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# County Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge

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Response Coordinator  
Irish Language Bill Consultation  
DCAL

1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Dear Sirs,

The attached response to the consultation on proposals for an Irish Language Bill, is submitted on behalf of County Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge.

County Fermanagh Grand Orange Lodge comprises 2225 members, organised across 15 Districts, and 90 Private Lodges. It's membership is closely involved in the communities within which they live and work, and widely participate in all walks of community life.

A recent Good Relations Audit carried out on behalf of the County Grand Lodge, contains all this information in detail.

A Summary Report is enclosed, which provides an outline of the research contained in the full report, and indicates where you can also view the full report online.

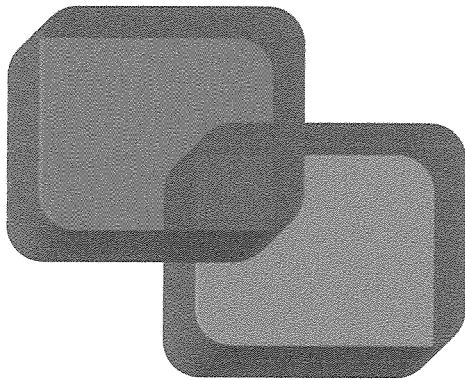
County Grand Master



An Roinn  
**Cultúir, Ealaíon  
agus Fóillíochta**

Department of  
**Culture, Arts  
and Leisure**

[www.dcalni.gov.uk](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk)



# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## RESPONSE FORM

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *Introduction*

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The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is holding a consultation to seek views on its proposals for an Irish Language Bill. The proposals are explained in our consultation document, which is available from the Department's website [www.dcalni.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/consultation).

Please provide your views by commenting on the proposals and answering the key questions, which follow.

Please email your completed questionnaire to [consultations@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@dcalni.gov.uk) or post to:

Response Co-ordinator  
Irish Language Bill Consultation  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
Level 7  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *Freedom of Information and consultation responses*

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The Department will usually publish a summary of responses following the completion of the consultation process. If you would prefer your response to be treated as confidential, please let us know, stating your reasons clearly. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will be taken to apply only to information in your response for which confidentiality has been specifically requested.

If we are asked to disclose responses under freedom of information legislation, we will take any requests for confidentiality into account. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

We will handle appropriately any personal data you provide in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office or see website [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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### PART 1 – OFFICIAL STATUS OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE

**Question 1a:** Do you agree with the Irish language being given Official Status through legislation?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 1b:** Please provide your comments on the Irish language being given Official Status through legislation.

#### Comments

The Irish Language is a minority language, and should not be given official status any more than Ulster Scots, Polish, Lithuanian, or any other language. In fact languages like Polish, for example, are much more prevalent throughout the population in Northern Ireland currently, and should in fact be given a higher preference for such consideration.

### PART 2 – IRISH IN THE COURTS

**Question 2a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Courts?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 2b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions for the use of Irish in the courts.

#### Comments

The use of the English Language covers the vast majority of the current Northern Ireland population, if not 100%. The cost alone of administering such a system is not practical in times of austerity, when available monies could be much better spent.  
The Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737, should not be repealed.

**Question 2c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

#### Comments

We do not agree with any provision that would allow the use of the Irish Language in court. The official language of the courts should remain English.  
Should Irish be allowed, then provision must be made for ALL other minority languages also. The financial burden imposed on the system because of this would be untenable.

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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### PART 3 – THE ASSEMBLY

**Question 3a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly?

Agree  Disagree

**Question 3b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions for the use of Irish in the Assembly.

#### Comments

Equality between English and Irish should not be allowed in the Assembly.  
The cost of administering such a scheme, which would have to include all other minority languages, in times of austerity is not acceptable.  
Members already use a non proscriptive method of using the Irish Language, in opening remarks. This, and other methods of doing so should be explored, as should the use of other minority languages in this way.

**Question 3c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

#### Comments

There should be no inclusion of provisions to allow the use of Irish in the Assembly, and current methods should be deemed sufficient, provided a translation is provided. This should include all minority languages, and not just Irish.

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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### PART 4 – THE IRISH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER

**Question 4a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 4b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to an Irish Language Commissioner.

