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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Gaelic teachers to gather in Aviemore for annual An t-Alltan conference**

Teachers involved in Gaelic Medium Education from all over the country will be gathering in Aviemore next week for the annual An t-Alltan conference.

Organised by Gaelic educational resources organisation Stòrlann Naiseanta na Gàidhlig, based in Stornoway, this will be the ninth year of An t-Alltan and the number of attendees has been growing every year.

It is taking place in the Macdonald Aviemore Conference Centre, on September 27 and 28.

Around 200 teachers from the early years sector through to high school are expected to attend and the keynote speech will be delivered by Joan Mackay, assistant director at Education Scotland, on the theme of 'developing the young workforce' and 'what kind of leaders we need to be'.

There will be nearly 30 workshops held across the two days and 18 exhibitors. The workshops are on many topics and themes, with workshops for all the stages. For the early years, there will be sessions on how to use puppets to bring language to life, how to use the outdoors including how to build dens and how to use song to reinforce learning.

There will also be a workshop from Jackie Mullen, a member of the Go! Gaelic outreach team on how to make best use of this powerful programme of classroom resources by Stòrlann, designed for young Gaelic learners in English Medium Education.

Workshops for practitioners working with older children will include sessions on reflective reading, PE activities, teaching art and drama, everyday ways to strengthen Gaelic and common grammatical problems.

There will also be workshops on supporting children with additional support needs in the classroom, as well as an introduction to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's internet-based e-Sgoil, advice on differentiation for Ceumannan and useful language apps.

As happened last year, the early years practitioners will join the main An t-Alltan conference. As an overall event, An t-Alltan is viewed as an excellent professional learning opportunity for Gaelic educationalists and an opportunity for delegates to see new initiatives and learn through a series of talks and workshops.

Feedback from last year was very positive, with delegates saying they had learned a lot about the resources that were available and what strategies they could try. 'Useful', 'motivating', 'interesting' and 'inspiring' were frequent words in the feedback, while the relaxed atmosphere was also noted as well as how strong the Gaelic community is when it is brought together.

That element of bringing people together is an important feature of An t-Alltan as teachers who are delivering Gaelic can often be geographically very far apart.

Neil Smith, Stòrlann's Head of Development Services and lead conference organiser, said: "Teachers come from all over Scotland. Every authority that teaches Gaelic is represented. This is our ninth year and it grows in number every year. There's been more attending it every year.

"We're hoping that we get as many as possible this year. It's a great networking opportunity for teachers and they appreciate not only being able to attend workshops with colleagues but also to speak to colleagues from all over the country and swap ideas.

"Some work in isolation in their schools so it gives them the opportunity to meet others who teach in similar circumstances. Lots of them appreciate that."

Donald W Morrison, Stòrlann Chief Executive, said: “An eminent educator once said that the ‘best part of learning is sharing what you know’ — that sentiment is a key element of the Alltan experience. The conference aims to enrich the Gaelic Medium classroom experience by providing practitioners with quality resources, tried-and-tested strategies and hands-on experiences of the goods. “I am pleased to note that, by all accounts, the Alltan conference seems to deliver on its objectives for Gaelic Medium Education.”

Mona Wilson, Director of Gaelic Education with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, said: “An t-Alltan with the support of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other organisations has grown to become a key annual event for all who are involved in Gaelic Medium Education. The event represents an excellent professional learning opportunity for Gaelic educationalists, giving those attending the chance to look at and experience new initiatives for teaching and learning. Through a series of lectures, workshops and seminars the event provides all with an excellent opportunity to find out about new products and services in Gaelic language education.

“Bòrd na Gàidhlig is delighted to once again support Stòrlann in the organisation of An t-Alltan 2017 and we look forward to working closely with them and our other partners on providing an informative, educational and enjoyable event which will be to the long-term benefit of teachers, parents and ultimately children going through Gaelic Medium Education.”

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#### Notes:

Stòrlann was established by the Scottish Executive in 1999 to co-ordinate the production and distribution of curriculum resources for Gaelic education. Stòrlann is a limited company, registered number SC190298, and a charity registered in Scotland as SC 031521.

Under Stòrlann’s publication programme, resources are distributed free of charge to nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools and lifelong learning groups every year. Priorities are set by teaching staff and learners and strategic planning and implementation is supported by local authorities through the MRG consortium and by appropriate lifelong learning organisations.

A small selection of Stòrlann’s resources are available for purchase by the general public via [www.gaelicbooks.org](http://www.gaelicbooks.org) and a range of free interactive resources for families can also be found at the organisation’s site [www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com), where families can also access support with homework and other issues relating to Gaelic education.

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Tha Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig a’ faighinn taic bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig agus Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

