

Gaelic Family Learning (GFL)

Case study

Making a difference through: Gaelic Family Learning

Due to the success of Gaelic Family Learning (GFL) a decision was made to produce a case study using the 'How good is our community learning and development?' (HGIOCLD). The HGIOCLD framework was selected as an effective way of evaluating the offer. It can allow for a better understanding of GFL's strengths and highlight any opportunities for improvements to the service. It will help identify if learners are progressing during their learning journey, and it will also give the practitioner the opportunity to reflect and self-evaluate their methods of support. These HGIOCLD quality indicators were selected to be looked at in more detail:

- 4.1 Delivery of community development
- 4.2 Delivery of community learning

Please see pages 3-7 of the appendix section for more information.

Need for the project / activity

why?

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have a Gaelic First Policy in place where they strongly encourage the use of the Gaelic language. The Council made the decision that all children who start primary one education will automatically be enrolled into Gaelic Medium Education unless the parents opt their child out. The Gaelic First Policy's primary aim is to ensure equity of opportunity for those who have Gaelic skills and those who do not within our bilingual communities. As a result of this the numbers of children being taught Gaelic in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is increasing. However, Gaelic is not necessarily the first language of many of these children, their parents, or their educators. Many of these individuals require additional support when it comes to reading, writing, speaking, and listening to the Gaelic language. This need has left the practitioner offering a Gaelic Family Learning service to help those who need additional support with Gaelic language learning.

Description

what and how?

The tutor is a native Gaelic speaker who wishes to empower the adults and to give them the confidence they need to use Gaelic with their families and children. Initially a pilot study was conducted between three primary schools in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Tong, Laxdale, and Stornoway). An email was circulated to the head teachers at these schools to make them aware of the offer. A group call was then sent out to all the parents of these three schools to let them know that Gaelic support was available. The tutor was in regular attendance at Sgoil a' Bhac, Sgoil an Rubha and Bun-sgoil Lacasdail (Laxdale Primary School) helping the school children prepare for the local Mòd and familiarising herself with the teachers to raise awareness of her offer. Over time Gaelic Family Learning was extended to all the schools in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Thig a' Chluich' (Gaelic play sessions for preschoolers and their parents/carers) staff often speak to adults who also require support with their Gaelic, they refer the tutor to the individuals. Also, the practitioner frequently attends community events where families are present, and she promotes her Gaelic Family Learning offer to them.

Impact

difference made

A one-to-one study was carried out with three GFL participants where they were asked structured questions on their learning experience. They had the opportunity to comment freely on the questions which were asked. Their responses can be found in appendix 11 on page 11 where they mentioned what impact GFL has had on their lives. For example, the participants share that the GFL offer worked well for themselves and their families with all participants reporting that they feel more able to support their child in learning Gaelic.

Evidence

how do we know?

The evidence that the GFL offering has been successful is gathered at the end of the lessons with learner feedback noted in their 'individual records of learning.' Feedback on the GFL offering was also gathered from the results of the structured questions on page 11. A baselining system was created to track learner's progress and shows that the offering has had a positive impact on the learners. An explanation of the baselining system used can be found in appendix 7, and the results from the baselining can be viewed in appendix 10.

Lessons learned?

We realised that we had no way of tracking the learner's progress which was why the baselining system was created, please see appendix 7 and 10 for more information.

Images / learner quotes

'I think the offering is very helpful.'

'We are happy with the offering'

Date: 1st of September 2023

Local authority: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar