

LANGUAGES NETWORK GROUP SCOTLAND (LANGS)



LANGS Meeting

Wednesday 12 March, 15.00-16.30

Meeting notes

	Meeting opens
	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Morris and Robbie Kirk, Co-chairs, welcomed attendees and outlined the objectives for the meeting. • Acknowledgement of full agenda and time constraints.
	<p>Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), Education Scotland</p> <p>Shona Hugh, Education Officer</p> <p>View slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CfE lacks a built-in mechanism for review; the CIC addresses this gap. • Languages are now in Phase 2 of the cycle, following Maths, English, Gaelic, and Health & Wellbeing. • Four capacities and curriculum structure remain; however, a refresh is underway to ensure future relevance. • Three Education Associates have been recruited to support this work. • Collaboration and Core Groups are now in place; applications remain open for Critical Friends. • “Know, Do, Understand” model underpins curriculum reform. • A third supporting paper, addressing implementation and qualifications, is expected before Easter. • Consistency and clarity across the senior phase are key priorities.
	<p>Language Trends Scotland, British Council Scotland</p> <p>Jane Halstead, British Council Scotland Dr Ian Collen & Dr Jane Duff, Queen’s University Belfast</p> <p>View slides</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scotland joins England, Wales, and Northern Ireland in publishing a Language Trends report. <p>Primary sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French most commonly taught; majority of lessons delivered by class teachers. Time allocated ranges from 30 minutes to an hour per week. Limited links with international organisations or cultural institutes. <p>Secondary sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish now most popular language, surpassing French across all levels. Decline in uptake from S2 to S3; retention stronger in Spanish than in French. Multi-level classes are widespread; recruitment remains a challenge in some areas. Low provision of qualifications for heritage and community languages. Interest in language assistants is high, but funding remains a barrier. <p>Independent sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More consistent provision; greater international links and cultural engagement. <p>View the report.</p> <p>Get in touch.</p>
	<p>Discussion – online language learning</p> <p>Caroline Cordier, Edinburgh College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online provision has significant impact, particularly for Advanced Higher German and Italian. Noted that learners account for up to 20% of national entries in some languages. Suggestion to document and promote the potential of online learning as part of wider solutions.
	<p>Update from University Council for Languages Scotland (UCFLS)</p> <p>Dr Fiona Barclay, University of Stirling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted current collaborative projects, including Francofoot/Calciamo. Continued support for the Language Ambassadors and Language Explorers schemes. Ongoing discussions with Government to ensure languages are recognised in HE admissions. Candid overview of the challenging financial situation in universities, particularly for humanities and languages. Roundtable with Cabinet Secretary planned to explore non-financial policy interventions.
	<p>Shaping the future of languages symposium</p> <p>Dr Kerry Roberts and Dr Lidia Acosta, University of Strathclyde</p> <p>View slides</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought together educators, academics, and industry representatives. • Focus on practical strategies for revitalising languages in schools and universities. • Encouragement of interdisciplinary learning (e.g. engineering and language study). • Critique of grammar-heavy assessments; desire for more communicative, immersive approaches. • Industry highlighted demand for language skills in conjunction with digital or vocational expertise. • Outputs include TES articles and planned Headteacher magazine publication.
	<p>SCILT update</p> <p>Fhiona Mackay, Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland's Languages Leadership Programme: Applications open until 31 March 2025. • Discovering Arabic: Registrations open until 25 April 2025 for both primary and secondary. • Anti-Racist Resource: Newly published; self-directed CPD tool for language educators. • Francofoot/Calciamo Competition: Open for S2/S3 learners. • Future of French Survey: Seeking learner feedback; schools encouraged to participate. • Emphasis on free, high-quality professional learning for all teachers in state schools. • SCILT school-university liaison webpage. • Sign up to the SCILT weekly e-bulletin.
	<p>SQA update</p> <p>Marilyn Waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly formed Urdu Working Group addressing appointee sustainability and wider provision. • Noted the need to future-proof provision for heritage and community languages. • Recognised teacher concerns around multi-level classes and curriculum pressures. • SQA open to engagement via the Curriculum Improvement Cycle to consider changes to assessments. • Interim leadership team now in place; priority focus on the upcoming examination diet.
	<p>Open floor & AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan Foundation Visit Proposal: Inquiry regarding circulation of information about Japanese language and cultural visits to schools. SCILT will assist with distribution via the meeting minutes and bulletin. Get in touch if you would like more information. • EasyRetro discussion board and chat functions available for any follow-up questions or reflections. • British Council Scotland: Applications to host a Modern Language Assistant are open now. If you or any schools in your area would like to discuss hosting, please

	get in contact: kay.turnbull@britishcouncil.org / languageassistants.UK@britishcouncil.org													
	Date of next meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday 13 June time TBC – in-person 													
	Actions and follow-up <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th><th>Responsible party</th><th>Deadline</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Share QR codes and critical friend application details</td><td>Education Scotland</td><td>Immediate</td></tr> <tr> <td>Distribute slides and resources</td><td>Alice (SCILT)</td><td>With minutes</td></tr> <tr> <td>Promote Francofoot/Calciamo</td><td>Schools & SCILT</td><td>Deadline 23 April</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Action	Responsible party	Deadline	Share QR codes and critical friend application details	Education Scotland	Immediate	Distribute slides and resources	Alice (SCILT)	With minutes	Promote Francofoot/Calciamo	Schools & SCILT	Deadline 23 April
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