

*Mr Jackson*

FROM: S PEOVER  
POLICY DIVISION

DATE: 5 January 1993

Ms McAlister  
CCRU

IRISH LANGUAGE POLICY - GLOR NA NGAEL

1. Thank you for copying M<sup>ó</sup>irín U<sup>i</sup> Chléirigh's letter to me, though I doubt if I can be of any assistance in answering it.
2. It is apparent from the letter that Glór na nGael is interested not in any explanation of the various policies under which Departments operate in dealing with specific Irish language issues but rather with an overall Government policy on Irish. In so far as any such general policy exists, I presume it is to acknowledge the importance of Irish and to facilitate those wishing to use it in so far as this is possible without unreasonable expense and without conceding the adoption of bilingualism.
3. This falls so far short of the policy line advocated in item 4 of the list in the letter that Glór na nGael is likely to be disappointed with any reply. This is unavoidable given the discrepancy between the aspirations of Glór (and similar organisations) and Government's assessment of what it is reasonable to do for Irish in the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland. However, as I suggested in earlier correspondence on the review of Irish language policy, the persistence of this discrepancy suggests the need for a more developed dialogue with Irish language organisations in an attempt to reduce suspicions and possibly even narrow the gap between us. For our part we are about to embark on discussions of this type with relevant Irish language educational interests which I hope will achieve some agreement on the best way forward for Irish medium education (though perhaps I am being hopelessly unrealistic in this).
4. At a more formal level we would of course claim that we keep our policies on the place of Irish in the education system under review and amend and adapt them as seems appropriate and as circumstances change. This will continue but I do not at the moment foresee any attempt by us to "codify" the various policies (on support for nurseries, primary schools, streams, etc) into a comprehensive single policy document.



S Peover