#### Comments

There is absolutely no need for such a prson to put even further pressuer on the public purse, and whose very job would be seen as divisive by its very nature, in promoting one language over another.

The Irish Language commissioner would have unacceptable proscriptive powers

**Question 4c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

#### Comments

**Question 4d:** Please provide your comments on the functions of an Irish Language Commissioner.

#### Comments

The commissioner has no function, save that of promoting one language over another. This not acceptable in any multicultural society.

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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**Question 4e:** Please provide your comments on the powers of an Irish Language Commissioner.

### Comments

The job should not be established, therefore the issue of powers in such a post doesn't exist.

## PART 5 – PUBLIC BODIES

**Question 5a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Public Bodies?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 5b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to Public Bodies.

### Comments

Going down a proscriptive and legislative route would not promote respect for the Irish language, rather the opposite.

There are other methods that could be used to promote the use of Irish in these bodies. This could be explored in a positive way by Irish language enthusiasts, and by consultation with others.

All other minority languages must be included in any discussions or consultation around this type of issue.

**Question 5c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

### Comments

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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**Question 5d:** Please provide your comments on the duties proposed for Public Bodies.

Comments

## PART 6 – LANGUAGE SCHEMES

**Question 6a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Language Schemes?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 6b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to Language Schemes.

Comments

Those wishing to follow, or learn, the Irish language, should be given the opportunity so to do. These sort of schemes could be established, and signed up, to as a separate issue. Being proscriptive in this respect will not promote the language, rather, demean it.

**Question 6c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

Comments

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## The Proposals

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### PART 7 – GAELTACHT AREAS

**Question 7a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Gaeltacht areas?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 7b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to Gaeltacht areas.

#### Comments

There are no Gaeltacht areas in Northern Ireland to our knowledge, therefore providing for them is simply ludicrous.

We believe that any attempt to establish such areas will simply lead to further disrespect, and suspicion around the whole idea. In what way would the wholesale use of any minority language, in an English speaking country, add to its economic prosperity, given that English and French, are the two internationally recognised languages, in this respect.

**Question 7c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

#### Comments

### PART 8 – PLACE-NAMES

**Question 8a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Place-names?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 8b:** Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to Place-names.

#### Comments

Most, or indeed all, of our place names, are already based very strongly on Irish and Ulster Scots. Therefore why, once again, are we putting Irish in a position that is above any other minority language. Bi-lingual road names, or signs, are promoting Irish on a par with English, in an English speaking country. What about all the other minority languages, are we going to have signs written in five or six different languages? Of course not. The addition of Irish, in an English speaking country, is not required to inform someone of the way to go, and also does not in any way promote or encourage proper use of the language. It will simply be seen as divisive, and so further demean the language itself.

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *The Proposals*

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**Question 8c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

### Comments

Many of our place names find their origins in many ways, not just through the Irish language. For example.....Norman, Anglo Saxon, Ulster Scots, English etc. Irish may actually find itself in the minority in this respect!

## PART 9 – EDUCATION

**Question 9a:** Do you agree with the inclusion of a provision for Education?

Agree

Disagree

**Question 9b:** Please provide your comments on the provision relating to Education.

### Comments

Irish should simply find itself alongside all other languages as regards classes. French, German, Spanish, to mention a few, are actually languages that are needed/spoken across the world, and are required in the course of business, and many other ways.

Giving priority to Irish is non-productive in this respect, as it is not used widely in any way, except for interest purposes.

Much more emphasis should be given to the compulsory learning of internationally recognised languages, that a student might actually have use of in their future lives.

**Question 9c:** Please list any other provisions that should be included.

### Comments

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)*

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The following questions ask for your views on the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) carried out. For further information, please refer to the EQIA included in the consultation document.

**Question 10a:** Do you have any views on any of the aspects of equality covered in this EQIA?

Comments

We concur entirely with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland assessment on this, and have attached it to this document.

