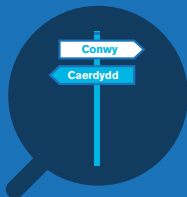




Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Shwmae



The Position of the Welsh Language 2016–20: Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year Report

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Introduction



Shwmae



Comisiynydd y
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Foreword by the Commissioner



Aled Roberts
Welsh Language Commissioner

It is with great pleasure that I present the Commissioner's second statutory report on the position of the Welsh language, which examines specifically the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020.

Taking stock of the position of the Welsh language every five years may seem somewhat excessive to some – to what extent can the position of a language change significantly in such a short period of time? But, as I know from experience, a week is a long time in politics! And I now know that something similar can be said in the context of language policy: developments and changes introduced in a five-year period have the potential to transform the status and position of a minority language.

There have certainly been significant political and legislative changes in relation to the Welsh language during the past five years. The era of the *A living language: a language for living* strategy came to an end with the introduction of the ambitious *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. There was an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a new language act and establish an arms-length promotional agency; instead, the Prosiect 2050 unit was established within the Government together with a new memorandum of understanding between the Commissioner and the Government. We saw the responsibility for the Welsh language being transferred to a new minister as Alun Davies AM handed the reins to Eluned Morgan AM, and I was appointed Commissioner following the retirement of Meri Huws. But the most significant development by far, in my opinion, are the new rights established for Welsh speakers as the first Welsh language standards became operational.

Fundamental constitutional changes were also seen during the reporting period that would have seemed unlikely or impossible just five years ago. During the first year of the reporting period, a referendum was held on whether or not the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union: a debate that has dominated the past five years. And although we officially left at the end of the reporting period of this report, the impact of the change will be subject to scrutiny and commentary for the next five years and beyond. The Wales Act 2017, on the other hand, confirmed and secured the position of the National Assembly and the Welsh Government as a permanent part of the UK's constitutional arrangements. We moved to a more powerful model of devolution with further powers being devolved to the Assembly, including determining its own name. The new official name given to the Assembly in 2020 – Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament – is a statement of the Senedd's confidence in its new constitutional status.¹

Please note that all links to websites or web pages in the footnotes are correct at the time of publication.

¹ In this report, the Senedd's former name, the National Assembly for Wales or 'the Assembly', is used and Members of the Senedd are referred to as Assembly Members if they are discussed in the context of the period before the National Assembly for Wales was renamed Senedd Cymru.

Who amongst us would have imagined the seismic changes we all experienced as a result of COVID-19? The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to rethink the way in which we work, socialise, and live. Although it is too early to fully measure its impact, there is no doubt that the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh language – as with all other aspects of life – will be significant. In December 2020, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee published a report on the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh language and it is crucial that this report is considered in full as the new Government plans how best to realise the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*. Without doubt, there will be a need for commitment and dedication from the Welsh Government in rebuilding and regenerating over the next few years, and it is essential that the Welsh language is at the heart of the recovery plans.

This provides an indication of the context in which this report is set. It is a historical record, in one sense, that will be of interest to future researchers and historians. However, I do not intend for this 5-year report to be a historical volume left to gather dust on a shelf. This report provides a detailed overview of developments in different areas for the benefit of those responsible for formulating policy and making decisions, as well as those who implement them. My aim in recording these developments is to ensure that future policy makers can borrow ideas and see which have been effective – as well as understand which ones need to be improved.

I should emphasise at this point that the target audience for this report is not Welsh language policy makers alone. The language does not exist in a vacuum. If we are serious about meeting the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 we need to transform the way in which we think about the Welsh language. It is not a distinct or separate 'subject' or 'policy area', but a living medium that applies to all other subject areas. Although the Welsh language needs its subject experts, and a Minister responsible for it, its overarching nature must also be acknowledged. There are other key players – including every Welsh Minister – who need to be held to account in relation to the language, as the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee observed in its legacy report on the Fifth Senedd.²

I indicated at the beginning of this foreword that it gives me great pleasure to present this 5-year report. And on the one hand, that is true: I am pleased to present the efforts of colleagues and partners who have worked hard during this period on behalf of the Welsh language. We have much to celebrate and even a sizeable report such as this cannot do justice to every single commendable effort. But, sadly, not all sections of the report make for pleasant reading. There are a number of areas where there has been insufficient progress during the reporting period, where opportunities have been missed, or where the Welsh language has not received fair and due consideration. I do not shy away from highlighting these examples or offering an opinion on how improvements must be made over the next five years.

This report is published at the commencement of a new Senedd term and I very much hope that any discomfort felt in reading this report will lead to action, as it sets a timely challenge to draw up bold policies in favour of the Welsh language. Policies that will lead to the full achievement of the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*, where the official status of the language is respected and countless new Welsh speakers are created; where the language is used and enjoyed in all aspects of life, and treasured by future generations.



² Senedd Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, *Fifth Senedd Legacy - Culture, Welsh Language and Communications* (March 2021), p. 5.

Background and context

The Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year reports

1.1

This is the Welsh Language Commissioner's second 5-year report on the position of the Welsh language published in accordance with section 5, part 2 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Its predecessor was the first report of its kind: it was by its very nature unique. One of the factors that made that report unique was that it was not actually an examination of a five-year period. Instead, it reported on the period between the opening of the Commissioner's office on 1 April 2012 and the end of December 2015, as required by the Measure. This is therefore the first 5-year report on a full five-year period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020: and is, therefore, also the first report of its kind.

1.2

Maintaining a strict focus on the reporting period will be a defining characteristic of this report. It will resist the temptation to refer back to historical events or developments, and, at times, the reader will be required to cross-reference with the first 5-year report should they need further clarity on some of the developments in their chronological context. It will also resist the temptation to refer to developments witnessed in the period from the end of the reporting period to the publication of this report – however significant they may be.

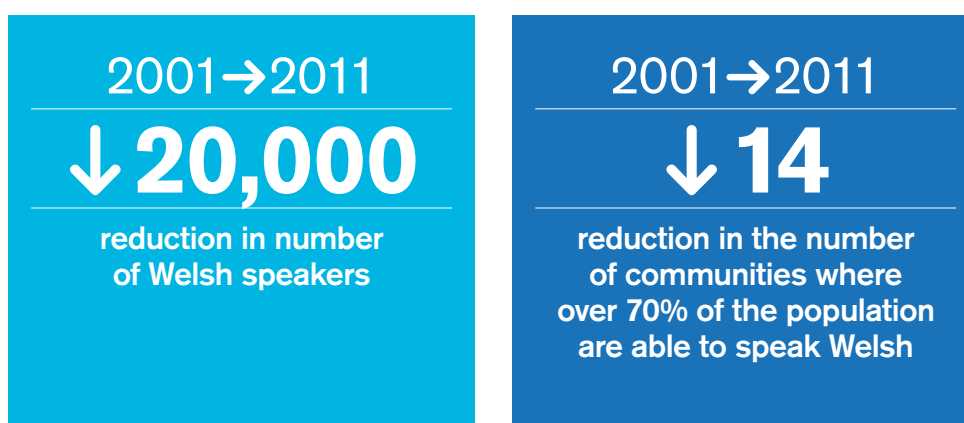
1.3

Considerations regarding the reporting period are not the only factors that make this report different from its predecessor. A large proportion of the first report was devoted to analysing the results of the 2011 Census, as required by the Measure. Despite the people of Wales completing their census forms on 21 March 2021, the results are not yet available and this report is not tasked with examining those results. As we await the definitive data on the number and percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales, our task here will be to scrutinise policy developments during the reporting period and consider their potential to contribute positively – or otherwise – to these numbers.

The shadow of the census

1.4

Although census results are not dealt with in detail in this report, it is inevitable that the 2011 Census casts its shadow over it, as it has done over all policy developments relating to the Welsh language since the publication of the results which showed a decline in the number of Welsh speakers. The reduction of over 20,000 in the number of Welsh speakers between 2001 and 2011, together with the reduction in the number of communities where over 70% of the population are able to speak Welsh (from 53 communities in 2001 to 39 in 2011), was a catalyst for much activity during the reporting period.³



1.5

Undoubtedly, the activity that reflected the impact of the 2011 Census results most clearly during the reporting period was the publication of the Government's Welsh language strategy which included a numerical target in its title. The Welsh Government launched *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*⁴ in July 2017. This is its 'long-term approach [...] to achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050'⁵ and the culmination of a consultation process launched at the 2016 National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny, the same week that the first 5-year report was launched. The Foreword to the strategy bears the signature of Alun Davies AM, the then Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language, as well as the First Minister at the time, the Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM: a symbolic statement of the ambition and status of the strategy.

1.6

With the publication of this strategy, the intention to revisit the whole question of who was responsible for promoting the Welsh language in Wales was announced. This was a commitment already made by the Government in its programme for government *Moving Wales Forward* and is a question that characterises the reporting period. In setting out the vision in its strategy, the Government explained its intention to 'legislate to provide a strong infrastructure for the language' and to strive to maintain 'a balance between efforts to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in a positive and inclusive manner, a drive to improve systematic planning of Welsh-language provision, and a robust regulatory framework.'⁶

³ For a full discussion of the census results in relation to the Welsh language see Part 2 in Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Position of the Welsh Language 2012–2015* (2016), pp. 33–85.

⁴ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* (2017).

⁵ Quotation from the overview at the beginning of *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

1.7


A month later, at the 2017 Anglesey National Eisteddfod, Alun Davies AM, still Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, published a consultation on the white paper *Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh language Bill*.⁷ This paper was an attempt to reconsider the arrangements and allocation of responsibilities established when the Welsh Language Board was abolished in 2012, and the Welsh Language Commissioner established with the principal statutory aim of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language. The Government's main impetus in putting forward the white paper was to seek a better balance between what it saw as 'too much emphasis on regulation, and not enough on promotion'.⁸

1.8

The suggestion of establishing a new arm's-length agency to promote the Welsh language in general was welcomed by Welsh language pressure groups. Indeed, the establishment of an 'arm's-length National Language Agency' was something that Dyfodol had called for in its 2015 manifesto document.⁹ Plaid Cymru also welcomed the suggestion; the establishment of a 'National Language Agency as an independent organisation responsible for the promotion of the Welsh language'¹⁰ was a manifesto pledge by Plaid Cymru itself and this vision drove the additional budget secured for the Welsh language in its budget agreement with the Labour Party.¹¹ The Commissioner at the time, Meri Huws, welcomed the Government's desire for a renewed debate on responsibilities in terms of promotion but at the same time noted her concerns about the 'loss of momentum' for a relatively young regulatory system.¹²

1.9

The Commissioner was not the only one concerned about the loss of momentum for the new regulatory regime, less than two years after it came into force. Cymdeithas yr Iaith, for example, was clear in its view that the appropriate place for the white paper was 'the bin' as it would 'turn back the clock' by weakening citizens' rights.¹³ Cymdeithas concluded that:

 The white paper's proposals are so far removed from legislation that would protect and extend Welsh language rights that it would be better not to legislate at all than to pass such proposals, and to get on with doing the work that can be done, but is yet to be done, under the current Measure.¹⁴

At a seminar to discuss the bill's proposals organised by the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society, delegates noted the 'risk' that the Government's desire to legislate would lead to a period of discussion on 'structures, rather than a focus on implementation'. It was also emphasised there that there was a need to 'ensure that any amendments introduced by the proposed Bill do not lead to delays or loss of momentum in relation to the work that has been done since 2011'.¹⁵

7 Welsh Government, *White Paper Consultation Document Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill* (9 August 2017).

8 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

9 Dyfodol, *Creu Dyfodol i'r Gymraeg: Rhaglen Weithredu* (2015), p. 5 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

10 Plaid Cymru, *Y Newid sydd ei Angen/The Change Wales Needs: Manifesto 2016 Manifesto* (2016), p. 171.

11 Welsh Government, *Budget Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru* (1 October 2017).

12 The Welsh Language Commissioner's response to the consultation document on the White Paper: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill (2017).

13 *Bil y Gymraeg i'r Bin - Ymateb i'r Ymgynghoriad | Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

14 *Ymateb Cymdeithas yr Iaith i'r ddogfen ymgynghori ar y Papur Gwyn: cynigion ar gyfer Bil y Gymraeg* (2017), t. 2 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

15 Centre for Welsh Politics and Society, *Taro'r cydbwysedd yn iawn: cynigion ar gyfer Bil y Gymraeg: Cloriannu cynnwys Papur Gwyn Llywodraeth Cymru* (Report on a seminar held at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay 29 September 2017), p. 7 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

1.10

There is no room in this report to cover all aspects of the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the various structures discussed in relation to the white paper proposals. We must also acknowledge that the Commissioner has a vested interest in the discussion as the Commissioner is responsible for implementing many aspects of the current system.

1.11

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee held an inquiry into supporting and promoting the Welsh language in 2018–19 to place the white paper's proposals in their wider context, and it is possible to examine that committee report in order to gain a flavour of the discussions and the views of independent experts in that period.¹⁶ It is sufficient here to refer the reader to the Committee's conclusion on the proposal to legislate:



We were not convinced, on the whole, of the need for new legislation at this time, or that the evidence for it was particularly robust. However, legislation should never be static, but should reflect the needs of society at the time.¹⁷

1.12

On 1 February 2019, Eluned Morgan AM, the then Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, made a written statement confirming that she had reached the same conclusion – aided by the evidence presented to the Committee – and that she would not be pursuing the idea of a Welsh Language Bill. She also noted her intention to work with the Commissioner to implement relevant changes to the regulatory system, and to look again at how the responsibilities for promoting the Welsh language had been allocated between the Welsh Government and the Commissioner.¹⁸

1.13

On 1 April 2019, Aled Roberts officially took up his role as Welsh Language Commissioner and by August 2019 a new memorandum of understanding was published between the Government and the Commissioner outlining how the responsibilities for promotion would be allocated.¹⁹ It was also in August 2019, at the Llanrwst Eisteddfod, that the Minister revealed plans to establish a 'new multi-disciplinary unit', Prosiect 2050, tasked with 'coordinating the planning for our route to a million speakers'.²⁰

1.14

Despite this public debate on which organisation(s) were to take responsibility for promoting and facilitating the Welsh language, it is clear that the Government has the aim of seeing everyone 'share in the vision of a million Welsh speakers'.²¹ There is no doubt that the Government has succeeded in this context and the vision and slogan of a million Welsh speakers has captured the imagination of organisations and individuals across the country. What is in doubt, however, is whether the efforts employed so far are sufficient to realise this great national ambition.

¹⁶ The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee National Assembly for Wales, *Supporting and promoting the Welsh language* (July 2019).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ [Written Statement: Welsh Language Bill \(1 February 2019\) | GOV.WALES.](#)

¹⁹ [Memorandum of understanding between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner | GOV.WALES.](#)

²⁰ [Minister unveils new measures to deliver 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 | GOV.WALES.](#)

²¹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 7.

1.15

It is natural for people to seek early signs of progress towards the target of a million Welsh speakers. This accounts for the significant interest in the promising results of the Annual Population Survey and the National Survey for Wales regarding the number of Welsh speakers. For the calendar year ending 31 December 2020, for example, the Annual Survey reported that 29.1% of people aged three and over were able to speak Welsh. This figure equates to 883,600 people and has increased steadily each year since March 2010 when it was reported that 25.2% of the population were able to speak Welsh (or 731,000 people aged three and over).²² It is easy to see how these numbers raise the hopes of a country aiming for a million Welsh speakers.

1.16

However, the Welsh Government warns that the key source to measure progress towards the million is the census. The census results are consistently lower than the Annual Survey, and a blog published by the Chief Statistician²³ explains how the data from the Annual Survey should be interpreted along with a specific statistical bulletin providing further information on the relationship between the Annual Survey and the census.²⁴

1.17

Given the Chief Statistician's advice about how to interpret these surveys, it will be necessary to seek other methods of measuring progress and efficiency along with the feasibility of the methodology adopted to date. In fact, the main aim of this report is to address this question of the adequacy of the efforts and interventions seen in the past five years.

1.18

Although we accept that it will be necessary to wait for the results of the 2021 Census to gain a reliable and definitive update on the true numbers, it was originally hoped when planning this report, that a Language Use Survey would have been carried out in time to report on the second (and sometimes overlooked) aim of *Cymraeg 2050*, namely to increase the use of the Welsh language. Our initial intention was that this 5-year report would place particular emphasis on language use, given that numbers will naturally be the main focus of all reports published following a census.

1.19

Although the Welsh Government launched a Language Use Survey in spring 2019, the survey had to be discontinued prematurely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency restrictions. The Government intends to publish the results gathered but that data will not be sufficient to meet the need for a full national Language Use Survey: the sample size will not enable analysis by local authority, for example. We will have to wait, therefore, before there is a full Language Use Survey from which a meaningful comparison can be drawn with the survey undertaken jointly between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner between 2013 and 2015.²⁵

²² [Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey: 2020 | GOV.WALES](#).

²³ [Update from the Chief Statistician: a discussion about the Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey | Digital and Data Blog \(gov.wales\)](#).

²⁴ <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-2001-2018>.

²⁵ The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner, *Welsh language use in Wales, 2013–15* (26 November 2015).

The shadow of COVID-19

1.20

The Language Use Survey is not the only activity relevant to this report that has been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. All aspects of our daily lives were put on hold as governments introduced lockdown restrictions in March 2020 to prevent the spread of the virus. Who could have predicted the subsequent turn of events? The closure of schools, businesses and offices; the postponement of festivals, events and celebrations; and the restrictions on meeting families and loved ones. And each of these restrictions having a direct impact on efforts to create new speakers and opportunities for people to use the language.

1.21

It is inevitable that COVID-19 has cast a shadow over this report as it is being drafted at a time when the virus continues to have a far-reaching and transformative impact on the way we live.

1.22

But it will only be a shadow. It would be very easy to devote a large proportion of the report to discussing COVID-19, philosophising on the economic, educational, community and cultural devastation – as well as the unexpected innovations and opportunities – that are bound to come in its wake. However, the terms of reference for this report are to report on a five-year period, and it attempts to give a balanced view of the developments in each year of the reporting period, although, by the time it is published, the beginning of this period will feel very distant.

