

NHSScotland's opportunity to contribute

Modern communication channels using the written word are numerous and a key element of healthcare. For example, NHS inform, NHSScotland's health information website, receives 30,000 hits per month from across the population of Scotland. There is an excellent opportunity for NHSScotland to use Gaelic in its written form in more communications, contributing to promoting the usage, status and language corpus of Gaelic.

What we will do

We want Gaelic users across Scotland to easily access communication and information. Our first action will be to publish the NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan bilingually. Over the course of implementation of the plan, we will make Gaelic an integral part of all of our communication channels. Gaelic will be included in our work to improve the quality and accessibility of patient information, through the development of NHSScotland Quality Assurance and Accessibility guidance.

#	Action	Owner	Year
1	We will publish NHSScotland's Gaelic Language Plan bilingually, demonstrating equal respect for English and Gaelic languages	NHS Health Scotland	2012
2	We will make available key information on public involvement in Gaelic	Scottish Health Council	2012
3	We will make available the summary of NHSScotland's Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities in Gaelic	Health Rights Information Scotland	2012
4	We will prioritise Gaelic when developing the model for central provision of translated public information	NHS 24	2012-13
5	We will make provision for Gaelic in the NHSScotland Quality Assurance and Accessibility Framework for public information	NHS 24	2012-13

2.3 Workforce

Why the workforce is important for NHSScotland

Everyone in the NHSScotland workforce has the same aim - to improve people's health and to deliver person-centred, safe and effective care whether they are porters, radiologists, surgeons, general practitioners, service managers, receptionists, safety champions – and the rest. Effective health services are dependent on the wealth of skills that people bring to the job and develop while working for NHSScotland. Quality of healthcare is dependent on the spirit with which those skills are used, and the values of the NHS being an essential framework within which to deliver the best health outcomes and patient experience. With over 150,000 staff across Scotland, 7% of the nation's workforce who are developing their skills and working to the same values, NHSScotland contributes a large amount to the vibrancy and spirit of Scottish public life.

Why the workforce is important for the Gaelic Language

The workplace environment plays an important part in people's lives where many spend a large amount of time every week. For example, employees can become acquainted with Gaelic from colleagues or from their organisation. Workforce development can help make services better for Gaelic speaking service users and to enhance the visibility and recognition of Gaelic in Scotland. Those learning or fluent in Gaelic can offer their Gaelic skills to their employer, improving work satisfaction and increasing the use of Gaelic in places of work.

NHSScotland's opportunity to contribute

We have a great opportunity as NHSScotland has the largest single workforce in Scotland. Welcoming Gaelic into the NHS workplace would fit well with inclusive values of the NHS and commitment to diversity. NHSScotland workplaces cover the entire country and healthcare teams comprise people from all backgrounds. Therefore the reach of workplace support in NHSScotland is unparalleled.

What we will do

We will increase the visibility and recognition of Gaelic by publishing guidance notes on the NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan for our staff and signposting our staff to Gaelic learning opportunities. Workforce development will include training for staff about the importance of Gaelic for their area and we will ask job applicants about their Gaelic skills.

#	Action	Owner	Year
1	We will publish guidance notes for staff on the NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan	NHS Health Scotland with input from NHS Education Scotland	2012
2	We will signpost staff to Gaelic learning opportunities	NHS Education Scotland	Under discussion
3	We will identify priority areas for workforce development that will improve care for Gaelic speaking service users, for example care for older people, in emergency situations or for early years staff	NHS Education Scotland	2014
4	We will support workforce development in identified priority areas that will improve care for Gaelic speaking service users, for example care for older people, in emergency situations or for early years staff	NHS Education Scotland	2015
5	We will amend the NHSScotland application form to ask applicants about Gaelic language use	SGHD Workforce	2015

3. Implementation and Monitoring

An NHSScotland Gaelic Language Plan Working Group will be established with representation from the organisations and departments taking on the actions as agreed in the preceding sections, chaired by NHSScotland with the secretariat provided by NHS Health Scotland. The Working Group will develop and agree an implementation plan, with clear monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring reports will be submitted as requested by the Bòrd na Gàidhig and progress reported to the Director-General Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHSScotland. The Plan will be reviewed within five years as required by the 2005 Act.

4. Conclusion

NHSScotland is committed to playing a role in promoting the use of Gaelic in public life as well as removing language barriers to the provision of healthcare services of equally high standards across the whole population. We have considered the position of the Gaelic language within the Scottish population and examined where we can best build on existing structures and services to strengthen the use of and promotion of the Gaelic language. We agreed, in conjunction with the Bòrd, that identity, communication and workforce were the areas where we can best establish and strengthen the use of the Gaelic language. We have taken an incremental approach and regard our actions as the starting point for establishing the use of Gaelic in core NHSScotland activity rather than being an end in themselves. We have set out specific actions to meet these goals that we can take within the next five years and propose to set up a working group to monitor and support ongoing implementation.

We present this draft plan for your consideration and look forward to working with you to further establish the Gaelic language in daily Scottish life.