An Coimisinéir Gaeilge
Irish Language Commissioner

FÁILTE

Nuachtlitir an Choimisinéara Gaeilge

As Irish Language Commissioner, I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of our newsletter. This publication will keep you informed about our work in building positive and constructive relationships with public authorities, stakeholders and the wider community. Through this newsletter, we will share updates on our work, progress on the development of best practice standards, and news from across the Irish language sector.

The Irish language is an important part of our cultural and linguistic landscape. We look forward to working with organisations and communities to promote good practice and to support greater opportunities for the language to be seen, heard and used in public life.

Go raibh maith agat
We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful.

Pól Deeds
An Coimisinéir Gaeilge

TÚS MAITH LEATH NA HOIBRE

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

The Commissioner attended a number of events at Belfast Exposed hosted by the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, highlighting the important role of arts and culture in community engagement and expression.

These engagements have provided valuable opportunities to listen, learn and build relationships as we work to support the visibility and use of Irish in public life. We look forward to continuing these conversations and sharing further updates in future editions.

SO WHAT COMES NEXT?

Since the establishment of our Office, the Commissioner has engaged with stakeholders across a wide range of events, meetings and sectors, helping to build relationships and promote the visibility and use of Irish in public life.

MINORITY LANGUAGES CONFERENCE



MINORITY LANGUAGES CONFERENCE STRENGTHENS CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF BEST PRACTICE

In collaboration with Ulster University, the Office hosted the Minority Languages Best Practice Conference in June, bringing together public authorities, commissioners and senior officials from across these islands. The conference provided a valuable forum for collaboration, innovation and the exchange of expertise to support indigenous minority languages.

Hosted by An Coimisinéir Gaeilge, the conference brought together policymakers, public sector leaders and language specialists to explore practical approaches to language policy implementation, public engagement and service delivery.

Delegates heard from a distinguished panel of speakers, including:

- Pól Deeds, An Coimisinéir Gaeilge/Irish Language Commissioner
- Efa Gruffudd Jones, Welsh Language Commissioner
- Lee Reynolds, Commissioner for Ulster Scots and Ulster British Traditions.

The conference provided an important forum for public authorities to discuss both the opportunities and challenges involved in supporting minority languages in public services.

A key feature of the event was the participation of the Welsh Language Commissioner and her senior team, whose visit to Belfast highlighted the growing cooperation between language institutions in Northern Ireland and Wales. The visit followed a successful trip by the Office of the Irish Language Commissioner to Cardiff earlier this year, during which officials gained valuable insights into the protection and promotion of Welsh across the Welsh public sector, including within the Senedd and higher education institutions.







Speaking after the event, Irish Language Commissioner Pól Deeds said:

“The conference demonstrated the value of bringing public authorities together to share experiences and learn from each other. We heard practical examples of how language policies can be successfully implemented and how meaningful engagement with communities can strengthen the delivery of public services.

“We were particularly pleased to welcome the Welsh Language Commissioner and her team to Belfast. The relationship between our offices continues to grow and provides an excellent opportunity for mutual learning and cooperation. By sharing knowledge and best practice, we can better support minority language communities and help ensure language rights are realised in everyday public life.”



The conference also featured a presentation from Dr Niall Comer of Ulster University, who outlined current research on language standards, implementation frameworks and public engagement, providing attendees with valuable evidence-based insights to inform future policy development.

The conference included a video message from Rob Dunbar (Chair of Bórd na Gáidlig in Scotland and member of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages).



Welsh Language Commissioner Delegation Visits Stormont to Strengthen Language Collaboration

As part of a productive visit to Belfast, the Welsh Language Commissioner, Efa Gruffudd Jones, and her senior team visited Parliament Buildings at Stormont alongside An Coimisinéir Gaeilge, Pól Deeds, his team, Lee Reynolds, Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British Tradition and Dr Katy Radford, where discussions focused on the promotion and protection of indigenous minority languages and the important role of public authorities in supporting linguistic diversity.



During their time at Stormont, delegates learned more about the operation of the Northern Ireland Assembly and explored opportunities for strengthening language provision and accessibility within public institutions. The visit also provided an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of both jurisdictions in developing language policy frameworks and supporting language rights in public life.

A particular focus of discussions was the importance of collaboration between language commissioners, policymakers and public bodies in ensuring that minority languages can thrive in modern society. Participants exchanged views on the challenges and opportunities facing language communities and considered how public services can be designed to better meet the needs of language users.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.



For the Welsh delegation, the visit also provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the vibrant Irish-language sector in Belfast. Throughout their time here, the visitors engaged with community representatives and learned about innovative work taking place across education, community development and employment initiatives.