1.23

Furthermore, it is too early to fully understand what the real impact of the COVID-19 crisis will be on the position of the Welsh language whilst we are still dealing with it. As yet, there is no certainty as to how far-reaching or permanent some of the social changes we have experienced since spring 2020 will be. In autumn 2020, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee began examining the impact of the pandemic on the Welsh language. The Committee's report published in December 2020 provides a useful summary of the experiences of organisations involved in promoting the Welsh language during the first months of the pandemic and the impact it has had on their work.²⁶

1.24

During a rapidly changing pandemic the experiences and situations described in that report also date quite rapidly. However, the Committee's recommendations are lasting, and scrutiny of their implementation and impact will form part of the work for the next five years.²⁷

1.25

The current report naturally provides opportunities to identify early concerns or emerging patterns in relation to the pandemic and to begin to predict future challenges and opportunities. We also focus on initial research studies conducted during the reporting period, but we will have to wait until the next 5-year report for a meaningful discussion on the true impact of COVID-19 on the position of the Welsh language.

²⁶ Senedd Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, [The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Welsh language.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#), (December 2020).

²⁷ [Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Welsh language - Welsh Government response.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#).



One in a million

1.26

Another original feature of this report is the stories at its heart. Throughout the report we attempt to shed light on the experiences of organisations and individuals in using the Welsh language in different contexts and policy areas. This is an attempt to bring policy developments to life and demonstrate their impact on people and real-life situations.

1.27

In addition to these short case studies, we also present the stories of twelve individuals and their lived experiences of the Welsh language in their areas during 2016–20. The twelve have been selected from the 500 plus people with which Aled Roberts came into contact during his community tour at the start of his term as Welsh Language Commissioner in spring 2019. These twelve were chosen simply because something in their story struck a chord, but we also tried to ensure that a cross-section of individuals and communities across the country were represented.

1.28

In undertaking his tour, Aled Roberts's aim was to understand the real-life situation of the Welsh language throughout Wales to try to ensure, at the beginning of his tenure as Welsh Language Commissioner, that his agenda was not simply informed by his own experiences and prejudices.

1.29


This is also our aim in introducing you to these individuals: to encourage you (and us with you) to view the Welsh language through the lens of geographies, identities and situations beyond our own. We also present them to you in an attempt to go beyond the statistics. After all, it is people who speak a language: each one of the million speakers accounted for will be individuals and we are interested in their individual experiences, as well as the collective experience.

1.30

Without census headlines we must turn to a range of other sources to understand the position of the Welsh language in 2016–20. This report is based on a raft of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including evidence arising directly from the Commissioner's regulatory work and from the Commissioner's discussions with stakeholders, partners and the public during the reporting period. The advantage of this is that it is possible to examine issues in greater depth, beyond plain statistics as it were, in an attempt to shine a light on the experience of using Welsh during the reporting period and the quality of that experience.

1.31

Certainly, one must be mindful not to fall into the dangerous trap of exalting quantitative research over qualitative research when discussing the position of the Welsh language. This tendency in relation to language planning was noted in the advice document published by the Commissioner in 2018 to provide guidance on 5-year strategies to promote the Welsh language.²⁸ In discussing how to measure performance in that document, it is acknowledged that measuring results by ascertaining size or quantity is an important standard method of setting a baseline and measuring progress. But it also emphasises that this is only part of the picture, as it does not provide information on the practices, use, confidence, or behaviour of the people concerned. Qualitative methods must be employed in order to fully understand the true experience of individuals. Steve Eaves also noted this tendency to place too much weight on the gathering and interpretation of quantitative information in recent years:

 There is now significant consensus that over-reliance on quantitative information cannot provide a full insight into the social reality experienced by survey respondents and interviewees.²⁹

1.32

This report, therefore, attempts to provide a balanced approach and platform for individuals' experiences alongside data analysis. After all, it is people, not statistics, who use the Welsh language. That is why the stories of these people shine throughout the report.

The aim and structure of the report

1.33

The publication of a 5-year report on the position of the Welsh language is one of the Commissioner's statutory duties. We hope, however, that this report goes further than simply meeting the requirements of the Measure. The aim is not to produce an interesting historical record on the position of the Welsh language. Rather, we aim to outline the position of the Welsh language in the reporting period in an attempt to improve its position in the coming period: to look back in order to look forward.

1.34

In that sense, the aim of the report is similar to that of a census. A census is not held every decade to count for counting's sake, rather, the counting is undertaken to gain an understanding of a situation and to formulate policies as a result. This is also the aim of this report. It outlines the position of the Welsh language and the policy interventions of recent years in order to understand the situation and assist policy makers in formulating ambitious and bold policies.

²⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Standards relating to promoting the Welsh language* (2018), pp. 51–2.

²⁹ Steve Eaves, *Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru* (PhD on the contribution of language awareness training to language planning in Wales, Cardiff University, 2015), p. 3 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

1.35

The beginning of the reporting period now feels a long time ago, and five years ago is in danger of feeling like ancient history viewed through today's lens. This report aims to give a balanced view of developments throughout the reporting period, rather than focusing attention on the most recent events. It does this in order to support policy makers and others to reach a view on whether the efforts and developments introduced to date have been effective and adequate.

1.36

It must also be acknowledged that five years is a long time in the history of Wales and the Welsh language and that it is not possible to give due attention to all planned initiatives, projects or policies relating to the Welsh language in this report. It would require volumes in order to chronicle all the valuable efforts made by organisations and individuals to improve the position of the Welsh language. Their omission from this report does not indicate a lack of appreciation. Even a report of this length provides only a snapshot of the position of the Welsh language.

1.37

Although the results of the 2021 Census are not yet known to us, they will soon be available during the term of the new Government. The challenge for the Government then will be to use those results to sharpen the mind and to plan what needs to be done differently or additionally in order to reach a million Welsh speakers.

1.38

It is our hope that this 5-year report – as well as adding the richness of qualitative research to the quantitative research of the census – will be an invaluable aid to scrutinize past efforts. To this end we have structured this 5-year report on the three pillars of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. The three strategic themes form the framework of the report in the hope that this will help the new Government, civil servants and policy makers to cross-reference easily between the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy and the Commissioner's conclusions in various areas. It will also help to scrutinise the Government's achievements against the relevant programmes of work. It is hoped that framing the report according to themes and subheadings will help readers find analyses of particular interest to them.

1.39

The astute reader will realise, however, that this report does not have a three-part structure. Although it is based on the three themes of *Cymraeg 2050* we believe that there is another cornerstone of linguistic planning that is not given due regard in the Government's current strategy: status. As such the first section of this report examines the status of the Welsh language.

A word about the author

1.40

Our wish and ambition is to present an objective and neutral report on the position of the Welsh language between 2016 and 2020. However, that would be absolutely impossible. The authors of this report are not neutral actors. Far better to admit this from the outset rather than try to disguise it. The Welsh Language Commissioner, through his officers, is responsible for producing the report. He is prejudiced in favour of the Welsh language, he wants to see the language thrive, and so it is impossible for him to be 'neutral' in any discussion on the position of the language.

1.41

Moreover, the Commissioner is more than an author looking on from the sidelines, he is one of its main characters. It would be impossible to discuss the position of the Welsh language during the reporting period without regard to the Commissioner's work who has the primary statutory aim of 'promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language'.³⁰ The Commissioner's officers have a policy interest in each of the areas examined in this report and the information presented stems directly from their work and information provided to them by stakeholders.

1.42

It is inevitable that others will have additional evidence that would further enrich our understanding of the position of the Welsh language. Several public requests for information and research from organisations and individuals were made during the preparation of this report. That request stands: if you have important information about the position of the Welsh language that was not included in this report, we would more than welcome a discussion with you. After all, our ambition is that the report will lead to dialogue that will serve to benefit the position of the Welsh language over the next five years.



³⁰ [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#), Part 2, Section 3 (1).

Part 1: The status of the Welsh language



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The language of the Senedd and society

Although the introduction explains that this report focuses strictly on the past five years, we must turn our sights back almost five hundred years in order to have a meaningful discussion on the status of the Welsh language today. Tracing the legislative developments in the history of the Welsh language, step by step, from then to the present day is key to understanding the legal status of the Welsh language – from a language that was banned and devalued in the 16th century to being an official language in Wales today. This is also the key to understanding its status in all aspects of life as well as the psychology of its speakers.



1535

The Act of Union

established that English would be the official language of law and order in Wales



1942

Welsh Courts Act

people allowed to use the Welsh language in courts if they would otherwise be disadvantaged



1967

Welsh Language Act

limited permission to use the Welsh language in legal proceedings, and allowed Westminster ministers to publish Welsh versions of official documents for public use



1993

Welsh Language Act

established the principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality in the conduct of public business and in the administration of justice in Wales

Welsh Language Board established



2011

Welsh Language Commissioner post established



2011

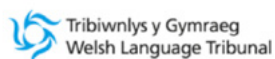
Welsh Language (Wales) Measure

the first language act to be made in Wales for Wales and was the legislation that clearly declared official status for the Welsh language in Wales



2015

Welsh Language Tribunal established



Unravelling the Acts of Union, act by act

1.1


The Act of Union of 1535 established that English would be the official language of law and order in Wales. It was only in 1942 – over four hundred years later – that some of the clauses of the Acts of Union began to be dismantled when it was determined that Welsh speakers would be allowed to use the Welsh language in courts if they would otherwise be disadvantaged. Much of the Welsh Courts Act 1942 was replaced by the Welsh Language Act 1967, which again gave limited permission to use the Welsh language in legal proceedings, and allowed Westminster ministers to publish Welsh versions of official documents for public use. This is also the law that removed Wales' status as part of England.

1.2

Further progress was seen with the Welsh Language Act 1993 which established the principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality in the conduct of public business and in the administration of justice in Wales (so far as was appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable). Again, the right to use Welsh in the courts was confirmed and strengthened, stating that anyone wishing to use Welsh could do so. As that provision was not repeated in later legislation, this part of the 1993 act is still in force today, as are other parts of it.

1.3

The 1993 language act established a process where public bodies would prepare language schemes explaining how they would provide services through the medium of Welsh. It also established the Welsh Language Board to oversee the language schemes, to advise on Welsh language issues, and promote and facilitate its use. Whereas permission to use the Welsh language in specific and limited areas was provided in the previous acts, the 1993 act, on the other hand, established a process to encourage the use of the Welsh language and replaced the previous acts, as Professor Thomas Glyn Watkins explains:

 **The 1993 Act swept away the last vestiges of the provisions of the sixteenth-century Acts of Union and repealed the earlier twentieth-century statutes which had sought to provide Welsh with some degree of official recognition – the *Welsh Courts Act 1942* and the *Welsh Language Act 1967*.¹**

1.4

However, the 1993 act was still an act of Westminster and the 15 members of the Welsh Language Board were appointed by the Secretary of State for Wales. The Secretary of State also had the final say when a body failed to comply with its language scheme until that responsibility was transferred to Welsh Ministers following devolution. This meant that the Welsh Language Board, the body that worked with the organisations in the first instance to agree their language duties, was left without powers to enforce organisations' use of the Welsh language. So, although the act significantly changed the legal status of the Welsh language, Westminster's influence was still felt at the time of its formulation.

¹ Thomas Glyn Watkin, 'Competence and Complexity: The Role of the Welsh Language Commissioner', *Constitutional Pioneers: Language Commissioners and the Protection of Official, Minority and Indigenous Languages* (Éditions Yvons Blais, 2019), p. 128.

1.5

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, on the other hand, was Welsh legislation developed by Welsh Government (under the Labour-Plaid Cymru One Wales coalition). The Welsh Language Measure was the first language act to be made in Wales for Wales and was the legislation that clearly declared official status for the Welsh language in Wales.

1.6

As well as ensuring official status for the Welsh language, the Measure established the post of Welsh Language Commissioner and abolished the Welsh Language Board. It also made provision in relation to promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. It introduced the system of imposing and enforcing standards where the Commissioner would be responsible for investigating the compliance of public organisations with the standards imposed upon them. The Commissioner was also given the power to investigate interference with an individual's freedom to use the Welsh language.

1.7

By imposing and enforcing legal duties relating to the Welsh language on public organisations, the Welsh Language Measure created rights for Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with those organisations. The Measure also provided for the Welsh Language Tribunal, established in 2015, to ensure that those linguistic rights were protected and to 'deal with appeals against decisions by the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to Welsh Language Standards'.² This was the first tribunal established by the Assembly.

1.8

All of this means that the Welsh language is now a fundamental part of the administrative justice system in Wales. There are now legal processes in place to ensure that individuals are able to exercise their right to use the Welsh language, and robust processes if an individual is deprived of that right. In such cases, access to the justice system is easy and free of charge as an individual is able to make a complaint to the Welsh Language Commissioner or to the President of the Tribunal.

² [Welcome to | Welsh Language Tribunal \(gov.wales\)](#).


A Measure of success?

1.9

The Welsh Language Measure was the last piece of legislation to receive Royal assent before the 2011 referendum on devolving further powers to Wales. Therefore, although the Assembly members of a devolved Wales were responsible for drawing up the Welsh Language Measure, the legislative process was driven (and limited) to a certain extent by the legal system of the Legislative Competence Order (LCO).³

1.10

The legislature's freedom, therefore, was somewhat limited and the limitations of this arrangement can be seen in the Measure itself. As Professor Thomas Glyn Watkin, who was the Welsh First Legislative Counsel at the time the Measure was drawn up, observed:

 The overall complexity of the system results from the restrictions imposed by the LCO, and renders the process as a whole somewhat cumbersome.⁴

1.11

However revolutionary the Welsh Language Measure may be in terms of ensuring the legal status of the Welsh language, it is not without its shortcomings, as the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee concluded in its 2019 report, *Supporting and Promoting the Welsh Language*. Reference is made in this report to the 'Measure's complexity and detail' and to the common perception 'that the Welsh language standards framework is complex and bureaucratic'.⁵ The slow pace of the introduction and implementation of standards is criticised and it is recommended that the complaints process should also be speeded up.

1.12

Although the Measure provides new rights to Welsh speakers in one sense, it provides no legal justice if an individual's freedom to use Welsh is interfered with. Professor Emyr Lewis suggests that the Measure seeks to 'align the idea of the "rights" of Welsh speakers with processes that are essentially regulatory and bureaucratic and that do not, in terms of the law in any case, lead to particularly robust outcomes for those who are wronged'.⁶

³ For a comprehensive introduction to the history of drawing up the Measure and the impact of the then regime on the Measure, see Thomas Glyn Watkin, 'Competence and Complexity: The Role of the Welsh Language Commissioner', pp. 125–46.


⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵ National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, *Supporting and Promoting the Welsh Language* (July 2019), p. 12, p. 7.

⁶ Emyr Lewis, 'Saesneg yn unig – helynt iaith Rhydaman', *Barn* (December/January 2019–20), pp. 6–7 [Welsh publication only, author's translation].

1.13

Some have argued that the Welsh Language Measure is a law that focuses on the regulator and the regulated and that its significance is unclear to the average citizen. Dr Catrin Fflur Huws notes that there is room to strengthen such legislation by considering the audience of the legislation in its initial drafting:

 If the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 had been drafted with a view to making it accessible to individuals, its content and structure could have emphasised the simple precept: a citizen has rights. If it had been drafted with a view to make it accessible to public bodies as service providers, its content and structure should have encapsulated the message: 'you have a duty'. Instead, the model of the 2011 Measure is to state: 'this is how the system of regulation works'.⁷

1.14

But despite the frustration with aspects of the way in which the legislation was drawn up, as the first to implement the law and the regulatory system arising from it, the Welsh Language Commissioner at the time, Meri Huws, stated in her evidence to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee in 2018 her view that the Welsh Language Measure is essentially a law that enables and provides scope. While acknowledging that no legislation 'is perfect', and recognising that elements of the Measure could be made more flexible, she emphasised that the Measure was a step forward since the 1993 act and that she had not 'used the Measure to its greatest potential, by a long way' after only six years of its implementation.⁸

1.15


Meri Huws also noted that, despite the bureaucratic aspect at the start of the process, the detailed nature of the standards was increasingly welcomed by organisations as the standards clearly outlined the expectations upon them. Only two organisations have appealed to the Welsh Language Tribunal against some of the standards imposed on them, and in both cases, the appeal was refused. This suggests that there is no justification for a public organisation not to offer Welsh language services in a country where the language is an official language.

⁷ Catrin Fflur Huws, 'Administrative Justice and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011', in Sarah Nason (ed.), *Administrative Justice in Wales and Comparative Perspectives* (University of Wales Press, 2017), p. 104.

⁸ [Evidence session for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee 20/09/2018 – Senedd \(senedd.wales\)](#).

1.16

Although the Commissioner's work has reinforced the official status of the Welsh language in Wales, neither this work nor the Welsh Language Measure, can, of course, ensure that status alone. There is also a need for promotion, facilitation and ambitious language and education strategies from the Welsh Government alongside the legislation so that the official status of the language is respected and is visible on a practical level. But considering the Welsh Language Measure in its own right and the significant progress that it has brought about, it is difficult to argue with Professor Thomas Glyn Watkin's conclusion:

 At the end of the day, and despite the political tensions that shaped the 2011 Measure, the first Commissioner's own judgement of it, expressed in the title of the office's 2017–18 assurance report, cannot be improved or gain-said: *Mesur o Lwyddiant – A Measure of Success*.⁹

Standards to elevate status

1.17

It is one thing to give official status to the Welsh language in legislation, it is another, however, to ensure that this status has a far-reaching impact, and is respected and reflected in all aspects of life. As has been said about devolution in Wales, giving official status to the Welsh language is also a process rather than an event; a process that is far from completion, but which has certainly seen progress over the past five years.

1.18

The process of imposing standards on the first group of organisations began in 2015, and those standards became operational on 30 March 2016 – during the first year of the reporting period of this report. This was an important step in the process of establishing the status of the language as it was on that date that the people of Wales were given legal rights to use the Welsh language for the first time, when dealing with local authorities, the Welsh Government and the national parks.

1.19

Since these first standards were introduced for the organisations named in the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations, the Welsh Ministers have introduced a further five sets of regulations for specific groups of organisations. The second set of standards for national bodies came into force in January and March 2017 placing legal duties on organisations such as Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales, the Arts Council of Wales, the National Library and the BBC. The standards for Welsh tribunals, police forces, and fire and rescue authorities also came into force at the end of March 2017. Further and higher education institutions were next in having to comply with standards on 1 April 2018, and standards for health bodies then came into force at the end of May and the end of November 2019.

⁹ 'Competence and Complexity: The Role of the Welsh Language Commissioner', p. 146.

1.20

Where the Commissioner had been preparing for the advent of the standards during the early years, between 2012 and 2015, that work is now bearing fruit, and during the past five years a statutory duty has been placed on 123 public organisations to use the Welsh language.

1.21

As already noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Commissioner has the power to enforce the compliance of organisations with their language duties when they fail to do so. These failings often come to light when the Commissioner receives complaints from the public, and these complaints can result in an investigation. If an organisation is deemed to have neglected its language duties, then it is compelled to comply with those duties, usually by requiring it to take steps to prevent further failure in the future.

1.22

These enforcement actions have, at times, gone further than simply preventing failure, resulting in changes that exceed expectations. For example, the Commissioner undertook an investigation in 2018–19 which determined that the Welsh Government had failed to publish an explanatory memorandum in Welsh for secondary legislation relating to the Welsh language. Enforcement action was imposed on the Government and it now has rigorous arrangements in place to assess whether explanatory memoranda need to be published in Welsh. The Government now conducts an audit of all statutory instruments submitted in a calendar year, follows a process for prioritising memoranda, and conducts a full assessment of the word count with the aim of increasing the number of memoranda that are published bilingually. The organisation's arrangements for publishing bilingual memoranda now, therefore, exceed the requirements of the standards, with bilingual memoranda issued for legislation not required under the standards.

1.23

In some cases, however, the Commissioner has responded to the failure of an organisation by publicising the fact that it has breached the standards and ignored the official status of the Welsh language. This impacts negatively on the organisation's reputation and, at the same time, serves as a warning to other organisations that there are consequences if they do not fully comply with the standards. The Commissioner is also entitled to impose a civil penalty on an organisation if it does not comply with the standards, but as yet, has not employed that right.

1.24

Since the implementation of standards by organisations from 2016 onwards, by the end of 2020 the Commissioner had received 668 valid complaints about organisations' failure to comply with the standards. Being able to compel those organisations to correct their failings in depriving an individual of their right to use Welsh not only places the Welsh language within the administrative justice system but also ensures that its official status is respected.

1.25


The Commissioner also conducts investigations following receipt of complaints about interference with individuals' freedom to use the Welsh language. In such cases, if an investigation demonstrates that an organisation or company is guilty of this, they will be advised to take full account of the official status of the Welsh language, and to raise awareness of the language amongst staff and managers. During the reporting period, information was received on 17 such cases.

1.26

Unlike other commissioners and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, who are responsive bodies charged with promoting human rights or acting as advocates, the Welsh Language Commissioner was given a slightly different status in the sense that the Commissioner is a regulator as well as a responsive, promotional body.¹⁰

1.27

With language commissioners now in existence in several countries across the world, the distinction between an ombudsman and a language commissioner is outlined in the foreword to the volume *Constitutional Pioneers*. In addition to the practical elements of conducting complaints investigations, making policy recommendations and regulating compliance with law, the establishment of the post of language commissioner is a symbolic act in itself, reflecting respect for minority communities and demonstrating their value:

 Thus the establishment of a language commissioner in any given jurisdiction is never a politically neutral act. Nor is it merely a simple and convenient mechanism to improve the general quality of public services. Rather it is a deliberate but crucial statement regarding the value of minority languages and their speakers and their potential to enrich and unite people.¹¹

The language of the Senedd

1.28

The official status of the Welsh language was further strengthened by making Welsh and English the official languages of Senedd Cymru, through the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012. It is significant that this is the first law to be passed in Wales for 600 years, after the Assembly gained primary law-making powers following the 2011 referendum. Although the Welsh Language Measure provided for the official languages act,¹² the Assembly's commitment to being a 'truly bilingual institution where Assembly Members, the public and staff can choose to work or communicate in either or both of our official languages' was a statement of ambition and confidence in the language and a means of leading the way for other organisations.¹³

¹⁰ The differences between different Commissioners for Wales are set out in 'How is the role of the Future Generations Commissioner different from the role of other Commissioners?' on the [Future Generations Commissioner's website](#).

¹¹ *Foreword to Constitutional Pioneers: Language Commissioners and the Protection of Official, Minority and Indigenous Languages*, p. X.

¹² [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#), Part 1, Section 1 (3a).

¹³ The Assembly Commission, [Official Languages Scheme](#) (July 2013), p. 2.

1.29

The Senedd is recognised as a Welsh-language organisation and is an attractive workplace for anyone who wants to work through the medium of Welsh. Indeed, in a survey of the Welsh language skills of Senedd Commission staff in 2019–20, 88% of respondents said that they had Welsh language skills, ranging from Welsh courtesy level to fluency.¹⁴

1.30

Despite the importance of the act in ensuring that Senedd Members today and in the future have the right to contribute in Welsh or English in Senedd proceedings, the use of the Welsh language, of course, depends on the number of bilingual Members, along with quite complex issues relating to their willingness or confidence in using the Welsh language. One thing is certain, hearing the Welsh language on the floor of the Senedd confirms its status as an official language in Wales. It is also a means of raising the status and raising public awareness of the Welsh language as a medium in which to discuss constitutional issues, politics and legislation.

1.31

That being said, the number of contributions made through the medium of Welsh in Plenary and Committee proceedings has decreased over the last three years. In 2017–18, it was recorded that 20% of contributions in Plenary proceedings were in Welsh; by 2019–20, 16% of contributions were made in Welsh. Similarly, the percentage fell from 8% in Senedd Committee proceedings in 2017–18 to 6% in 2019–20.¹⁵ Referring to this decline, Rhun ap Iorwerth MS stated in the Senedd that any barriers preventing individuals using the language must be overcome and that a review of the current Official Languages Scheme was underway.¹⁶

1.32

For constitutional reasons, neither the Senedd nor the Senedd Commission are named in the Welsh Language Measure as bodies subject to Welsh language standards and therefore are not regulated by the Welsh Language Commissioner. It is therefore significant that a memorandum of understanding was agreed between the Assembly Commission and the Commissioner in 2019 which states that the Official Languages Scheme undertakes to offer a bilingual service that compares favourably with the requirements of the standards, and that 'the Senedd Commission would not wish to fall below the spirit of the Language Commissioner's Standards in any way'.¹⁷ Shortly after this statement, the Senedd's commitment to the official status of the Welsh language was seen in action during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis as it became one of the first legislatures in the world to hold a fully bilingual virtual plenary session.

¹⁴ Senedd Commission, *Official Languages Scheme: Annual Report 2019–20* (June 2020), p. 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶ [Plenary 04/11/2020 - the Senedd \(senedd.wales\)](#).

¹⁷ *Official Languages Scheme: Annual Report 2019–20*, p. 11.

Consideration of the Welsh language in legislation

1.33

In 2014, the Commissioner provided advice to the First Minister on how the official status of the Welsh language can be operational and have a real impact on the lives of people in Wales by being visible and being placed at the centre of legislation.

1.34

The Welsh Ministers have, of course, implemented the standards since 2016, and those standards include policy making standards that require the Welsh Government to consider the impact and influence of any policy decisions on the Welsh language. Since 2018, the Welsh Government has been using a new impact assessment framework that ensures that a Welsh language impact assessment is carried out as a statutory part of policy development, review or reform. Giving consideration to the Welsh language in this way, and containing references to it within policies and legislation, is actually part of the language planning process relating to language status planning. Not only does it lead to statutory and practical action, it is also a symbolic statement that acknowledges the value and importance of the Welsh language.¹⁸

1.35

Four years after the Welsh Language Measure was passed, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was passed; an act that contains specific reference to the Welsh language. The act lists seven well-being goals and places a statutory duty on public bodies named in the act to work towards these goals. One of the seven aims is 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.¹⁹ Including the Welsh language as one of the well-being goals means it will be mainstreamed into Local Well-being Plans and policy decisions arising from the act. However, it could also be argued that there is a place for the Welsh language within the other six well-being goals too, given that the Welsh language is a valuable skill for employment and care in the health service, for example.²⁰

1.36

Of the 22 acts passed by the Senedd between 2016 and 2020, six make reference to the Welsh language, with some references more meaningful than others. The only reference to the Welsh language in the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, for example, relates to the inclusion of information about the impact of the standards in annual reports. The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 makes the Ombudsman subject to the standards, and similarly, the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2020 does so in the case of the Citizen's Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales. There are more detailed references to the Welsh language, however, in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 where there are considerations in relation to additional Welsh-medium teaching provision and treatment and services in Welsh for children and young people.

¹⁸ More details on language status planning can be found in Steve Eaves, *Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru* [Critical Awareness Training on the Welsh Language, and its Contribution to Inclusive Linguistic Planning in Wales] (PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2015), p. 76 [publication in Welsh only].

¹⁹ *The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015*, Part 2, Section 4.

²⁰ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Advice document: Considering the Welsh Language in the Local Well-being Plans* (2018), p. 3.

1.37

Another act worth mentioning here is the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 where the National Assembly for Wales was renamed Senedd Cymru or Welsh Parliament. Despite missing an opportunity to have a single legal Welsh name, 'Senedd' is the common name used in both Welsh and English contexts with elected Members legally known as 'Members of the Senedd' and acts known as 'Acts of the Senedd' in English.²¹ Welsh Government's Office of Legislative Counsel has also adopted the practice of referring only to the Welsh name, Senedd, in drafting legislation, a practice emulated by legislation drafters within the UK Government.

1.38

It may be argued that it is an act of Westminster that is responsible for one of the most far-reaching developments in relation to the status of the Welsh language in Wales today. The Government of Wales Act 2006 established a statutory requirement for the Welsh Government to adopt a strategy to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. This section of the act (section 78) was amended by Part 10 of the Welsh Language Measure, placing a responsibility on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish an annual action plan to accompany the language strategy.

1.39

However, a language strategy was published by the Welsh Assembly Government before it was required by the Government of Wales Act 2006. The *Iaith Pawb (Welsh language, our language: its future)* strategy was published in 2003 before being replaced by *A living language: a language for living* in 2012 and the associated policy statement *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward*. In 2017 the Government's new language strategy was published, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. This ambitious strategy was widely welcomed by campaigners, policy officers and language supporters. Meri Huws, the Welsh Language Commissioner at the time, described the strategy as the most 'challenging and confident' one she had seen for the Welsh language.²²

1.40

This ambitious target that has seized the imagination of policy makers across the country is an indication, according to the Government, that 'the Welsh language is a strategic priority for the Welsh Government'.²³ The fact that the Government wishes to state that at all is symbolic in terms of the status of the Welsh language and the general political consensus in its favour. However, concerns have since been raised by those who welcomed *Cymraeg 2050* regarding the way in which the strategy is being implemented, the investment in it and the resources available to meet the target of a million speakers.

²¹ Information on the effects of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 and changing the name of the legislature can be found on the [Senedd website](#).

²² This extract is from an article from the Welsh Language Commissioner's old website: 'One million speakers – Commissioner welcomes confident target'.

²³ Welsh Government, [Welsh Government Annual Report on compliance with Welsh Language Standards 2019–2020](#) (23 June 2020).

Bilingual legislation

1.41


With the Government of Wales Act 2006 (and its predecessor in 1998) giving equal status to the Welsh and English texts of Assembly measures and acts and the Welsh Ministers' subordinate legislation, that provision is reinforced in the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019. The Legislation Act also requires that the Counsel General regularly revises the accessibility of Welsh law and ensures that it is 'readily available to members of the public in Welsh and English'. It also requires that activities to 'facilitate use of the Welsh language' must be included in Welsh Ministers' programmes to improve the accessibility of Welsh law.²⁴

1.42

The equal status of the texts of Welsh and English laws together with the Welsh and English wording of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 was considered in a judicial review by the High Court in 2020. The case concerned Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's decision to open two large area schools and close two secondary schools and four primary schools, two of which were Welsh-medium schools.


1.43

This is the case where the Welsh Language Commissioner used his right, in accordance with the Welsh Language Measure, to intervene in legal proceedings for the first time. This is also the first time that a High Court Judge has made a clear statement about the status of Welsh language legal text, a judgement described as a milestone in relation to the interpretation of bilingual legislation:²⁵

 The Council's submissions wholly ignore the Welsh text, then conclude (after construing the English text) that the Welsh text must have the same meaning, or does not matter. I do not consider that to be the correct approach to legislation passed in Wales, both in Welsh and in English, the text of each language having an equal status to the other.²⁶

1.44

The case was later discussed at plenary in the Senedd where Rhun ap Iorwerth MS welcomed the judgement:

 I agree that seeing the Welsh language being confirmed so emphatically in its status should encourage us to ensure that our bilingual legislative processes are robust, and are more robust. It should give us confidence as a Senedd to increase the use of the Welsh language in this Senedd.²⁷

²⁴ [Legislation \(Wales\) Act 2019](#), Part 1, Section 1 (2a), Section 2 (3d).

²⁵ [Rhodri Williams QC and Nia Gowman successful in landmark Welsh-language judicial review case | 30 Park Place Chambers](#).

²⁶ See paragraph 79: [Driver, R \(On the Application Of\) v Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \[2020\] EWHC 2071 \(Admin\) \(30 July 2020\) \(bailii.org\)](#).

²⁷ [Plenary 23/09/2020 - the Senedd \(assembly.wales\)](#).

1.45

The case later went before the Court of Appeal and although the appeal by the local authority regarding the case itself was successful, the equal status of the text of Welsh and English legislation was upheld by the Court of Appeal, as by the High Court.²⁸ The Commissioner again submitted evidence in writing and orally in this case. That is the first time that evidence has ever been presented in Welsh at the Court of Appeal and the Commissioner recommended that a Welsh-speaking Judge is needed in cases where the composition of Welsh text is considered.

1.46

However, the claimant's request for a judge who could speak Welsh was denied by the court in this case. Not only was this decision inconsistent with the court's statement regarding the equal status of Welsh and English legislation texts, but it was also inconsistent with the Law Commission's conclusion about the need to appoint a Welsh-speaking judge if a case required interpreting Welsh law.

1.47

The Legislation (Wales) Act 2019 states that 'the Welsh language text and the English language text have equal status for all purposes',²⁹ and the explanatory notes for the act expatiate that 'this means that the full expression of the law is that contained in both texts, not merely one'.³⁰ This has implications for interpreting bilingual legislation of course and the Law Commission considered these implications in its report, *Form and Accessibility of the Law Applicable in Wales*.³¹ The report notes that interpreting both Welsh and English versions is essential in order to interpret bilingual legislation and that 'to presume conclusively that both texts mean the same would be likely to lead to courts simply relying on the English text'. It goes on to note that 'this has implications for the accessibility of the law in that it requires proficiency in both languages to arrive at the meaning of the legislation'.³²

1.48

There are, therefore, far-reaching implications for the way judges, lawyers, courts and others approach Welsh law and the Welsh language. But as the case mentioned above demonstrates, not everyone is aware of these implications and they certainly need to be given more prominence.

²⁸ See paragraphs 11–5: [Driver -v- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(judiciary.uk\)](#).

²⁹ [Legislation \(Wales\) Act 2019](#), Section 5 (2).

³⁰ [Legislation \(Wales\) Act 2019: Explanatory Notes](#), p. 9.

³¹ Law Commission, [Form and Accessibility of the Law Applicable in Wales](#) (2016).

³² [Ibid.](#), p. 142.

Welsh language and the law

1.49

Having established the principle that ‘the Welsh language has official status in Wales’ in Part 1 of the Welsh Language Measure, there is a list of enactments that support the official legal effect of the Welsh language.³³ This part of the Measure could almost be used as a checklist or list of indicators to measure the status of the language.

1.50

One of the possible enactments on the list is an act providing the right to speak Welsh in legal proceedings in Wales. This is a right that already exists as a result of the language acts of 1967 and 1993 as already stated, and has not been repeated since. The conduct of civil cases and tribunal cases in Welsh is now becoming more common and the Welsh language was used in around 1,000 court and tribunal hearings in 2018–19 compared to around 570 cases in 2015–16.³⁴

1.51

Having said that, the take-up of a Welsh language service at tribunals still appears to be low. During 2019–20, the Welsh language was used in only 9 tribunal cases across all tribunals apart from the Welsh Language Tribunal, where there were 16 cases processed in Welsh.³⁵ The first Welsh language case at the High Court was held in 2014 between the Commissioner and National Savings and Investments. Since then a further two cases have been held in Welsh at the High Court.

1.52

Another significant event in terms of the courts was the appointment of the first Welsh judge to the Supreme Court in 2017, and the Welsh language was used for the first time in the oath taking ceremony of Lord Justice David Lloyd-Jones. During the first Supreme Court hearings held in Wales, in July 2019, Lord Justice Lloyd-Jones read a case judgement in Welsh, thus being the first to use the Welsh language in the Supreme Court.


³³ [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#), Part 1, Section 1 (3).

³⁴ The Commission on Justice in Wales, [Justice in Wales for the people of Wales](#) (October 2019), p. 437.

³⁵ President of Welsh Tribunals, [Second annual report 2019–2020](#) (30 April 2020), p. 4.

1.53

The courts have consistently been ahead in terms of the Welsh language, with the 1942 courts act the first act to loosen the restrictions of the Acts of Union before the arrival of a turning point in the legal status of the Welsh language with the 1967 Welsh language act and subsequently the 1993 Welsh language act. This means that simultaneous translation has been taking place in court proceedings long before it became a familiar procedure for public bodies. However, despite this progress, there is still more to be done to extend Welsh language provision within the justice system in Wales, as is outlined in the report of the Commission on Justice in Wales, a review of the justice system between December 2017 and October 2019:

 The current justice system does not consistently treat the Welsh language on a basis of equality with the English language. There are too many gaps in the provision and too much dependence on the goodwill of individuals rather than establishing bilingual systems. Coroners in Wales cannot issue documents in Welsh. There is a lack of teaching materials on Welsh law and in the medium of Welsh.³⁶

1.54

A survey by the Commissioner of the rights and experiences of Welsh-speaking prisoners showed that there were also large gaps in Welsh-medium provision in this area.³⁷ With HM Prison and Probation Service committed to a language scheme, the position of the Welsh language in prisons is discussed in more detail in Part 3 of this report.

1.55

With law and justice leading the way in terms of the Welsh language on the whole, it is perhaps not surprising how central a place is given to the Welsh language in the Commission on Justice in Wales' ambitious report and recommendations. There is a real desire and need to see the Welsh language thrive in this area as the Commission recommends that 'all justice bodies should be subject to the Welsh Language Measure 2011'.³⁸

1.56

There is a recommendation for better collaboration between law schools in Wales on Welsh-medium legal education and that free support and digital services should be available in Welsh at the same time as English. In 2020, the Solicitors Regulation Authority announced their plans for introducing parts of the new Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE) course in Welsh. The course will be delivered for the first time in September 2021 where assessments can be submitted in Welsh, and further Welsh language provisions will be introduced on a year-by-year basis.³⁹

³⁶ *Justice in Wales for the people of Wales*, p. 13.