**Question 10b:** Are there any other equality issues that have not been addressed? If so, what are these?

Comments



# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## Respondent details

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### SECTION 1 – NAME OF RESPONDENT

#### Title

Mr	Mrs	Ms	Miss	Other (Please state)
				✓

First Name	COUNTY FERMANAGH GRAND ORANGE
Last Name	LODGE

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### SECTION 2 – INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANISATION

Are you responding mainly as an individual or on behalf of an organisation? (Select one option only)

Individual	
Organisation	✓

*If you are responding on behalf of an ORGANISATION, please go to SECTION 4*

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### SECTION 3 – SECTION 75 MONITORING

#### Gender

Male	
Female	

#### Age

Under 16		45-54	
16-24		55-64	
25-34		65 and over	
35-44			

#### Community Background

Catholic	Protestant	Other

# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## Respondent details

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### Marital Status

Single	Married/ Co-habiting	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed	Other

Do you have dependants? (e.g. a child, a person with a disability or an older person that you care for)

Yes	No

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (Include problems related to old age)

Yes, limited a lot	Yes, limited a little	No

**Please go to SECTION 5**

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### SECTION 4 – ORGANISATION DETAILS

What is the name of the organisation on whose behalf you are responding?

COUNTY KERRY ANASR GRAND ORANGE LODGE

How many people are there within this organisation?

2225

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# Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

## *Respondent details*

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### **SECTION 5 – CONFIDENTIALITY**

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Do you want your response to be treated as confidential?

Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>

No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please state clearly your reasons for requesting confidentiality.

**Thank you for taking time to participate in this public consultation.**

March 19, 2015

#### Question 10 - Equality impact assessment

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland believes that the Irish language Act does provide issues in relation to equality. We believe that if there is to be an Irish language Act then community relations would suffer as a consequence as clearly the Irish language is seen to belong more to one community than any other community. In the details provided by the department we note that Roman Catholics are more likely to have some knowledge of Irish than Protestants/ 22% in 2001 and declined to 21% in 2011 compared to 1% in 2001 and 2% in 2011 among Protestants. Therefore any measure attendant upon the Irish language is going to be seen as principally directed towards a section of the Roman Catholic community and in terms of census figures this shows quite a modest percentage (the highest in terms of knowledge of the language was 24% in 2011 among 12 to 15 year olds.)

Therefore we believe that there is an equality issue in terms of provision of language and legalisation in respect of it. It is noted in terms of the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey that 31% of those Nationalists surveyed are more likely to speak Irish than Unionists (a mere 2%). In our view therefore the Irish language has a contentious aspect which should not be enforced in any way by legislation forcing its provision within the population.

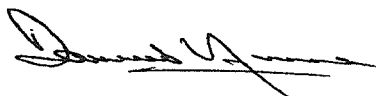
We took issue with DCAL's view that "Establishing Irish language legislation will have a positive impact on Irish speakers and therefore indirectly on Catholics, Nationalists, single people, younger people, people without a disability, and people with dependants. In DCAL's view, there are no discriminatory or adverse impacts". The Grand Lodge of Ireland disagrees very strongly with this view and believe that it is erroneous and not grounded in reality.

We also do not believe that the Irish language bill has the potential to improve good relations by giving the Irish language potentially a more accessible platform for all sections of the community as is stated in page 22 of the consultation.

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland would take this opportunity to point out that we do have Irish language speakers within our membership.

But we also refer the Department to the fact that one of the most prominent Irish language speakers in Belfast in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and indeed one of those had to preserve the Irish language, was a County Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast, the Rev. Dr. Richard Rutledge Kane. The Rev. Kane was originally from County Cavan and was a very prominent figure within the Irish language and Gaelic league community at that time. However where the Rev. Dr. Richard Rutledge Kane disagreed with others in the language movement at that time was in relation to the politicisation of the Irish language and the Gaelic League.

We believe that we reflect his memory by taking a similar position; we respect the right of people to learn and speak the Irish language and we respect the Irish language as one of the indigenous languages of the British Isles. However we do not believe that there should be an Irish language Act as it is a very proscriptive measure. We also do not believe that the Act will succeed in its declared aim of encouraging respect for the Irish language as it will result in community division along religious and political lines. In the final analyses that will be detrimental to the Irish language and we believe that the Department should look at non preclusive ways of promoting the Irish Language instead.



DR DAVID HUME M.B.E.  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES