

Irish-medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill

[AS AMENDED AT CONSIDERATION STAGE]

LEGISLATIVE COMPETENCE

At Introduction the Member in charge of the Bill, Mr Pat Sheehan, had made the following statement under Standing Order 30:

“In my view the Irish-medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly.”

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BILL

TO

Require the Department of Education to prepare a workforce plan in respect of Irish-medium education.

BE IT ENACTED by being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly and assented to by His Majesty as follows:

Irish-medium education workforce plan

1.—(1) The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 89, in paragraph (4), for “this article” substitute “this Article and Article 89ZA,”.

5 (3) After Article 89 insert—

“Irish-medium education workforce plan

89ZA.—(1) The Department must issue a workforce plan in respect of Irish-medium education, which is to set out measurable targets against which its effectiveness is to be assessed.

10 (2) The Department must—

(a) keep the workforce plan under review, and

(b) revise and reissue the plan at least once every 5 years.

(3) The Department must—

15 (a) publish the workforce plan whenever the plan is issued or reissued,
and

(b) lay the plan before the Assembly as soon as the plan is published.

(4) In preparing or revising the workforce plan, the Department must consult—

(a) persons representative of—

20 (i) governing bodies of schools providing Irish-medium education,

(ii) teachers at such schools,

(iii) pupils at such schools,

(iv) parents of pupils at such schools,

(b) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, or any successor to that body,

5 (c) those providing informal learning opportunities within the Irish-medium youth sector, and

(d) such other persons as the Department thinks fit.

(5) In preparing or revising the workforce plan, the Department must take account of these factors in particular—

10 (a) the range of schools providing Irish-medium education,

(b) the current and foreseeable demands on such schools,

(c) the sufficiency of the workforce at such schools to meet such demands,

(d) the needs for recruitment, retention and development of the workforce at such schools, and

15 (e) the different disciplines or contributions (whether by way of teaching or otherwise) of the people comprising the workforce at such schools.

(6) Within 18 months of laying the workforce plan before the Assembly as issued or reissued, the Department must—

20 (a) publish a report on the implementation and effectiveness of the plan, and

(b) lay the report before the Assembly as published.”.

(4) A workforce plan must be issued under article 89ZA(1) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 within 12 months of the coming into operation of this Act.

25 **Commencement and short title**

2.—(1) This Act comes into operation on the day after it receives Royal Assent.

(2) This Act may be cited as the Irish-medium Education (Workforce Plan) Act (Northern Ireland) 2026.

Irish-medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill

[AS AMENDED AT CONSIDERATION STAGE]

A Bill to require the Department of Education to prepare a workforce plan in respect of Irish-medium education.

Introduced by: Mr Pat Sheehan

On: 03 March 2026

As amended at Consideration Stage: 21 September 2026 and 28 September 2026.

Bill Type: Non-Executive Bill

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

**An Explanatory and Financial Memorandum is printed separately as
NIA Bill 28/22-27 EFM - REVISED.**



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