³⁷ Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Welsh language in prisons: A review of the rights and experiences of Welsh speaking prisoners* (2018).

³⁸ *Justice in Wales for the people of Wales*, p. 25.

³⁹ Solicitors Regulation Authority, *Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) Briefing* (August 2020), p. 22.

1.57

Lord Justice Lloyd-Jones suggests that the changes brought about by twentieth century legislation have coincided with changes in people's attitudes to using the Welsh language in courts in Wales. And where some disagreed with the changes at the outset, there is now considerable support for bilingualism in the courts as evidenced by the report of the Commission on Justice in Wales and as the Lord Justice himself states:

 It seems to me that it is a basic requirement of fairness that witnesses, litigants and other court users in Wales should be allowed to express themselves in court in the Welsh language in which they conduct their everyday lives.⁴⁰

Changes underway

1.58

This change of attitude, or the change in people's perception of the language, is another, different metric, which could be taken into account when considering the status of the Welsh language. Of course, it is difficult to measure such a shift, but there is reason to hope that the tide has turned on the lack of confidence and inferiority linked to the psyche of Welsh speakers for centuries. The Welsh Government's national training programme, Understanding Bilingualism, is a formal effort to contribute to this change in attitude among organisations, and the programme is discussed in more detail in Part 4. Part of the programme contains language awareness training for strategic leaders, which is an important contribution for leaders to understand the implications of the official status of the Welsh language and the responsibilities involved.

1.59

The previous 5-year report recorded that 85% of people surveyed in a 2015 opinion poll believed that the Welsh language was something to be proud of and 77% believed that the Welsh language was an asset to Wales.⁴¹ Seeing the Welsh language having a place in the country's legal constitution is undoubtedly partly responsible for this change of attitude. And in raising the status of the language in this way, it is given more prestige and becomes a more visible language that belongs to all.

1.60

Indeed, it is recognised that language prestige and status planning is one of the cornerstones of language planning and 'legislating and awarding status to a language in a country's constitution are also symbolic statements of its importance and value', as Steve Eaves observed.⁴² Emyr Lewis also notes that giving official status to the language through the Measure is 'historically important in order to settle questions in relation to the status of the Welsh language and the status of Welsh speakers in Wales'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Speech by The Rt Hon Sir David Lloyd-Jones, Lord Justice of Appeal, '[The Welsh Language Act: The First 50 Years](#)' (delivered at the opening of the annual conference of the International Association of Language Commissioners in Cardiff on 16 May 2017), p. 5.


⁴¹ Welsh Language Commissioner, [The Position of the Welsh Language 2012–2015](#) (2016), p. 277.

⁴² [Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru](#), p. 76 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁴³ Emyr Lewis is quoted in [Supporting and Promoting the Welsh Language](#), p. 11.


1.61

Alongside the apparent change in the attitude and confidence of Welsh speakers, there is also a change in the mindset of organisations subject to language duties. The Commissioner's annual assurance reports show that organisations' attitudes are gradually changing as standards become embedded and rights begin to take root. Meri Huws stated that after a year of seeing the first standards in action, she felt

 that there has been a shift in the public debate on the Welsh language. Now, in discussions on increasing the use of Welsh, the question asked is not “why” but “how”.⁴⁴

1.62

This is reflected in the experiences of members of the public in trying to access Welsh language services; during 2017–18, we heard in discussion groups that

 users describe an improvement in the availability and quality of Welsh language services – and equate this to an improvement in the attitude of organisations towards using Welsh.⁴⁵

1.63

But despite this significant improvement since the introduction of standards, there is still more to be done to ensure that the official status of the Welsh language is fully respected, and to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language in the public arena. Further discussion on the progress, the failures and the improvement required by organisations in service delivery, policy making, operating, record keeping and promoting the Welsh language is examined in Part 3 of this report.

1.64

Part 3 of the report also details the use of Welsh by businesses, charities and third sector organisations. It is fair to say that the increase in the use of Welsh by organisations that are not subject to standards is gradual and varied. The general perception amongst Welsh speakers is that seeing the Welsh language used by businesses and charities shows respect and acknowledges the status of the language.⁴⁶

1.65

However, although there have been very positive attitudes on the whole towards the language from businesses and charities at sectoral seminars held by the Commissioner's Hybu Team, the positive attitudes and desire to use the Welsh language have not always led to action. Having said that, some businesses and charities are now doing better than others at considering the Welsh language, and there has been an overall increase in the use of Welsh by supermarkets and large retailers such as Boots and Marks and Spencer.

⁴⁴ Welsh Language Commissioner, *2016–17 Annual Report (2017)*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Welsh Language Commissioner, *A Measure of Success: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2017–18 (2018)*, p. 47.

⁴⁶ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Using the Welsh language – the business case (2018)*.

1.66

Now that the United Kingdom has left the European Union, other considerations are brought to the fore regarding the status of the Welsh language in Europe. Although the Welsh language did not have official status in the EU, it had 'co-official' status, corresponding to the status given to the Catalan and Basque languages. This status gave citizens some limited rights, such as the right to correspond in Welsh with the European Commission, and to receive a response in Welsh. It also meant that some Welsh was used in the activities of the European Parliament. With the EU's commitment to linguistic diversity and to respecting the rights of minorities, the Welsh language had a more formal status within the EU constitution than it has in the corridors of Westminster.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Paper by Emyr Lewis, *Dwi isio fy iaith nôl: Sofraniaeth, Xenophobia a'r Gymraeg yn dilyn refferendwm Ewrop* (delivered at a symposium on the Welsh language and Brexit at Bangor University on 8 November 2016) [publication in Welsh only].



The Commissioner's conclusions

There have been significant developments over the past five years that confirm the official status of the Welsh language. The process of conferring official status on the Welsh language is, without doubt, in progress and it is a language that belongs as much on the floor of the Senedd as it does at grassroots level. But there is still a great deal of work to be done.

There is no denying that the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is an important milestone in the history of the status of the language as it confirms the official status of the Welsh language for the first time and establishes legal rights for people to use the language. The standards have provided a level of certainty for organisations and users alike, creating new opportunities to use the Welsh language and further confirming its status. It is only by continuing with the same momentum and using the Welsh Language Measure to its full extent that we will see similar progress over the next five years. **It is therefore vital that the new Government commits to providing stability to the structures and rights already in place, committing to standardising and improving the experiences of Welsh speakers within the current legislative framework.**

In order to maintain the momentum, it is essential that the new Government resumes the process of imposing standards as a matter of urgency, thus bringing new organisations and sectors under that system. This would provide new opportunities and contexts to use the language daily, as well as reaffirm its status. Although 123 organisations are implementing standards, we are still waiting for the Welsh Government to draw up regulations for a number of key sectors so that the Commissioner can impose standards on them. They include sectors with which the public has considerable day-to-day contact, such as housing associations, non-ministerial UK Government organisations such as HMRC, gas and electricity suppliers, and rail services and bus companies.

The consequence of not imposing standards on non-ministerial UK Government organisations is that two statutory regimes are currently being implemented in Wales. This is a source of confusion for the public as they are entitled to come to us directly to make complaints about organisations that are subject to standards but do not have the same right to make complaints directly about failures in the context of essential and high-profile state welfare services, for example.

There is therefore a pressing need for the Government to examine the schedules of the Measure once again to identify further sectors on which standards could be imposed, and to be proactive in identifying new entities that could be brought under the system as they are created.

As the Welsh language loses its status and protection within the EU, **it is more important than ever that Westminster considers the Welsh language in non-devolved matters and in legislation introduced as a result of leaving the EU.** The need to consider the Welsh language at UK level – thereby ensuring its status – was highlighted very clearly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic when procuring and organising a number of key responses to the pandemic was done centrally by the Westminster Department for Health and Social Care. The result of these efforts by a non-devolved department, unfamiliar with operating under the requirements of the standards, was that not all of the services provided were designed with the Welsh language as a central consideration. **Lessons must be learned from this to ensure that the Welsh language has sufficient constitutional and political status at a UK level to ensure the provision of vital services to the citizens of Wales, particularly in times of crisis.**



Name: **Cadi Emlyn**

Age: **20**

Area: **Bethesda, Gwynedd**



77.5%
*Speak Welsh
in Bethesda*



Cadi is a student at the School of Welsh, Bangor University and lives in the John Morris-Jones residential hall during term time, a hall primarily dedicated to Welsh speakers and learners.

Welsh is the family language at home in Bethesda where her mother, father, Nel, her 14 year old sister, and Ned the dog live. Her mother comes from Tre-garth, a stone's throw from Bethesda, and her father from Aberystwyth. She speaks Welsh to relatives on her father's side of the family and English mainly to family on her mother's side.

"I feel passion, love and pride for the Welsh language. I wouldn't be me without the Welsh language."

Welsh through Cadi's eyes

We spoke mainly Welsh at primary school, although two of our friends were non-Welsh speakers. But I don't remember that changing the language of our group. By secondary school, I had a new group of friends, and again our group's language was Welsh. We spoke English to one friend, and although she had done Welsh as an A-Level subject, we still speak English to each other. I'm not sure why, perhaps because that's the language in which we were introduced to each other?

I think a lot of Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen pupils are lazy with their language and use of Welsh and therefore tend to turn to English too easily. Some groups also think that speaking English is more 'cool', and this sometimes happens in groups where all the individuals come from Welsh-speaking homes.

When I go to Bethesda's high street, I can speak Welsh almost everywhere – Tesco, Londis, Siop Ogwen. Even in the pubs most people who work behind the bar speak Welsh or at least understand. In the takeaways (e.g. Indian, chips, kebabs), I would only be able to speak Welsh in the chip shop.

Since going to university my English has really deteriorated as I hardly use it at all. I live in JMJ Hall, I study Welsh, and I'm a member of UMCB (Bangor Welsh Students' Union) and so everything I take part in is in Welsh and everyone I socialise with speaks Welsh. I hardly have any opportunity to use English.



Name: **Nest Davies**

Age: **80**

Area: **Allt-wen, Neath Port Talbot**



27.0%

*Speak Welsh
in the community of
Cilybebyll*



Nest lives with her husband in the village of Allt-wen in the Swansea Valley, which is within the community of Cilybebyll. She has two sons and several granddaughters, and she speaks to them all in Welsh. She has lived in the area all her life.

“I couldn’t imagine not speaking Welsh. It’s part of you isn’t it?”

Through Nest’s eyes

I went to Ysgol y Rhos, and then to Ystalyfera Grammar School. Then, my education was in English, but we all spoke Welsh on the yard. It was a very Welsh area at that time.

I was head teacher of Ysgol Gynradd Rhiw-fawr for years, before retiring in 1993. They spoke Welsh on the yard at Ysgol Gynradd Rhiw-fawr, which is in the upper Swansea Valley. But remember, that’s nearly 30 years ago now.

We live in a rural place here in Allt-wen. When I walk around Pontardawe, I see some people who speak Welsh. When we were children, everyone spoke Welsh, every house spoke Welsh. Fewer speak Welsh now. The people who buy houses are non-Welsh speaking, they don’t come from this area.

I always speak Welsh with people who wear those badges, they’re like an orange coma. I’ve come to know who speaks Welsh in Tesco, and I make a point of speaking Welsh with them.

I am a member of Merched y Wawr. We are ‘merched y wawr’. We were the ones who founded the organisation. I’m a member of the reading group at Tŷr Gwrhyd, I try and support the activities there. I also enjoy supporting drama at Pontardawe Arts Centre. Unfortunately, people don’t usually give support, it makes me very angry.

I go to Tŷr Gwrhyd to listen to children from non-Welsh speaking homes reading every Friday. Non-Welsh speaking parents are very grateful for individual attention. I see their confidence increase when I read with them one-to-one.

I use Welsh at chapel, and with the sisterhood. Everything there is Welsh. A couple of children attend Sunday school. It gives me hope to see people coming back to the chapel, seeing a new wave turn to the chapel.



Name: **Richard Vale**

Age: **62**

Area: **Newcastle Emlyn,
Carmarthenshire**



53.7%

*Speak Welsh
in Newcastle Emlyn*



Originally from Buckinghamshire, Richard has lived in Newcastle Emlyn for fifteen years. He learnt some Welsh from his mother as a child, and he speaks Welsh to his mother's side of the family, while his father's side of the family speaks English. Richard has a wife and five children with whom he speaks German, but he speaks Welsh with his youngest son. The other four children have moved to live in various European countries where five languages are spoken between all the households.

“The Welsh language is an invaluable and unique thing that everyone in Wales can be proud of.”

Welsh through Richard's eyes

My mother spoke Welsh to me as a small child but I lost the language when I started going to school as we lived in England.

I was familiar with the language as many of my mother's family spoke Welsh and I remember going on holiday to Pwllheli at 10 years old, and having 10 shillings to spend. I bought a Welsh dictionary and spent hours poring over it.

I spent most of my career living in different places across Europe – including Stockholm, London and Zurich before deciding in 2005 to come to Wales to live.

I immediately set about learning the language, and as I spoke it as a little boy, the language came back to me quite quickly. By 2008 I worked as a Welsh for Adults tutor in Cardigan and north Pembrokeshire, so Welsh is the language of the workplace for me.

I made a promise at a protest by Cymdeithas yr Iaith in 2013 that I would live my life through the medium of Welsh, so I choose to go to shops, cafes etc where I know someone speaks Welsh. It's always worth starting a conversation in Welsh as I'm sometimes surprised that someone can speak the language.



I'm very fortunate in the area where I live that so many people can speak the language. It's been fairly easy to keep to my promise.

Part 2: Increasing the number of Welsh speakers



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

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A language handed down...

We now turn to the three strategic themes of the *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* strategy. As a numeral is given such prominence within the title and vision of this strategy, it is no wonder that the first strategic theme is centred on creating and counting the numbers. There are two main approaches to creating Welsh speakers: people can acquire the language at home or later through the education system. These are the cornerstones of the Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy. The trajectory for a million Welsh speakers has been calculated on the basis of the contribution that education and language transmission will both make at different stages during the lifetime of the strategy. In this part, we consider the progress made in relation to this theme during the reporting period and draw conclusions on the main challenges for the next five years.

1 Transmission of the language within the family

Evidence base

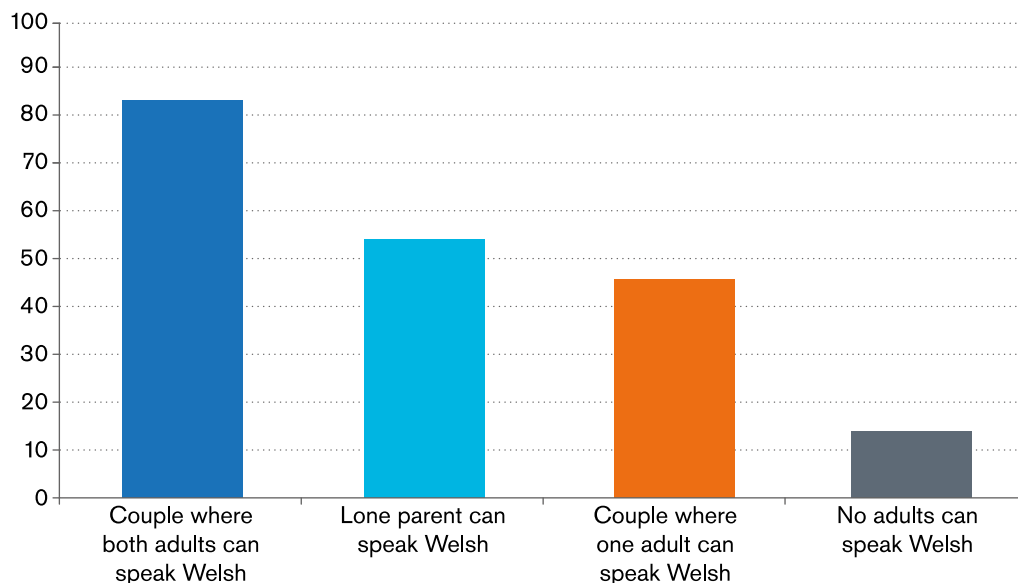
1.1

The 2011 Census and 2013–15 Language Use Survey¹ provide the latest reliable data on Welsh language ability and fluency rates and their relationship to the transmission of language within the home. We must await the next results of these surveys in order to analyse the extent to which the situation in Wales has changed over the last ten years.²

1.2

Although the available statistics are somewhat dated at the time of reporting, the conclusions derived from the data continue to provide a sound basis for planning language policies. The census data show that the percentage of children aged 3–4 who can speak Welsh varies considerably depending on the adults in the household's ability to speak the language:

Chart 1: Percentage of children aged 3–4 able to speak Welsh, single family households only (Source: the 2011 Census).



¹ The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner, *Welsh language use in Wales, 2013–15* (26 November 2015).

² You can find a discussion on the relationship between the census and other surveys in the Background and context section.

1.3

As seen from the chart above, the proportion of children aged 3–4 years who can speak Welsh is higher in households where two adults speak Welsh than in any other type of household. However, even in households where both parents can speak Welsh, around 18% of children aged 3–4 are not able to speak the language. The proportion of 3–4 year-olds able to speak Welsh is significantly lower in households where only one adult can speak Welsh, and even lower when no adult can speak the language.

1.4

The Language Use Survey 2013–15 provides detailed information on the fluency levels of Welsh speakers, based on where they mainly learnt Welsh. The results support the suggestion seen in the census results regarding the fundamental importance of the transmission of Welsh within the home to create and maintain the numbers of fluent Welsh speakers. The survey shows that there is a correlation between when and where an individual acquires or learns Welsh and how fluent and willing they will be to use the language in due course.

1.5

As the Government's recent language strategies have recognised, with the education sector creating more Welsh speakers in the future, it is anticipated that there will be an increasingly significant role for language transmission within the home as one of the main ways of maintaining the language in the community. This was first set out in the strategy *A living language: a language for living*:

☞ Passing the language from one generation to the next is one of the two most important areas of language planning – the other being education. It is unlikely that Welsh will thrive as a community and social language if it is dependent on the education system alone as a means for new speakers to learn the language. It needs to be the language of the home for as many children as possible – and there is no doubt that learning the language in this way is a natural and effective way to become a fluent Welsh speaker.³

This was further emphasised in *Cymraeg 2050*:

☞ The importance of language transmission remains a key aspect of our strategy, and as we see an increase in the numbers acquiring the Welsh language through the education system, and therefore a higher proportion that have acquired the language at school rather than at home, the challenge in relation to language transmission will change over time. We will need to tailor policy accordingly.⁴

³ Welsh Government, *A living language: a language for living, Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17* (March 2012), p. 25.

