

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY / PDMU · P5–P7

Athbheochan na Gaeilge — Irish Language Revival

Language in Northern Ireland — P5–P7

Irish in Northern Ireland

1

Irish language in NI — the numbers

Approximately 184,000 people in Northern Ireland (10.4% of the population) have some ability in Irish, according to the 2021 census. About 6,000 speak it daily. Numbers have grown significantly since the Good Friday Agreement.

2

Gaelscoileanna in NI

Over 30 Irish-medium primary schools in Northern Ireland. Enrollment has grown significantly — more families (including Protestant families) are choosing Irish-medium education. The demand for places exceeds supply.

3

Political dimension

In NI, the Irish language has historically been associated with the nationalist/republican community. This is slowly changing — more people see Irish as a shared cultural heritage.

4

Foras na Gaeilge

The cross-border body that promotes the Irish language on both sides of the border. Provides resources, training, and funding for Irish language organisations and schools.

5

Identity and Language (NI) Act 2022

Legislation giving the Irish language formal recognition in Northern Ireland for the first time. Requires public bodies to accommodate Irish speakers and promotes Irish language arts and culture.



6

Community Irish

Irish language classes and community groups (e.g., Gaelic League/Conradh na Gaeilge) have operated in nationalist areas of Belfast and other NI towns for over a century. The Cultúrlann on the Falls Road is Belfast's Irish language arts centre.