Speaking about the visit, Irish Language Commissioner Pól Deeds said:
"Engagements such as these are invaluable in strengthening relationships between language organisations and public institutions. There is much that we can learn from one another's experiences, and the visit to Stormont provided an excellent opportunity to discuss practical ways to support minority languages and language communities."

The visit highlighted the shared commitment of language commissioners and public authorities across these islands in promoting linguistic diversity, supporting language protections and ensuring that indigenous minority languages continue to play a visible and valued role in public life.









WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER VISITS VIBRANT IRISH-LANGUAGE SECTOR DURING BELFAST VISIT

The delegation's programme included visits to Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, Cumann Chluain Árd, Raidió Fáilte, ANAM Café at Glór na Móna, and Gaelchúrsaí, providing a broad overview of the ways in which the Irish language is embedded in everyday life across Belfast.

"'Ná habair é, déan é – don't just talk about it, do it!'

This simple phrase captures the spirit, ambition and determination of many of the community initiatives we had the privilege of visiting during a recent trip to Belfast. In a city that has undergone profound social and political change over recent decades, the energy and commitment to sustaining language and cultural identity is impossible to ignore."

Welsh Language Delegation

Community Conversation on the Future of Irish

The Irish Language Commissioner was delighted to join members of the community at Ionad Teaghlach Ghleann Darach, alongside Dr. Órla Nig Oirc for an engaging and thought-provoking discussion on the future of the Irish language.

The evening provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from Irish speakers, learners and supporters about their experiences, aspirations and hopes for the language in the years ahead.







Pól Deeds Visits UCD Gaeltacht Summer School

Irish Language Commissioner Pól Deeds recently visited the UCD Gaeltacht Summer School, where he met with students and staff participating in the popular Irish-language programme.

During his visit, Pól spoke about the role of An Coimisinéir Gaeilge, the importance of language rights, and the opportunities available to young people through the Irish language. Students also had the opportunity to discuss their experiences of learning and using Irish and to ask questions about the Commissioner's work.

The visit highlighted the vital role that initiatives such as the UCD Gaeltacht Summer School play in supporting the next generation of Irish speakers and fostering a lifelong engagement with the language. Pól commended the enthusiasm and commitment shown by participants and encouraged them to continue using and promoting Irish in their studies, careers and daily lives.

Seoladh an tSuirbhé ar Dhearcthaí i leith na Gaeilge 2025



The Irish Language Commissioner attended the launch of the Irish Language Attitudes Survey 2025, published by Foras na Gaeilge.

The findings are encouraging, highlighting growing support for the Irish language across society, particularly among younger generations. The survey reflects a positive outlook for the future of Irish and demonstrates increasing recognition of its value as an important part of our shared cultural and linguistic heritage.

While this growing support is welcome, it also highlights the importance of creating more opportunities for people to use Irish in their everyday lives.

Continued colloboration across communities, organisations and public services will be key to ensuring that the language can thrive and develop for future generations.



Recent Engagements







Over recent weeks, the Irish Language Commissioner has had the opportunity to engage with a wide range of organisations, communities and stakeholders.

A series of productive meetings were held with local councils and elected representatives to discuss the work of the Office and opportunities to support Irish in public life. We were also delighted to welcome representatives from Noregs Mållag, providing an opportunity to share experiences and perspectives on language promotion and revitalisation.









www.coimisineir.org



TAITHÍ OIBRE
Luke's Story

Welcoming an A-Level Irish Student for Work Experience

Where would you like to see the language in the future?
Cá háit ar mhaith leat an teanga a fheiceáil amach anseo?

I would like to see Irish treated less as something unusual and more as a truly living language. I do not think it is right to view the language only as a part of our culture. Instead, we should see it as an extension of who we are. Our ability to express emotion comes through the words we use, and I believe we have an obligation to preserve the words of our ancestors. Perhaps, if we are lucky, our children will use those same words in the future.

When did you start learning Irish and why?

I started learning Irish when I was around 11 years old. Although most of my extended family knew Irish, it was not spoken fluently by my parents or my brothers. Because of this, I decided to learn Irish in secondary school. I had never learned another language before, and I found the idea a little intimidating, especially as many people say that Irish is a difficult language to learn. Despite this, I did well in my Irish classes, probably because of my genuine interest in the language, which is something I do not often feel about schoolwork. I earned my Silver Fáinne in 2023, and I am now looking forward to achieving my Gold Fáinne soon.

What do you think needs to be done for the language?

Above all else, I believe Irish needs official recognition. It should be treated as an equal option to English, rather than as a smaller or less important language. Irish should be taught to children from a young age so that they have the choice to speak it as they grow up. Greater visibility is also important. For example, I believe dual-language signage would greatly help to strengthen the use, recognition, and promotion of the Irish language.