⁴ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* (2017), p. 34

1.6

Joshua Fishman summed up the importance of language transmission succinctly by stating that language revitalisation by means of


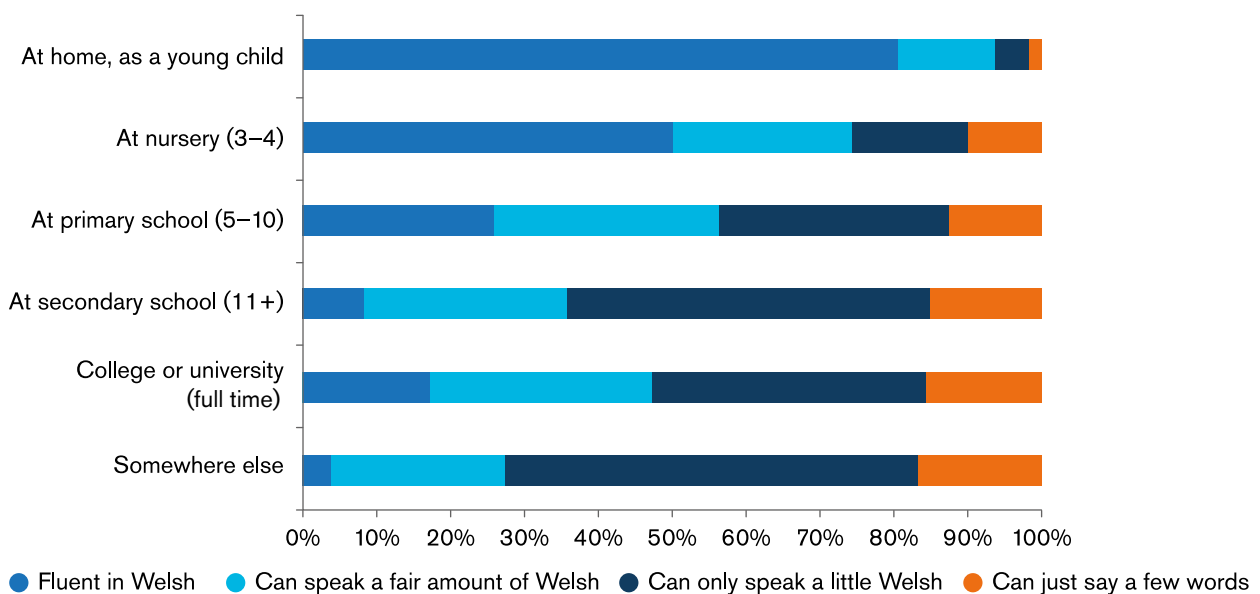
 stylish efforts to control the language of education, the workplace, the mass media and governmental services, without having sufficiently safeguarded [intergenerational language transfer] is equivalent to constantly blowing air into a tire that still has a puncture.⁵

Chart 2: Fluency of Welsh speakers by where they learnt to speak Welsh (Source: *Welsh language use in Wales, 2013–15*).



1.7

The above data clearly demonstrate the strong correlation between language transmission in the home and fluency in Welsh. Unfortunately, the data below show that the proportion of children acquiring the Welsh language in the home has decreased significantly over the last half century. About 80% of Welsh speakers aged 65+ had acquired Welsh at home as children, while this figure was around 20% for Welsh speakers aged 3–15.



80%

About 80% of Welsh speakers aged 65+ had acquired Welsh at home as children...

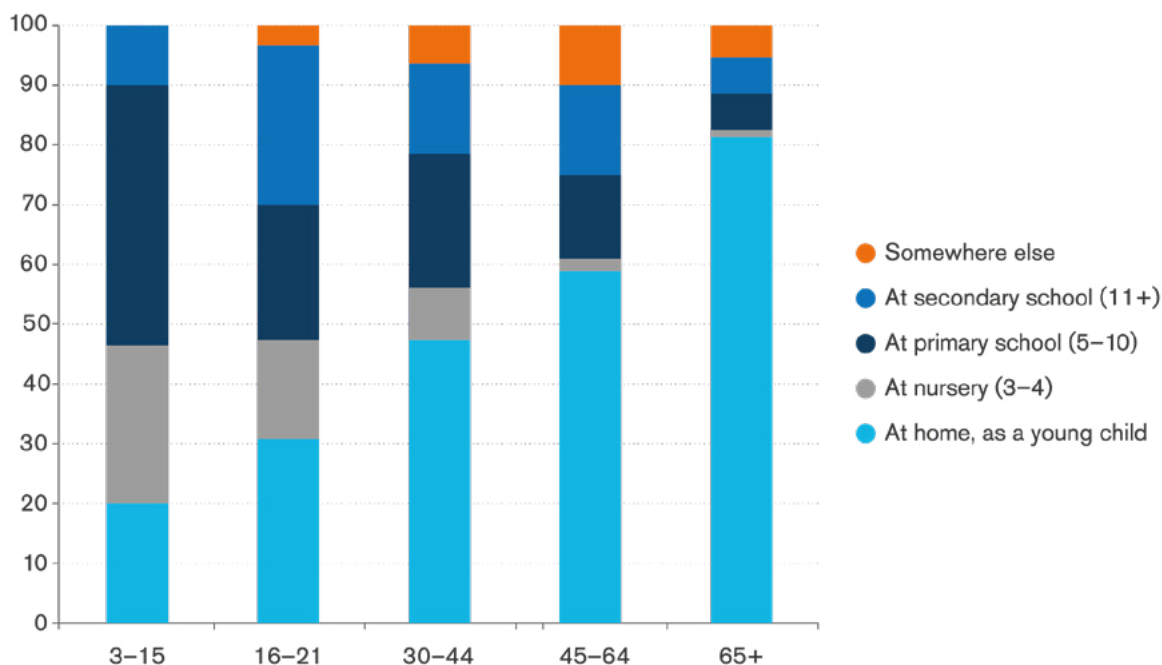
20%

...while this figure was around 20% for Welsh speakers aged 3–15.

⁵ Joshua A. Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages* (Clevedon, 1991), p. xii.

Today, the majority of children are likely to learn Welsh at school rather than at home:

Chart 3: Where Welsh speakers mainly learnt the language by age (Source: *Welsh language use in Wales, 2013–15*).



1.8

In April 2020 the Welsh Government published a statistical bulletin *Where and when people learn to speak Welsh* based on the results of the National Survey for Wales 2018–19. Although the results of the National Survey are not directly comparable with the census results, there are common patterns in terms of transmission of the Welsh language within the home.⁶

1.9

As part of the preparatory work of drawing up a new strategy for the Welsh language, the Welsh Government commissioned research on how parents use Welsh with their children and how different factors influence the use of Welsh in the home. In 2017 the report *Welsh language transmission and use in families*⁷ was published, which added to existing research on language transmission.⁸

⁶ Welsh Government, *Where and when people learn to speak Welsh: The National Survey for Wales, 2018–19* (28 April 2020).

⁷ Cardiff University and Arad Research, *Welsh language transmission and use in families: Research into conditions influencing Welsh language transmission and use in families* (Welsh Government Social Research, 12 June 2017).

⁸ A brief overview of past work on language transmission can be found in the Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Position of the Welsh Language 2012–2015* (2016), pp. 91–7, or for a more detailed discussion, please see *Welsh language transmission and use in families*, pp. 12–47.

1.10


The research supports much of what is already known about the factors that are likely to influence language transmission: the importance of the linguistic composition of the family, where the family lives, and attitudes towards the Welsh language and identity, for example. The research also shows that the use of language in the home amongst the studied families was an unconscious behavioural action, one that was usually based on parents' linguistic practices, and their previous experiences of language use when they themselves were children.

1.11

One of the key messages of the research is the conceptual difference between language transmission (use of the language in the home) and language donation (choosing Welsh-medium education for children).

1.12

While parents who had acquired the language in the home as children tended to use the language with their children, it was found that parents who had learnt the language through the education system were often intent on choosing Welsh-medium education for their children, without necessarily considering using the language in the home. In other words, although they chose Welsh-medium education for their children, the use of English at home was something that happened automatically. Here is an example of the mindset of one father from the Rhondda Cynon Taf area:

 If you don't speak Welsh at home, which we didn't, when you have a child, it tends to be that you don't even think about the language... When they start school, then you make a decision. If you're not used to speaking [Welsh], English is the default setting.⁹

1.13

Often, those parents from backgrounds where Welsh was not used in the home reported that they lacked confidence in their Welsh language skills, and had not used Welsh much since leaving school. The research highlights possible future interventions in language transmission. There will be a need to focus in particular on supporting parents who have learnt Welsh at school to go a step further than simply 'donating' the language to their children, and encouraging transmission of the language within the home.

⁹ *Welsh language transmission and use in families*, pp. 107–8.

National policy on Welsh language transmission in the home

1.14

The information gathered from the National Survey on the transmission of Welsh in the home has informed the development of a national policy on the transmission of Welsh within the family during the reporting period. During the summer of 2020 the Government consulted on a draft version of this policy, and the final policy, published at the beginning of 2021, will underpin the Government's work in this area for the next decade.

1.15

The policy contains a series of actions which largely reflect some of the main recommendations of the study on the transmission of the Welsh language in the home. The actions focus on four overall aims:

- Inspire today's generation of children and young people to speak Welsh to their children in the future.
- Reignite the Welsh language skills of those who may not have used Welsh since their school days, or who have lost confidence in their language skills, to speak Welsh with their own children.
- Support and encourage use of Welsh within families where not everybody speaks Welsh.
- Support Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children.¹⁰

1.16

Of course, efforts to support parents in the transmission of the Welsh language to their children have been in existence for some years. The Twf project, which ran from 2001 to 2016, aimed to raise awareness amongst families of the benefits of raising children bilingually. This was done primarily by working with midwives and health visitors, and offering support and advice to parents.

1.17

In 2016, Twf was replaced by the Cymraeg i Blant/Cymraeg for Kids programme, jointly operated by the Welsh Government and Mudiad Meithrin at present. The Cymraeg for Kids programme offers various activities such as baby massage and yoga, support groups, and story and song group sessions, focusing on the pre-natal period up to 18 months of age. Through these activities, parents are offered practical help, advice and support on using Welsh in the home and choosing Welsh-medium education or childcare.

¹⁰ Welsh Government, *Consultation Document: National policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families* (11 February 2020), p. 23.

1.18

A process evaluation of the programme was published in 2019, which reported on its success overall in the context of the policy objectives of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. According to the evaluation, the number of families attending Cymraeg for Kids activities has increased significantly since its introduction in 2016, and in 2017–18 almost 21,000 adults and 22,000 children attended almost three thousand different group sessions.¹¹ The evaluation includes a range of recommendations on how the programme can be developed further, and implementing these and considering ways of extending the programme will be vital to achieving the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*.

1.19

In order to implement the Cymraeg for Kids programme, the Welsh Government and Mudiad Meithrin are working with other relevant organisations and programmes, including the mentrau iaith and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Mudiad Meithrin's work through services and programmes such as Cylchoedd Ti a Fi, Clwb Cwtsh, and the Cylchoedd Meithrin follows on naturally from the Cymraeg for Kids programme and are effective ways of sharing messages with new parents on using Welsh in the home and choosing Welsh-medium education for their children.

1.20

Alongside this, the Cymraeg for Kids programme continues to work with NHS Wales to ensure that midwives, health visitors and other partners share information about the benefits of language transmission, highlighting the support available to new parents.

1.21

Another important development in the context of the Government's language transmission policy is the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Welsh at Home scheme. The scheme was established in 2020 and aims to offer a Welsh language learning provision specifically for families with a focus on restoring parents' confidence in their Welsh language skills and encouraging them to speak Welsh with their children. Working with key partners and the associated provision already in place, for example Mudiad Meithrin's Clwb Cwtsh, will be a key element of the scheme. The intention is to evaluate this innovative scheme at the end of the first year, before deciding on its future content and nature.

¹¹ Welsh Government, *Process evaluation of Cymraeg for Kids: Executive Summary* (Government Social Research, 12 February 2019), pp. 1–2.



The Commissioner's conclusions

Evaluating the success of different interventions in language transmission is no easy task, due in part to the fact that comprehensive data, that would form the basis for evaluating progress since 2011, are not yet available. But even when those data are available, we are likely to see comparatively minor changes, and it will not be possible to draw firm conclusions on the role and influence of different interventions if any changes are observed. Language transmission is a complex and extremely difficult policy area to penetrate. However, there is no question of the strategic importance of language transmission in the context of the aims of *Cymraeg 2050*, particularly in ensuring that the Welsh language thrives as a social and community language in the long term.

As the research on language transmission in the home emphasises repeatedly, changing the language habits of individuals or families is no simple matter. In most cases, the language used in the home is a subconscious decision or habit, and one that arises from the personal and social situation and experience of the individuals. This means that it is not easy to successfully influence language choices and habits in the home through individual interventions. **There is a need, therefore, for a range of interventions that will have an impact on an individual's holistic experience over a longer period of time.**

It could be argued that successful policies in areas such as childcare, education, and the workplace – not to mention the economy – may ultimately be more significant and influential in increasing rates of language transmission in the home than those policies that focus specifically and exclusively on parents' linguistic practices. Given this argument, it must be accepted that wider policy decisions can completely undermine the Government's objectives in terms of language transmission. If funding or support were cut in areas such as childcare, further and higher education, or the Work Welsh scheme, for example, this would inevitably influence people's perception of the importance of the language as well as the opportunities for them to gain linguistic confidence. It could also affect the inclination and ability of individuals to transmit the language – or to choose language donation through the education system. **There is a need to ensure that the conditions and support are in place for individuals to be able to use Welsh after they leave school so that they can be persuaded of the value of the Welsh language and encouraged to use the language when raising their own children.**

Of course, this does not mean that a national policy and specific interventions focusing on language transmission in the home are not needed. The national policy on language transmission in the home contains a range of interesting proposals for the future. The idea of a language use pledge programme is put forward, for example, with the intention of targeting parent/carer networks in schools offering support for families to use more Welsh. **Particular attention needs to be given to those organisations and activities that offer less formal opportunities, and often at a very local level, for new parents to gain confidence to use and transmit the Welsh language.** These interventions also highlight the relationship between language transmission within the family and the wider issue of socialising a child in the Welsh language.

There is not yet any detail on the extent or timescale for the implementation of Government projects. **Ensuring that the high level commitments of the draft policy lead to ambitious projects in language use among families will be crucial over the next five years. It will also be necessary to ensure adequate support and funding for the organisations and programmes that contribute directly and indirectly to the objectives of this national policy.**

2 Early years



We believe that the Welsh language belongs to everyone and is a medium for uniting our diverse nation. Since 1971, Mudiad Meithrin's remit has been to influence, and work diligently and practically to ensure that young children in Wales can become confident Welsh speakers. While it is important to celebrate the progress made over the period in question (with more children receiving quality childcare through the medium of Welsh and more going on to receive Welsh-medium education) we (and others) must work harder to ensure that all children are able to experience the Cylch Meithrin and Welsh-medium education as people in some communities are still faced with unintended and practical barriers.

Gwenllian Lansdown Davies

Chief Executive of Mudiad Meithrin

2.1

If the language is not transmitted within the home, immersing children in the Welsh language as early as possible in the childcare and education system is the most likely means of creating fluent Welsh speakers.¹² That is why the early years care and education sector is so vital to language planning.

2.2

Apart from the provision of early years education for 3–5 year olds, pre-statutory care is not under the direct control of the Welsh Government, and is provided by a wide range of individuals, companies, and voluntary and private organisations. However, Care Inspectorate Wales has regulatory responsibilities in the childcare sector, which include registering, inspecting and acting to improve the quality and safety of childcare services. Estyn is also responsible for inspecting quality and standards in schools and nursery settings funded or maintained by local authorities.

2.3

The Childcare Act 2006 recognises the duties of local authorities as strategic leaders in the local provision of childcare.¹³ Local authorities have a legislative duty to assess and plan childcare provision to ensure availability and quality. As part of their wider duty to monitor and assess provision, local authorities are required to consider and plan Welsh-medium childcare by filling gaps, ensuring sustainability, increasing numbers and improving the quality of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the area.

2.4

The pre-statutory childcare landscape has changed significantly over the last five years, mainly as a result of the range of policies and legislative changes in childcare and early years education introduced by the Welsh Government.

New childcare offer for Wales

2.5

One of the commitments of the Welsh Government's programme for government, *Taking Wales Forward*, was to provide 30 hours a week of free childcare for working parents of three and four year olds.¹⁴ The 30-hour offer is a combination of early years education time (usually 10 hours a week) and childcare (usually 20 hours a week).

2.6

The Welsh Government began the implementation of the offer in September 2018, and it is now available in all local authorities in Wales. It is too early yet to fully evaluate the impact of this development on the pre-statutory sector in Wales. What is clear, however, is that the Childcare Offer for Wales is a significant development for the sector that is likely to shape provision for years to come.

¹² [Welsh language use in Wales, 2013–15](#).

¹³ Please see the [Childcare Act \(2006\)](#), Part 1, Section 22 and the [Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#).

¹⁴ Welsh Government, [Taking Wales Forward 2016–2021](#) (20 September 2016), p. 5.

2.7

It is also clear that providers have had to adapt to these changes by offering provision in line with the Childcare Offer for Wales framework. To support the sector in adapting to this, the Welsh Government introduced a grant scheme for childcare capital projects in 2018. Of the £81m available, almost £36m was allocated to Welsh-medium projects, and over £4.5m to bilingual projects.

2.8

The development of a national strategy such as the Childcare Offer is a clear opportunity to place the Welsh language at the centre of the policy development process. This is particularly true given that the development of the Childcare Offer for Wales took place in the same period as the publication of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy.

2.9

Cymraeg 2050 emphasises the importance of the pre-statutory stage as the start of the journey to achieving the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers. The long-term aim is to reach a situation where children under the age of five have had sufficient exposure to the Welsh language to start their journey to becoming fluent speakers. The strategy includes a target to expand early years Welsh language provision, establishing a further 150 nursery groups over the next decade, 40 of which are to be established by 2021.

2.10

The Government is working with Mudiad Meithrin to achieve these targets. Mudiad Meithrin's overall work is central to the aim of expanding Welsh-medium pre-school provision, and its policy document *Meithrin Miliwn*¹⁵ sets its work in the context of the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh language strategy.¹⁶ Following additional funding from the Welsh Government, Mudiad Meithrin introduced the Sefydldu a Symud programme where a dedicated team works with local authorities across Wales to establish the 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin by 2021. A core principle of this programme is the need to establish new cylchoedd in areas where there is currently a lack of Welsh-medium provision. Since January 2018, Mudiad Meithrin has opened 31 new Cylchoedd Meithrin and a further 13 will open before September 2021.

