

Irish-medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

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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CONTENTS

1. Irish-medium education workforce plan
2. Commencement and short title

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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) After Article 89 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (Irish-medium education) insert—

“Irish-medium education workforce plan

5 **89ZA.**—(1) The Department must prepare and then publish a workforce plan in respect of Irish-medium education within 12 months of this Article coming into operation.

(2) The Department must keep the workforce plan under review and publish a revised workforce plan at intervals of not more than five years.

10 (3) The Minister of Education must lay a workforce plan before the Assembly as soon as possible after it has been published.

(4) In preparing a workforce plan, the Department must consult with—

(a) persons representative of—

(i) schools providing Irish-medium education;

15 (ii) teachers providing Irish-medium education;

(iii) pupils receiving Irish-medium education;

(iv) parents of pupils receiving Irish-medium education;

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

(c) such other persons as it thinks fit.

20 (5) In preparing a workforce plan, the Department must take into account—

(a) current and future expected demands upon the workforce;

- (b) the sufficiency of the workforce to meet those demands;
- (c) recruitment, retention and development of the workforce;
- (d) the differing functions of persons within the workforce;
- (e) the types of schools providing Irish-medium education.

5 (6) A workforce plan must set out measurable targets against which its effectiveness may be assessed.

(7) Within 18 months of laying a workforce plan before the Assembly, the Minister for Education must—

- (a) publish a report on the implementation of that plan; and
- 10 (b) lay that report before the Assembly as soon as possible after it has been published”.

(2) In Article 89(4) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (meaning of Irish-medium education), for “this article” substitute “this Article and Article 89ZA”.

15 **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 INTRODUCED]

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

Bill Type: Non-Executive Bill

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

**An Explanatory and Financial Memorandum is printed separately as
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