Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament
The Scottish Parliament wants to make sure that everyone in Scotland can become involved in its work, whatever language they use. With this in mind, Gaelic has played an important part in the Scottish Parliament since it opened in 1999. With the introduction of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 the Parliament has increased opportunities to engage with its work through Gaelic.

Gaelic, pronounced ‘gaalik’, was once the language of the majority of the Scots people, her nobles, clans and kings, and was not only spoken in the Highland area but was also widely spoken in what we would now consider the Lowlands. As late as the 17th century, native Gaelic speakers were to be found in Galloway and Ayrshire for instance.

Today, Gaelic speakers are spread throughout Scotland. According to the 2001 census just over half live in the Highland counties with the remainder living in the Lowlands. A large proportion of Gaelic speakers live in urban areas such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. For example, around 20% of Gaelic speakers live in the Greater Glasgow area. Overall 92,400 people (1.9% of the Scottish population) were recorded as being able to read, write, speak or understand Gaelic. In addition to this there is a thriving community of learners.

This leaflet is aimed at Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), members of the public and Scottish Parliament staff. You will find information here about the Scottish Parliament’s Gaelic services and how you can use them.

92,400 people (1.9% of the Scottish population) were recorded as being able to read, write, speak or understand Gaelic in the 2001 census.
You can also participate in the parliamentary process through Gaelic in the following ways:

- You can write to or email your MSPs in Gaelic.
- You can submit written evidence to parliamentary committees in Gaelic.
- You can submit public petitions in Gaelic.
- If invited to address the Parliament, you may do so in Gaelic subject to prior agreement from the Presiding Officer.
- If invited to give oral evidence to a parliamentary committee, you may do so in Gaelic subject to prior agreement from the committee convener.

Full details of how languages other than English can be used in parliamentary business by both Members and the public are available in the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Language Policy: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/language/lang-pol.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/language/lang-pol.htm)
Gaelic services on offer to MSPs and Scottish Parliament staff include:

- Advice to Members on the use of Gaelic including help with pronunciation and advice on sourcing translation services. Translation costs for Members’ correspondence can be reimbursed under the Members’ expenses scheme (as Members arrange translation of correspondence themselves).
- Advice on Gaelic-related matters and translation services for Scottish Parliament staff.

There are a range of opportunities to use Gaelic in parliamentary business:

- Members may use Gaelic in debates or committee meetings, subject to prior agreement from the Presiding Officer or committee convener.
- Motions, amendments to motions and questions must be in English but Members may provide an accompanying Gaelic translation which will be published in the Business Bulletin along with the English version.

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body has developed a statutory Gaelic Language Plan for 2008-2013 under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. This has added to the opportunities available to use Gaelic in the Parliament and seeks to give effect to the principle that the Gaelic and English languages should be accorded equal respect.

New measures arising from the Plan include the adoption of a bilingual corporate identity as standard, an expansion of public signage within the Parliament complex, introducing Gaelic awareness training for front of house staff and ensuring that Gaelic is considered in the policy making and monitoring process.

The Scottish Parliament Gaelic Language Plan is available in hard-copy or online at:

www.parlaimaid-alba.org/gaelicplan
Contacts

Address:
Gaelic Service
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel:
0131 348 5395 (Gaelic)
0131 348 5000 (English)

Fax:
0131 348 5601

E-mail:
gaidhlig@scottish.parliament.uk

Website:
www.parlamaid-alba.org

Text:
07786 209888

Order free Gaelic publications on line:
www.parlamaid-alba.org/foillseachaidhean.htm

Arrange an education session at:
www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/education/
visitsEvents/index.htm

Mailing list

We hope that you found this publication useful. If you would like to be included on the Parliament’s Gaelic mailing list please complete the details below, and return in an envelope to:

Gaelic Service
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

or alternatively email gaidhlig@scottish.parliament.uk

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Email: ____________________________________________