2.11

It is clear that there is potential to integrate the above strategies and policies to stimulate significant growth in Welsh-medium childcare provision. In addition to the duties placed on local authorities as a result of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans also set out a framework to co-ordinate Welsh-medium childcare planning processes locally.

¹⁵ Mudiad Meithrin, *Meithrin Miliwn: Mudiad Meithrin's response to the Welsh Government's #Cymraeg2050 Language Strategy and Work Programme (2017–2021)* (August 2017).

¹⁶ See also Mudiad Meithrin's strategy document, *Dewiniaith: A Vision for Mudiad Meithrin 2015–2025* (2015).

2.12

In March 2017, the then Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language, Alun Davies AM, announced his intention to undertake a rapid review of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans to provide recommendations on how to develop the framework for the future. One of the most significant recommendations of the review¹⁷ was the need to include a pre-school outcome as part of future plans. The vision of the review was that expanding Welsh-medium pre-school provision would become a central part of the new framework, with an emphasis on successful progression and transition from one phase of education to another.

2.13

Following the publication of the rapid review, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Advisory Board was established to offer advice to the Government on the legislative changes required to improve the foundations for planning Welsh-medium education. Following the advice of the advisory board, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 came into force on 1 January 2020.

2.14

The new regulations lay a much stronger foundation to ensure that local authorities plan the expansion of Welsh-medium childcare provision, and that it is seen as a key part of creating the demand for Welsh-medium education in the future. The new strategic plans must be ten-year plans and local authorities must also set targets for the expected increase in year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh during the lifespan of the plan. This requirement to set long-term targets is directly linked to the need for local childcare planning.

2.15

The introduction of a new Curriculum for Wales is also a significant turning point for the education sector in Wales. The new curriculum will apply to childcare settings providing early years education. Although the pedagogical principles and practices of the current Foundation Phase will be central to the new curriculum, the concept of key stages of learning is being replaced by a continuum of learning for 3–16 year olds. The curriculum will set out stages of progression for different areas of learning and experience for pupils aged 3–16. As part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication area of learning, all settings will be required to introduce the Welsh language in order to provide opportunities for all learners to develop bilingually.

17 Aled Roberts on behalf of Welsh Government, *Rapid Review of the 2017–2020 Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* (August 2017).

Evidence base

2.16

In 2017, the Commissioner published the briefing note *Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Education Provision*.¹⁸ One of the main findings was that the data on childcare was fragmented, inconsistent and complex to interpret. Part of the problem was a lack of consistency between different datasets, which made it difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the level of provision available through the medium of Welsh, and the number of children receiving childcare through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

2.17

There now appears to be greater consistency in the data, and Care Inspectorate Wales publishes annual statistics on the primary operating language of the services approved, including the number of places offered by those providers. The data derived from the monitoring of the Childcare Offer for Wales also provide useful information on the take-up of Welsh-medium or bilingual childcare. These data, together with data published by Mudiad Meithrin, now provide a fuller picture of the language of childcare in Wales.

¹⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Briefing note: Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Education Provision* (November 2017).

Chart 4: Number of approved childcare and play services in Wales by local authority and primary language of service (Source: Care Inspectorate Wales Data Management System at 31 March 2020).

Local Authority	English	English with bilingual elements	Bilingual	Welsh	Total
Swansea	100	73	11	9	193
Blaenau Gwent	30	23	2	2	57
Vale of Glamorgan	96	93	6	8	203
Cardiff	202	173	23	30	428
Caerphilly	98	84	14	20	216
Newport	79	68	4	1	152
Neath Port Talbot	63	55	7	6	131
Ceredigion	7	17	31	46	101
Conwy	55	47	20	26	148
Gwynedd	9	11	38	118	176
Merthyr Tydfil	24	13	4	3	44
Bridgend	82	48	2	6	138
Powys	99	61	9	21	190
Rhondda Cynon Taf	108	87	16	19	230
Pembrokeshire	59	57	7	18	141
Denbighshire	43	45	15	27	130
Monmouthshire	65	49	1	3	118
Carmarthenshire	41	23	78	75	217
Flintshire	128	75	14	7	224
Torfaen	38	44	3	4	89
Wrexham	83	63	10	11	167
Anglesey	15	15	44	31	105
Wales	1524	1224	359	491	3598
	42.4%	34%	10%	13.6%	

2.18

The above data from Care Inspectorate Wales show that a large majority (76%) of the providers in Wales operate primarily through the medium of English. Around 10% of provision is bilingual and around 14% of provision is operated primarily through the medium of Welsh. It should be noted that this information is derived from providers' self-assessment of the category that best defines the linguistic nature of their provision.

2.19

It is also worth noting that only 14% of childcare settings offer Welsh-medium provision compared with the 23% of primary age pupils receiving education through the medium of Welsh in 2019.

2.20

Care Inspectorate Wales also collects some information on the linguistic skills of the childcare workforce in Wales. The data gathered in January and February 2020 show that:¹⁹

- around 10% of childminders and 23% of day care setting staff are fluent Welsh speakers;
- around 10% of childminders and 20% of day care setting staff speak some Welsh; and
- around 80% of childminders and 57% of staff in day care settings speak little or no Welsh.

2.21

As part of the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales, the Government has been gathering statistics on take-up and language of provision. The scheme's monitoring data for October 2020 showed that:²⁰

- 2,300 children received the Childcare Offer in Welsh or bilingually, which is around 25% of all children accessing the offer of care during the period.
- Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire have the highest rates of children receiving care through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, at around 75%.
- The proportion of those receiving care as part of the offer through the medium of Welsh or bilingually are as low as 5% in the Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea, Newport, Monmouthshire, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent.

2.22

Mudiad Meithrin is the main provider of Welsh-medium early years education and childcare in Wales. Mudiad Meithrin gathers a wide range of data on the different provisions on offer and the number of children attending their Cylchoedd Meithrin.

¹⁹ This data was collected by Care Inspectorate Wales as part of the Self Assessment of Service Statement, and was directly shared with the Commissioner. The data is based on the 88% of settings that completed the data gathering process. It is based on the setting's perception of the Welsh language skills of its workforce, therefore there may be some inconsistency in the understanding of different settings of how to measure the Welsh language skills of their staff.

²⁰ This data was received directly from Welsh Government. The data gives a snapshot of the situation in October 2020 and is based on the Government's monthly monitoring data, collected directly from local authorities every month.

Chart 5: Numbers attending Cylchoedd Meithrin, number of Cylchoedd Meithrin and number of locations, and the percentage of children that transfer from Cylch Meithrin to a Welsh-medium primary school (Source: Mudiad Meithrin monitoring data).²¹

Year	Numbers attending Cylchoedd Meithrin	Numbers of Cylchoedd Meithrin	Numbers of Cylchoedd Meithrin locations	Percentage of children that transfer from Cylch Meithrin to a Welsh-medium primary school
2015/16	10,724	467	358	86.35%
2016/17	11,215	491	373	87.19%
2017/18	11,432	462	360	88.06%
2018/19	11,544	454	361	89.81%
2019/20	9,453	436	358	88.06%

2.23

With the opening of more Cylchoedd Meithrin as part of the Sefydlu a Symud programme, it is hoped that an increase will be seen in numbers attending.

²¹ This decline in 2019/20 reflects the effect of the pandemic on the childcare and early years education sector. The vast majority of Cylchoedd Meithrin were closed for substantial periods in 2020 and therefore not accepting new children.



The Commissioner's conclusions

Although more consistent and robust data collection processes are now in place for the childcare sector, it remains difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the extent to which the situation of Welsh-medium childcare provision has improved over the last five years. This is partly due to deficiencies in past data gathering, but also because there is still uncertainty about the validity and reliability of some of the data gathered today. It remains difficult to know the extent to which year-on-year changes are the result of changes in the way the data is gathered and interpreted, rather than a real reflection of an increase or decrease in Welsh-medium provision across Wales. There is still some way to go to ensure the consistency and reliability of the data that is so essential for measuring the success of policies and strategies in a crucial area of the Government's language strategy.

Although there is no unqualified statistical evidence indicating an improvement in this area, there have been a range of positive developments that are likely to strengthen the future position of Welsh-medium childcare. With the introduction of the 30-hour offer and the legislative changes to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans regulations, there is now a stronger strategic foundation for expanding Welsh-medium provision across Wales. These strategies have also led to significant capital investment for the purpose of expanding the provision of Welsh-medium childcare and early years education. There is also initial evidence of the potential that exists to integrate different planning strategies and frameworks in order to deliver the aims of *Cymraeg 2050*. The 30-hour offer, the capital funding, and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, for example, could be integrated to create greater impact.

Mudiad Meithrin's work remains key to establishing new Cylchoedd Meithrin as part of the *Cymraeg 2050* action plan. It is also positive that Cwlwm, an umbrella consortium of five childcare organisations, is working together to expand Welsh-medium and bilingual provision more generally. In view of all this, it must be concluded that the infrastructure supporting Welsh-medium childcare today is stronger than that which existed when the Commissioner's previous 5-year report was published.

However, these positive developments must be set in the context of the fact that the childcare sector is starting from a low baseline in terms of Welsh-medium provision. The percentage of childcare settings offering provision through the medium of Welsh is significantly lower than the percentage of primary age pupils receiving Welsh-medium education. The main reason for this is probably the fact that Welsh-medium childcare provision is not always available or accessible. It is reasonable to assume that the majority of parents choosing Welsh-medium education for their children would also have wished to have childcare through the medium of Welsh if it were practically possible. The data therefore suggest that the childcare sector in Wales is not meeting the demand that exists for Welsh-medium childcare. Neither does it create additional demand for Welsh-medium education nor stimulate its growth as envisaged in *Cymraeg 2050*.

Although the Government gave consideration to the Welsh language in the process of drawing up the 30-hour offer, the ambition of *Cymraeg 2050* does not appear to have been central to the initial planning of this policy. Given the strategic emphasis placed on the pre-statutory phase in *Cymraeg 2050*, it is disappointing that this vision was not fully reflected in the Government's introduction of a key, transformational childcare policy. **The agenda of *Cymraeg 2050* should be included as a central and core part of policy making from the outset in strategic areas such as childcare.**

With a view to the future, the Government will need to develop more ambitious policies for the childcare sector. Although the target to open new Cylchoedd Meithrin is crucial, this alone is unlikely to lead to the increase in Welsh-medium provision that will be needed to realise the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*. As is increasingly acknowledged in relation to the statutory education sector, the Welsh language needs to be mainstreamed into childcare provision more generally. In other words, **consideration must be given to ways of supporting and encouraging English-medium providers to develop and transform in order to offer increasingly bilingual and Welsh-medium provision.** Of course, achieving this will depend on ensuring an increasingly bilingual workforce in the first place, and that is clearly the initial challenge for a shift in this direction.

In 2019, the Welsh Government announced that it was embarking on an exciting journey to review and reform the provision and structure of early childhood education and care in Wales. Early Childhood Education and Care refers to a high-quality approach to the planning and delivery of education and care for pre-school children. One of its core principles is the need for a single coherent approach to the education and care of children aged 0–5 which focuses on the right of all children to have the best possible start in life. The commitment to establish the Early Childhood Education and Care approach is a long-term vision, and the move to such an approach will be a gradual process over a period of ten years or more. This is a golden opportunity to ensure that the Welsh language is an integral part of the long-term vision for early childhood education and care in Wales.

The Welsh language and bilingualism should be at the heart of all discussions on how to provide the best start in life for every child in Wales. **There is a need to go further than stating the need for high quality early childhood education and care through the medium of Welsh for those who wish that for their children. Instead, the right of all children to learn Welsh should be acknowledged, with action taken in favour of the social, personal and cultural benefits of bilingualism.** Early Childhood Education and Care in Wales would therefore give all children a head start on the journey towards bilingualism. Of course, achieving this will take considerable time and commitment, and **the infrastructure needs to be put in place as a matter of urgency.**

3 Statutory education

3.1

The majority of young Welsh speakers today are likely to have learnt Welsh in the education system. It therefore follows that achieving the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050* will depend to a large extent on the success of that system in creating more confident Welsh speakers who are likely to use the language in their everyday lives. Of course, the statutory education sector is absolutely fundamental in this context.

3.2

At the time of the publication of the previous 5-year report, the Commissioner concluded that much more intensive and ambitious action was needed to realise the Government's vision for the Welsh language. Although many commendable developments had occurred following the publication of the *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* in 2010,²² there had been little real progress in the position of the Welsh language within statutory education on the whole.

3.3

These findings supported the conclusions of Arad's research, *Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy*, published in 2016.²³ One of the conclusions of that evaluation was that the strategy had not led to the expected changes, and that significant progress had not been made against the majority of the strategy's targets and outcomes. Very similar conclusions have been drawn by a range of other reports and reviews evaluating the success of different aspects of the Government's Welsh-medium education strategy.²⁴

²² Welsh Government, *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* (April 2010).

²³ Welsh Government, *Evaluation of the Welsh-medium education strategy: Final Report* (Government Social Research, 10 March 2016).

²⁴ See, for example, Welsh Government, *One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4* (September 2013); National Assembly for Wales Children, Young People and Education Committee, *Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* (December 2015); Estyn, *Local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* (September 2016); *Rapid review of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – 2017–20*.

3.4

The publication of *Cymraeg 2050* was an important development in the history of the Government's Welsh-medium education strategy and was a positive response to the increasing shortcomings that had come to light in the Welsh-medium education planning system. With the publication of this strategy, the Welsh Government committed to a highly ambitious and long-term vision and strategy for the Welsh language in education.

Cymraeg 2050 and the contribution of the education sector

3.5

Although the document *Education in Wales: Our national mission (2017–21)* is the Government's action plan for education, in reality *Cymraeg 2050* is the strategy that provides vision and direction – along with a number of specific targets – for the sector in terms of the Welsh language. These actions and targets are supported and further developed in *Welsh in education: Action plan 2017–21*²⁵ and also in annual action plans for *Cymraeg 2050*.

3.6

Cymraeg 2050 and the associated action plans outline a large and extensive number of relevant actions. However, three work streams appear to be central to the statutory education sector in particular:

- i. **Increasing the numbers** receiving Welsh-medium education.
- ii. **Transforming the way Welsh is taught in English-medium schools** to significantly increase the number of pupils that can speak Welsh by the time they leave the education sector.
- iii. **Increasing the number of teachers** who can teach Welsh as a subject and through the medium of Welsh.

²⁵ Welsh Government, *Welsh in education: Action plan 2017–21* (December 2017).

3.7

The trajectory towards a million has been calculated on the basis of achieving the growth targets in the above areas, and also on the basis of assumptions regarding language transmission in the home. The chart below outlines these main targets in relation to the trajectory which have set the context for the Government's work in this area over recent years:

Chart 6: The contribution of the education sector to the trajectory towards a million speakers, based on the *Cymraeg 2050* targets.

Year	Targets/projections							
	2017	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2050
The trajectory to a million	570,000	600,000	630,000	680,000	750,000	830,000	920,000	1,000,000
Welsh-medium Education	22% 7,700	24% 8,400		30% 10,500				40% 14,000
Increase the number/percentage of English-medium sector pupils leaving school able to speak Welsh				35% 8,500				50% 10,500
Teachers Welsh-medium Primary	2,900	3,100		3,900				5,200
Teachers Welsh-medium Secondary	1,800	2,200		3,200				4,200
Teachers Welsh-medium Welsh as a Subject	500	600		900				1,200

The expansion of Welsh-medium education and Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

3.8

Cymraeg 2050 clearly states that Welsh-medium immersion education is the ‘principal method for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills, and for creating new speakers’.²⁶ It is therefore not surprising that strengthening the foundations of Welsh-medium education planning has been a subject of considerable focus in the Government’s work over the past five years.

3.9

Following the publication of the final report of the *Evaluation of the Welsh-medium education strategy* in 2016, the Government began consulting local authorities on the necessary changes to the Welsh-medium education planning system. Although it issued new guidance for the preparation of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans for 2017–20, in March 2017 the Government commissioned an independent review of these plans.

3.10

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019, which came into force following the review, are a significant development in the context of the Welsh-medium education planning system. The new framework addresses some of the most obvious shortcomings of the previous system and sets expectations on local authorities to introduce long-term plans to expand Welsh-medium education locally, in line with the national targets set out in *Cymraeg 2050*. The overall intention is to move from a reactive planning framework to a more proactive one. Local authorities will be expected to do more than just meet parents’ wishes for educational provision, with more proactive planning in line with *Cymraeg 2050*.

3.11

Beyond issues relating to the legislative basis of Welsh-medium education planning, the rapid review of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans concluded that there was also a need to review the linguistic definitions and categories of schools. There is no legislative basis for the language categories of schools, and they do not always provide clarity on the true nature of the linguistic provision of different schools. This is particularly true in relation to the language categories of secondary schools. There is a strong case for simplifying these categories, ensuring clarity for parents and pupils regarding provision as well as the likely linguistic outcomes for learners.

3.12

More importantly, the review will provide an opportunity to ensure that the linguistic definitions and categories facilitate effective language planning. It is quite clear that meeting the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh-medium education targets will depend less on opening new Welsh-medium schools, and more on the reorganisation of existing provision. Moving schools along the linguistic continuum will become increasingly important in working towards the *Cymraeg 2050* targets, and the reform of schools’ language categories will be crucial in setting a path to achieving this.

²⁶ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 21.

3.13

The reform of schools' language definitions and categories touches upon an important issue for the care and education system as a whole, namely the need for clarity and consistent definitions for the terms 'bilingual education' and 'Welsh-medium education', and the relationship of these to the likely linguistic outcomes for learners.

3.14

Part of the current problem is that the term 'bilingual education' can include an extremely wide range of educational provision. It can refer to provision that only includes very basic and limited aspects in Welsh. It can refer to provision where students are given the choice to study through the medium of Welsh, but where the majority may not take advantage of that choice. It may also refer to provision that includes significant elements through the medium of Welsh for all pupils. Definitions and terminology must be developed that distinguish between these types of provision with a focus on the likely linguistic outcomes for learners.

3.15

As with the childcare and early years education sector, capital grants have the potential to drive plans for expanding Welsh-medium and bilingual education. In September 2018, the then Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan AM, announced an investment of £46m to support growth in Welsh-medium education. £32m came from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant and £14m from the Childcare Offer Capital Grant. This funding was used to support 41 projects across 16 local authorities creating an additional 2,818 school places and childcare settings for Welsh-medium learners.


