UCFL: Northern Ireland

24 May 2024

1 Executive

Northern Ireland Assembly was restored in early February. So far, no appointment has been made of the two commissioners specified in the Identity and Language Act 2022 (Irish Language Commissioner; Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British Tradition). Ministers have raised this at Stormont and work is reported to be ongoing.

2 NICILT

Funding from the NI Department of Education was terminated in June 2023. NICILT has been brought into the Centre for Language Education Research in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at QUB and currently has access to some internal QUB funding. Twitter: `@cler-qub`, `@nicilt`

3 QUB: Recruitment

Currently working with schools across NI, with a focus on the theme of "Careers and Languages". Much recruitment work is now based in "hub" schools; other schools bring their pupils to attend talks and events at these hubs. The recruitment team are currently designing new materials on career options for use with years 9–11 (= GB 8–10), based on alumni experiences and building on the social media campaign during National Careers Week, which was very successful with teachers. A "Languages and Careers Festival" is planned for 7 November, involving students, alumni, and language representatives, and open to schools from across both Ireland and GB.

4 Mentoring project

Janice Carruthers is coordinating a new mentoring project for GCSE pupils, similar to the Language Ambassadors Scheme run in NI and elsewhere in 2019–20. We have secured funding from QUB and aim to mentor up to 80 pupils per year over three years. Currently recruiting mentors from among our undergraduate students.

Merryn Davies-Deacon