3.16

The 21st century Schools and Education Programme, a longer-term investment for schools and education institutions in Wales, has also contributed to the expansion of Welsh-medium and bilingual education. In relation to general funding programmes, and in relation to funding programmes dedicated to Welsh-medium projects in particular, there is clear evidence of the potential to co-ordinate them with planning frameworks such as Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, and the introduction of policies such as the Childcare Offer for Wales.

The new curriculum, abolishing Welsh second language, and the introduction of a single linguistic continuum

3.17

Although the expansion of Welsh-medium education is a key part of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, there is no doubt that the English-medium sector has an important contribution to make towards the target of a million Welsh speakers. As several past reports have stated, very few pupils attending English-medium schools in Wales develop sufficient Welsh language skills to use the language in a meaningful way outside the classroom. The Government is very clear that it wants to see a transformation in this context:

 To reach a million speakers, we need to transform how we teach Welsh to learners in all other schools, in order that at least half of those learners report by 2050 that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.²⁷

3.18

Including the 40% of learners predicted to attend Welsh-medium education in 2050, the Government's aim by 2050 is that 'at least 70 per cent of all learners develop their Welsh language skills and are able to use the language with confidence in all aspects of their lives by the time they leave school'.²⁸ According to Government plans and strategies, the introduction of a new curriculum for Wales will drive these changes to the way in which the Welsh language is taught in English-medium schools.

3.19

Following the publication of the Donaldson independent review of the curriculum in 2015,²⁹ the Government began an ambitious journey to completely redesign the curriculum and assessment arrangements for pupils aged 3–16. The past five years have been a period of intensive planning and development, bringing together education specialists, teachers, schools, pupils, and other stakeholders with an interest in the educational development of the children and young people of Wales.

3.20

There is no room here to provide a full summary of all the work that has been undertaken in this context, or to outline the content of the new curriculum published in January 2020. One of its core features, however, is that teachers and schools will have more freedom to design their own curriculum. Headteachers and teachers will be required to produce a suitable curriculum for their pupils, based on philosophical principles regarding the purposes of education and statements about what is important in relation to six specific Areas of Learning and Experience.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Professor Graham Donaldson, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales* (February 2015).

3.21

In terms of the Welsh language in particular, there has been a clear commitment from the outset to keep it as a compulsory part of the curriculum for pupils up to the age of 16. The Donaldson report concluded that the ‘cultural, cognitive and practical benefits of learning Welsh as a living language provide a strong case for its inclusion as a compulsory element in the school curriculum’.³⁰ The report also recommended a new focus on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication. He noted that the importance of the language should be promoted by reference to its value in the job market, the cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism, and its importance to the cultural life of Wales.

3.22

Beyond this, the most important development in terms of the Welsh language is the commitment to abolish the Welsh second language qualification and teaching programme, and to develop a single linguistic continuum for teaching Welsh across schools in Wales – a principle that gained increased prominence following a report by Professor Sioned Davies in 2013.³¹ According to the Government, ‘developing such a continuum would mean that all learners in Wales would follow the same curriculum and be assessed against one framework, thus removing the term Welsh second language and the programme of study’.³² The Government states that the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience reflects the commitment to create one continuum for teaching Welsh.

3.23

The intention is that the curriculum legislation will ‘remove the distinction between Welsh and Welsh Second Language’ and ‘allow for one continuum of learning for languages, including Welsh, in all schools and settings’.³³ However, despite the commitment to develop a single framework, the learning descriptions and steps of progression for the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience set different expectations for pupils in English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.³⁴

3.24

The long-term aim, according to the Government, is that these expectations placed on English-medium settings, schools and streams will be reviewed periodically with the intention ‘of removing this scaffold and having all schools use the same Descriptions of Learning for Welsh in order to realise the ambition of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050’.³⁵ *Cymraeg 2050* and the new curriculum are therefore absolutely clear that the long-term aim is that all pupils in Wales will have the opportunity to develop into confident Welsh speakers – irrespective of the language medium of the school.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³¹ *One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4.*

³² Welsh Government, *Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021: Explanatory Memorandum* (April 2021), p. 150.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Please see the [guidance for schools and settings on the Hwb website for the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience](#).

³⁵ Welsh Government, *Integrated impact assessment Curriculum for Wales Curriculum and Assessment Bill* (July 2020), p. 14.

3.25

Since the beginning of the process of scrutinising the legislation, the Commissioner, along with a number of other stakeholders, has highlighted the shortcomings of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill in relation to the Welsh language.³⁶ Specific questions have been raised regarding the degree that the curriculum truly reflects the commitment to remove Welsh second language and ensure that there is a radical increase in the number of English-medium school students who leave school as confident Welsh speakers. In December 2020 the Children, Young People and Education Committee published their Stage 1 Report on the bill,³⁷ and a number of the recommendations here also highlight its weaknesses with regard to the Welsh language. These include:

- the need for the Welsh Government to amend the Bill to resolve concerns about the impact on immersion in the Welsh language;
- the need for the Welsh Government to work closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner to address concerns about the delivery of the single continuum in the teaching of Welsh. This should include consideration of amending the Bill to require the Welsh Ministers to issue a statutory Code for the teaching and learning of Welsh under the curriculum; and
- that the Welsh Government take forward expeditiously work to revise school language categories and consider placing these on a statutory footing.

3.26

In December 2020, the Senedd agreed the general principles of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill, and it became an act in April 2021.³⁸

³⁶ Please see the Welsh Language Commissioner's written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill, for example: [CAW70 Welsh Language Commissioner.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#). The responses of a number of other organisations, including UCAC, RhAG, Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Mudiad Meithrin highlight the same shortcomings in the bill.

³⁷ Senedd Cymru's Children, Young People and Education Committee, *Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill: Stage 1 Committee Report* (December 2020).

³⁸ Some significant changes were made to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill during discussions that took place in stages 2 and 3. Following concerns raised about the impact of the compulsory status of English language teaching on immersion education in Welsh-medium schools, the Government introduced changes to mandatory elements of the curriculum. Instead of Welsh and English being compulsory from the age of 3, provision was made in the act which makes English a mandatory element from the age of 7 onwards, while the Welsh language remains a mandatory element from the age of 3. The result is that Welsh-medium schools and settings will be able to continue immersing young children in the Welsh language only up to the age of 7. The proposal to publish a statutory code for the teaching and learning of Welsh was rejected, but the Government made a commitment to publish a Welsh Language Framework that would provide further support and guidance to English-medium schools on teaching and using Welsh in the curriculum.

Other significant developments

Additional learning needs

3.27

Reference was made in the Commissioner's previous 5-year report to the importance of providing additional learning support through the medium of Welsh. In 2015 the Commissioner responded to the Draft Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, clearly stating the shortcomings of the draft bill in ensuring Welsh-medium services. As the bill went through the Senedd's scrutiny process, there were opportunities to discuss these shortcomings and propose amendments. The Government's response to the feedback received was positive, and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, and associated secondary legislation, set out a much firmer legislative basis to ensure pupils' right to additional learning support through the medium of Welsh.

Qualifications

3.28

The fact that qualifications are not available through the medium of Welsh has remained a problem over the past five years, and means that Welsh-medium learners do not have access to the same range of qualifications as their peers in the English-medium sector. Qualifications Wales requires those qualifications that are approved by them to be available for assessment in both Welsh and English. This means that all WJEC qualifications for GCSEs and A levels in subjects specifically designed for Wales are available bilingually.

3.29

Other qualifications gained by a relatively low number of learners in Wales are offered by a range of different awarding bodies. Qualifications Wales 'designates' some of these qualifications, in other words, it approves them and then regulates the awarding body, so that they are available to learners here in Wales. Although Qualifications Wales *encourages* awarding bodies to provide these qualifications through the medium of Welsh, it is not mandatory.

3.30

Qualifications Wales argues that the creation of such requirements would potentially mean that many awarding bodies would choose not to provide for learners in Wales for practical and financial reasons. As a result, 62.1% of publicly funded qualifications are only available in English to pre-16 learners in Wales.³⁹

³⁹ See Qualifications Wales' consultation document, *Qualified for the future* (2019), p. 20.

3.31

As part of the process of drawing up new qualifications for the new curriculum, Qualifications Wales has required all publicly funded qualifications, studied up to the age of 16, to be available bilingually. This should ensure a fairer balance of Welsh and English language provision for 16 year olds in Wales. However, the remaining qualifications system will need attention, particularly the post-16 sector and work-based learning.

3.32

To that end, in July 2020 Qualifications Wales published a new Welsh-medium strategy, *Choice for all*.⁴⁰ The organisation's clear commitment to the Welsh language is set out in it, and outlines how it will contribute to the priorities of *Cymraeg 2050* by working with awarding bodies, education institutions and learners to ensure a significant increase in the number of Welsh-medium qualifications available.

Resources

3.33

Similar to that of the situation of qualifications in Wales, there are also shortcomings in the Welsh-medium resources available. Part of the problem is that commercial publishers are usually responsible for publishing educational resources, and publishers often do not routinely create Welsh-medium versions. Although the Government funds the translation into Welsh of some textbooks published in English, problems have arisen in relation to the timetables. Overall, specifications for qualifications are published a few months before the start of term. Although publishers succeed in producing English language textbooks within the tight timescales between the publication of a specification and the start of term, they are often not translated into Welsh during the same period. It is therefore often the case that the resources available to English-medium learners are not always available to Welsh-medium learners.

3.34

In July 2018 the Children, Young People and Education Committee published a report on the provision of textbooks and learning resources for pupils, which included a range of recommendations relating to Welsh-medium resources. The then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, responded to the report by outlining the work being done to address these challenges, including:

- establishing a Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group to consider options for a new strategic approach to ensuring bilingual education resources;
- a commitment to ensure that necessary educational resources for the new curriculum will be available in both Welsh and English at the same time;
- piloting a 'twin-track' method to translating books into Welsh as they are written or very soon after they are written;

⁴⁰ Qualifications Wales, *Choice for all: Our strategy for increasing the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications 2020–25* (July 2020).

- continuing to provide funding to WJEC for the translation of English language resources created by commercial publishers, as well as focusing on supporting the creation of bilingual resources more generally, with an emphasis on digital resources; and
- linked to the two points above, Qualifications Wales to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop resources bilingually when any changes are made to future qualification specifications.

Transport

3.35

The nature of Welsh-medium education provision means that, on the whole, learners have to travel further to attend a Welsh-medium school than their peers in English-medium schools. That is why policies relating to learner transport are important in the context of widening access to Welsh-medium education.

3.36

In November 2019, the Commissioner published a report on the findings of a review of local authority transport provision for post-16 pupils.⁴¹ Following this, the Government stated that it intended to undertake a review of post-16 learner travel. The Commissioner welcomed that intention, noting the need to review the policies and legislative basis of learner travel more generally, to ensure that the policies support the Government's strategy to expand the numbers attending Welsh-medium education. On 10 August 2020 the Government stated that the scope of the review would include the 4–16 age group as well as the post-16 age group.⁴²

A statistical overview of the Welsh language in statutory education

3.37

A range of statistical data is published by the Welsh Government which enables us to analyse changes in the position of the Welsh language in statutory education. However, it should be emphasised that the data from the past five years is not necessarily a reflection of the success of the policies of the period. It is reasonable to assume that there may be some time until the policy developments described above have an impact on the position of the Welsh language in education across Wales.

⁴¹ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Provision of transport for post-16 pupils to schools or other places of learning: survey of local authority provision* (November 2019).

⁴² [Written Statement: Extension to the Review of Post 16 Learner Travel](#) (10 August 2020).

3.38

Historically, the two main outcomes used to measure the progress of the Welsh language in statutory education are teacher assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase (year 2) and Key Stage 3 (year 9).

Chart 7: Percentage of pupils in year 2 assessed in Welsh (first language).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Targets		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2031	2050
Number	7,937	7,693	7,939	8,066	8,149	8,400	10,500	14,000
Cohort	35,757	34,957	35,489	36,261	35,814	Targets based on an assumption that there will be a consistent cohort of around 35,000		
%	22.2%	22%	22.4%	22.2%	22.8%	24%	30%	40%

3.39

The above data show that the number and percentage of pupils assessed through the medium of Welsh (first language) at the end of the Foundation Phase has remained fairly constant over the last five years. It should be emphasised, however, that the target for 2021 actually means a fairly small increase from the baseline of 22.4% in 2017. It is easy to understand why the Government has set these cautious targets following its failure to meet the targets of the previous language strategy: to reach 25% by 2015 and 30% by 2021.

3.40

As with year 2 pupils, the data show that the percentage of pupils assessed in Welsh (first language) at the end of Key Stage 3 has also remained fairly constant over the last five years, and has increased somewhat since 2017. This percentage will need to increase at a much faster rate, however, if the Government is to achieve its 21% target by 2021.

Chart 8: Percentage of pupils in year 9 assessed in Welsh (first language).⁴³

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021 Target ⁴³
Number	5,638	5,517	5,662	5,836	6,068	21%
Cohort	31,755	30,787	31,635	32,037	32,777	
%	17.8%	17.9%	17.9%	18.2%	18.5%	

3.41

In comparing the percentage of pupils attending Welsh-medium schools over the last five years, the situation has remained fairly constant in the case of primary and secondary schools.⁴⁴

Chart 9: Number of schools and primary pupils by language medium of school, 5-year comparison based on Pupil Level Annual School Census, Welsh Government.

		Welsh-medium	Two streams	Transitional	English-medium with significant use of Welsh	English-medium	Total
2014/15	Schools	391	39	5	33	862	1,330
	Pupils	56,064 20.0%	8,614 3.2%	782 0.3%	5,201 1.9%	202,739 74.2%	273,400
2019/20	Schools	355	30	4	33	803	1,225
	Pupils	56,625 20.9%	7,949 2.9%	568 0.2%	5,896 2.2%	200,285 73.8%	271,323

⁴³ This target is included in the *Welsh in Education: Action plan 2017–21*, p. 42. No longer-term targets for year 9 pupils have been set as yet.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that the number of schools is not always a reliable variable for measuring changes in the position of the Welsh language in education, partly because schools close, others open or are merged. The difference in the number of Welsh-medium secondary schools between 2015 and 2020 (and possibly the total number of pupils attending these schools), for example, is mainly due to the fact that various Welsh-medium secondary schools are now middle schools (all ages) and therefore not included in the secondary school list.

Chart 10: Number of schools and secondary pupils by language medium of school, 5-year comparison based on Pupil Level Annual School Census, Welsh Government.

		Welsh-medium	Bilingual AB	Bilingual BB, CB and CH	Mainly English-medium but with significant use of Welsh	English-medium	Total
2014/15	Schools	23	9	18	9	148	207
	Pupils	16,728 9.2%	6,139 3.4%	13,618 7.5%	8,459 4.6%	137,464 75.4%	182,408
2019/20	Schools	18	14	13	7	131	183
	Pupils	15,305 8.9%	8,692 5.1%	10,518 6.1%	5,511 3.2%	131,245 76.6%	171,271

Chart 11: Number of schools and middle school pupils by language medium of school, 5-year comparison based on Pupil Level Annual School Census, Welsh Government.

		Welsh-medium	Bilingual AB	Bilingual BB, CB and CH	Mainly English-medium but with significant use of Welsh	English-medium	Total
2014/15	Schools	1	1	2	0	2	6
	Pupils	471 10.8%	544 12.4%	1,433 32.7%	0 0.0%	1,928 44.1%	4,376
2019/20	Schools	5	4	2	0	11	22
	Pupils	5,137 24.8%	2,494 12.0%	1,350 6.5%	0 0.0%	11,755 56.7%	20,746

3.42

If we combine the tables above, in 2019/20 16.6% of Welsh pupils attended Welsh-medium schools and 23.4% attended Welsh-medium or bilingual schools (namely any schools that were not English-medium). In 2014/15 15.9% attended Welsh-medium schools and 22.7% attended Welsh-medium or bilingual schools. In 2009/10 16.3% attended Welsh-medium schools and 22.5% attended Welsh-medium or bilingual schools.

3.43

The percentage of pupils studying Welsh first language as a GCSE subject rose by 0.8% between 2015/16 and 2018/19 and there has been a significant increase in the numbers studying the full Welsh second language course. However, this increase is partly due to the Welsh Government's decision to remove the GCSE Welsh second language short course from summer 2018 onwards. Around 20% of 16-year-olds in Wales in 2018/19 did not sit any Welsh examination.

Chart 12: GCSE entries by subject group based on the Welsh Government's Welsh Examinations Database.⁴⁵

	Number of pupils	Welsh	Welsh second language (full) ⁴⁵
2010/11	36,088	5,240 14.5%	11,564 32%
2015/16	32,248	5,285 16.4%	10,816 33.5%
2016/17	31,379	5,365 17.1%	12,009 38.3%
2017/18	30,371	5,266 17.3%	13,342 44%
2018/19	31,348	5,385 17.2%	20,270 64.7%

⁴⁵ It should be noted that these figures do not include entries for Short course Welsh second language. Please see a more detailed analysis of GCSE Welsh second language entries in Professor Sioned Davies's review: [One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4](#).



The Commissioner's conclusions

It is not possible to overstate the significance of *Cymraeg 2050* in setting a series of targets and a long-term action plan for strengthening the position of the Welsh language in statutory education. There is no doubt that the strategy, together with the associated action plans, sets an ambitious vision for the Welsh language in this sector, with the expectation that key partners respond and move forward in the same direction.

In analysing the statistics over the past five years, there is no clear evidence of significant progress against the most important outcomes of the Welsh Government's Welsh in education strategy. Although there has been a little progress in some areas over recent years, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about its significance. As in the context of the 2021 targets, it is difficult to use small percentage changes as the basis for drawing any meaningful conclusions regarding actual progress. We will have to wait until the next 5-year report before we can begin to seriously evaluate whether we are on track to achieving the long-term targets of *Cymraeg 2050*.

It is quite clear that achieving the targets for 2031 will mean a complete turnaround of the trends seen over the last twenty years. In terms of the targets relating to the expansion of Welsh-medium education, there is reason to be optimistic. The reform of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans regulations provides a much stronger basis to ensure that local planning of Welsh-medium education reflects the Government's national objectives. The move towards ten-year plans, and the requirement on local authorities to set local targets based on the national targets, are key developments. **In essence, it means moving from a planning system that seeks to meet and manage the demand for Welsh-medium education, to a system where local authorities proactively expand provision.**

To a large extent, the success of the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plans framework will depend on local authorities responding positively by producing bold and ambitious plans. Of course, it will also **depend on a robust response from the Government should these plans fail to deliver and if the mindset required of the new planning system falls short.** Whilst there is an unequivocal duty on local authorities and regional consortia in this context, the Government's work in related policy areas will be absolutely key to enabling and supporting local plans.

The Welsh language must be fully integrated into the policy and legislative agendas of education in Wales in general. The need to integrate the *Cymraeg 2050* agenda into the development of education policy and legislation has never been more important as the Government develops a new curriculum for Wales. Unfortunately, they have failed to grasp this opportunity. Given the central place of education in the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, it is disappointing to say the least that the vision for the Welsh language has not been fully integrated into the process of developing the most significant policy in statutory education since devolution. At a general level, a very clear gap has emerged between policy commitments and their implementation. Although there are ambitious targets linked to the commitment to abolish Welsh second language in the delivery of the new curriculum, there does not appear to have been a clear strategy in place to achieve this.

Cymraeg 2050 sets a hugely ambitious challenge that 50% of pupils leaving English-medium schools in Wales in 2050 will be Welsh speakers. Although some significant improvements were made to the curriculum bill as it passed through the Senedd, they do not truly address the more fundamental shortcomings of the curriculum in relation to the Welsh language. The overall framework of the curriculum does not reflect the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*, especially in terms of English-medium schools' contribution to the aim of creating more confident Welsh speakers. Contrary to what the

Government has claimed and to what is implicated in the education targets in *Cymraeg 2050*, it does not appear that the new curriculum will be a turning point for the linguistic outcome of most of the pupils in Wales who attend English-medium schools. Our concern is that the new curriculum effectively repeats the failures of the past and continues with the current system of having two Welsh language teaching routes for pupils in Wales, under the guise of the concept of a linguistic continuum. As a result, the Welsh Government will miss a golden opportunity to ensure that future generations of pupils in Wales are not deprived of the opportunity to become confident Welsh speakers, and will fail to deliver its own strategy for the Welsh language.

Achieving the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh-medium education targets will require a range of interventions across all areas of education policy. Although the curriculum is just one piece of the jigsaw, there is no doubt that it is crucial to all the other policy developments underway. **It is the national curriculum that should set clear and decisive expectations for the rest of the education system to follow and adapt to.** Unless the curriculum provides that lead, it is likely that shortcomings in terms of teachers' skills, school capacity, and qualifications and resources, will lead to an endless cycle that will continue to hinder improvement in pupils' Welsh language skills in Wales. It is worrying, and perhaps revealing, that these comments regarding the national curriculum for Wales are made only a few years after the publication of the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh language strategy and its clear focus on the education system.

There is no doubt that the past five years have been a period of significant reform for education in Wales. The changes to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and to the curriculum are highly significant developments that could significantly influence the future position of the Welsh language in education. *Cymraeg 2050* anticipates that these changes will lead to a radical increase in the number of pupils leaving the statutory education sector speaking Welsh.

Although there is reason to be optimistic when considering the expansion of Welsh-medium education, this is not the first time we have seen statements predicting a 'turning point' in the development of Welsh-medium education. **If the Government is to achieve the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*, it is inevitable that the delivery and implementation of education policies will need to reflect the scale of its ambition.** It cannot be expected that continuing to invest and operate in the same way as has been done in the last twenty years will somehow lead to completely different results. It remains to be seen whether the Government will act in accordance with the vision, and bring all its resources and influence to bear in order to take major steps towards the goal of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

4 Post-compulsory education

4.1

Post-compulsory education and training has a key role in ensuring linguistic progression. For many this is the period that bridges statutory education and the workplace. It offers vital opportunities for individuals to develop and use their Welsh language skills and to reinforce individuals' linguistic practices as they go on to use Welsh professionally and socially.

4.2

There is no doubt that considerable activity took place in the post-compulsory sector during the reporting period, and Welsh language promotion activities in these areas were further aligned with the priorities of *Cymraeg 2050*. Key developments in this area include:

- extending the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to include the further education sector and work-based learning;
- establishing the National Centre for Learning Welsh; and
- the development of the Work Welsh programme.

This section will therefore focus on each of those developments in turn.

Extending the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Progress in the post-compulsory sectors has not had the same strategic focus or investment compared with, for example, the Higher Education sector. With support from the Welsh Government, notable progress has been made within some locations yet this has often been dependent on the strategic disposition of individual providers and/or the goodwill of individual staff. There is considerable work to be done to develop Welsh-medium post compulsory provision and to ensure its take up by learners.⁴⁶

4.3

The Commissioner's previous 5-year report concluded that the statistics showed a 'varied picture of the position of Welsh medium education in further education colleges'.⁴⁷ While the report acknowledged positive developments, for example the Colegau Cymru National Strategy on Bilingualism and the Bilingual Champions Project, the overall conclusion was that the percentage of Welsh-medium learning activities in further education and work-based learning was very low. The problems in work-based learning were further highlighted in the Commissioner's publication on the position of the Welsh language in apprenticeship programmes in Wales in 2017.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Welsh-medium Further Education and Apprenticeships Planning Group in collaboration with Welsh Government and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, *Towards Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan* (January 2019), p. 2.

⁴⁷ *The Position of the Welsh Language 2012–2015*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *The position of the Welsh language in apprenticeship programmes in Wales* (November 2017).

4.4

As outlined below, the statistics of the past five years show some increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in further education and work-based learning:

Chart 13: Number and percentage of learning activities by medium of provision in further education, excluding work-based learning (Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record, Welsh Government).

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Welsh-medium	0.1% 690	0.3% 1265	0.3% 985	0.2% 755	0.3% 885	0.3% 915
Bilingual	3% 13,730	2.3% 8,755	1.1% 3,875	2.9% 10,010	1.9% 6,520	2.6% 7,550
A significant amount of learning through the medium of Welsh	0.6% 2,810	0.8% 3,020	0.4% 1,570	0.7% 2,325	1.2% 4,260	1.0% 2,810
Some learning through the medium of Welsh	3.5% 16,040	3.9% 15,145	2.8% 9,880	3.5% 12,160	5.3% 18,495	5.0% 14,650
English-medium	92.8% 431,620	92.7% 355,530	95.4% 337,680	92.7% 322,910	91.3% 317,425	91.2% 268,015
Total Welsh-medium and bilingual	7.2%	7.3%	4.6%	7.3%	8.7%	8.9%

Chart 14: Number and percentage of learning activities by medium of provision in work-based learning (Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record, Welsh Government).

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Welsh-medium	0.3% 620	0.4% 685	0.3% 515	0.3% 520	0.4% 565	0.5% 675
Bilingual	3.4% 6,475	3.1% 5,045	3.2% 5,135	2.9% 4,850	2.9% 4,305	2.9% 3,620
A significant amount of learning through the medium of Welsh	0.2% 325	0.3% 415	0.3% 465	0.3% 530	0.3% 435	0.3% 380
Some learning through the medium of Welsh	3.2% 6,110	4.7% 7,675	6.9% 10,945	6.7% 11,010	8.3% 12,355	9.3% 11,495
English-medium	92.8 174,875	91.5% 148,665	89.3% 142,285	89.3% 147,775	88.1% 130,455	87.0% 107,850
Total Welsh-medium and bilingual	7.2%	8.5%	10.7%	10.3%	11.9%	13.0%

4.5

Although there has been some progress over the past five years, there has been little change in the number of Welsh-medium learning activities. The overall increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is mainly based on an increase in learning activities involving 'a small amount of Welsh-medium learning'. These activities refer to situations where the use of Welsh is limited to oral communication or a small part of the learning activity, and where the assessment is in English only.

4.6

The need to ensure clarity in terms of the definitions of Welsh-medium and bilingual education in the further education sector was one of the recommendations in the Commissioner's previous 5-year report. Although there now appears to be greater clarity and consistency in the use of the definitions, it is not clear how suitable the categories contained in the chart above are in terms of achieving the core objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*, or how appropriate they are for the purpose of language planning in the further education and work-based learning sector.

4.7

In other words, it is not clear to what extent an increase in learning activities involving 'a small amount of Welsh-medium learning' is sufficient to lead to meaningful changes in the number of Welsh speakers, and the use of the language socially and in the workplace.

4.8

Although the data does not show significant or meaningful progress in the position of the Welsh language in the further education and work-based learning sector over the past five years, this lack of progress has prompted much more significant and bold policy developments over the reporting period than previously seen.

4.9

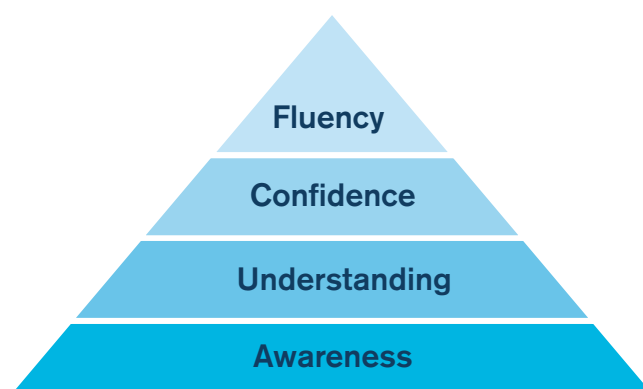
A *Review of the Activities of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*⁴⁹ was published during the summer of 2017 which included 25 recommendations, mainly for the Coleg and Welsh Government. Perhaps one of the main recommendations, or certainly the one that has brought about the most significant changes, was to extend the Coleg's role in becoming a recognised national strategic body for developing the Welsh language across the higher education, further education and work-based learning sectors.

4.10

The Coleg was charged with establishing an advisory board made up of representatives from the further education and apprenticeship sectors together with representation from Welsh Government. The board has been responsible for providing advice on the interventions necessary to develop Welsh-medium provision in these areas. It has also been asked to make bold and ambitious recommendations to feed into a formal action plan developed in conjunction with Government officials.

4.11

The action plan for the further education and work-based learning sector was published in January 2019.⁵⁰ The plan is based on the vision that all learners should be enabled to maintain or develop their skills in Welsh on the assumption that all learners have some grasp of the Welsh language, ranging from awareness of the language, all the way along the continuum to fluency. The 'skills development model' proposes 4 levels as a basis for the planning of interventions:



The aim of the model is to target all learners with interventions at one or more of these levels to increase their awareness, understanding, confidence, or fluency.

⁴⁹ Welsh Government, *Review of the activities of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* (25 July 2017).

⁵⁰ *Towards Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.*

4.12

The plan places clear responsibilities on a number of partners over the short, medium and long term in relation to 6 key strategic areas:

- learner experience
- increasing staffing capacity
- improving provision
- expanding resources
- assessing and developing qualifications in Welsh
- engaging with employers to provide experiences and demonstrate value.

4.13

To ensure that the experience of the post-16 sector is reflected in its planning, and to ensure ownership of the work on the part of the sector, the Coleg established a Post-16 Strategic Board. The Board includes representatives from further education institutions, apprenticeship providers, and employers, and ensures that learners' voices are also heard.

Higher education

4.14

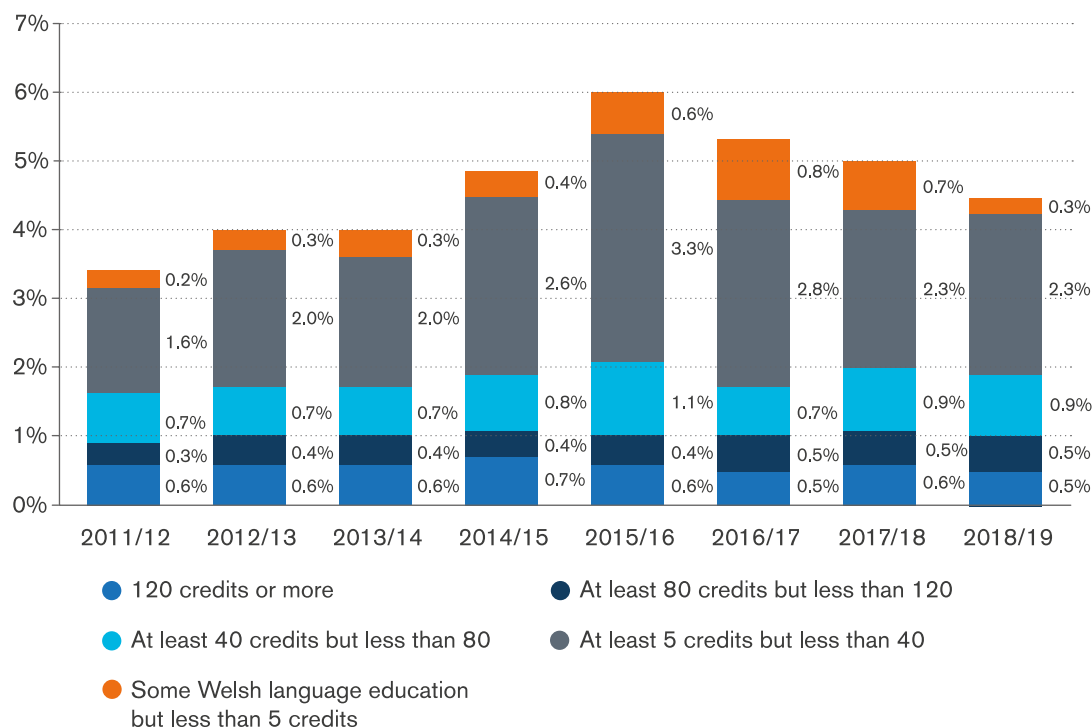
The Coleg Cymraeg has continued to work in the higher education sector, and the *Review of the Activities of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* made a number of recommendations relating to the Coleg Cymraeg's activities in this area. These included recommendations on the scholarship scheme, the subject grant scheme, research scholarships, and marketing methods, including encouragement for the Coleg Cymraeg to focus on promoting Welsh as a skill in the workplace. The main message of the review, however, appears to be the need for continued support for the Coleg Cymraeg's work in higher education, and to build on the progress that has already been made since the Coleg Cymraeg was established in 2011.

4.15

There is no doubt that the Coleg Cymraeg's work in the higher education sector, in conjunction with universities, has contributed to improving the position of the Welsh language in the sector over the past period. The latest data on the Welsh language in higher education can be seen in the Welsh language in Higher Education statistical bulletin, 2018/19.⁵¹

⁵¹ Welsh Government, *Statistical Bulletin: Welsh Language in Higher Education, 2018/19* (30 July 2020).

Chart 15: Percentage of student enrolments at Welsh universities who use Welsh in their education (Source: HESA student record).



4.16

The overall pattern shows a steady increase between 2011 when the Coleg was established and 2015/16, but since then there has been a steady decline in the figures. Despite the recent decline, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Strategic Plan for 2020/21–2024/25 states that 5,275 full-time students were studying at least some of their course through the medium of Welsh in 2017/18, compared with 3,005 in 2010/11. In 2017/18, 2,370 were studying at least a third of their course through the medium of Welsh, compared with 1,982 in 2009/10.⁵²

⁵² Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, *Setting the Pathways of Success: The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Strategic Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25* (2020), p. 9.

4.17

The data also show that 29% (19,870) of Welsh domiciled students at universities in 2018/19 were Welsh speakers: of these 9,945 spoke Welsh fluently.⁵³ It is revealing, however, that only 3,005 fluent Welsh speakers studied some of their course through the medium of Welsh, and that there were 6,945 fluent Welsh speakers who did not study any part of their course through the medium of Welsh. Of the 9,925 Welsh speakers who were not fluent, only 885 studied some of their course through the medium of Welsh, therefore there were 9,040 who did not receive any education through the medium of Welsh.⁵⁴ These data clearly show that one of the main remaining challenges lies in convincing students to take advantage of existing provision.



3,005

fluent Welsh speakers studied some of their course through the medium of Welsh.

6,945

fluent Welsh speakers did not study any part of their course through the medium of Welsh.

4.18

In 2018/19 the University of Wales Trinity Saint David had the largest number of students (2,680) and the largest proportion of its students (24%) receiving some of their education through the medium of Welsh. Bangor University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David together accounted for almost two thirds (64%) of all education received through the medium of Welsh in 2017/18.

4.19

There has been a significant increase over the last ten years in the number of lecturers who would be able to teach through the medium of Welsh. However, the increase in the number of lecturers teaching through the medium of Welsh has not risen in line with this. This again suggests that the main challenge is to encourage more students to take advantage of the Welsh-medium capacity available at Welsh universities.

4.20

These statistics do not necessarily fully reflect the significant increase in Welsh-medium provision across Welsh universities, in terms of courses, modules, and educational resources. Although it is difficult to measure increases in the available provision, the *Cymraeg 2050* annual report for 2019–20 notes that 26 of the main subject groups are now available through the medium of Welsh, which is an increase of 14 subject areas in an eight-year period.⁵⁵

4.21

We cannot fail to mention at this point some significant developments in relation to the Welsh language in the sector over the reporting period. There has been an increase in medical provision and science subjects such as Mathematics and Physics, for example, and a Welsh-medium postgraduate course in social care has been developed at Bangor University.

⁵³ See *Statistical Bulletin: Welsh Language in Higher Education, 2018/19* for a more detailed analysis.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that 1,705 students who had recorded that they did not speak Welsh had studied some of their course through the medium of Welsh, according to the data.

⁵⁵ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. Annual Report 2019–20* (November 2020), p. 23.



Case study: Doctoriaid Yfory/Tomorrow's Doctors Scheme

The scheme to increase the number of Welsh speakers successfully applying for a place to study medicine is now in its third year and is going from strength to strength.

Funded by the Welsh Government, and now supported by Health Education and Improvement Wales, the scheme is a joint effort between staff and students at Cardiff University School of Medicine and Swansea University and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Each year prospective year 12 and 13 students in secondary schools across Wales take advantage of a support programme, which includes masterclasses and summer schools designed to develop skills relevant to their applications and future studies. In being mentored by Welsh-speaking doctors and medical students, those who have taken part in the scheme have been given valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities in training and working as a doctor in NHS Wales.

The first successful cohort of Doctoriaid Yfory/Tomorrow's Doctors students began their studies at Cardiff University School of Medicine in September 2019 when a record number of Welsh-speaking students enrolled on the course. And in September 2020 Cardiff University and other universities across the UK welcomed the second group of medical students benefitting from the scheme.

4.22

At the beginning of 2020, the Coleg Cymraeg published its strategic plan for 2020/21–2024/25 with six priorities for developing the Coleg's work in the post-compulsory sector over the next five years. These include:

- Leading the development and implementation of language policy in Wales in the context of post-compulsory education
- Enriching the experience of students and learners
- Innovating and contributing to the well-being of future generations
- Collaborating proactively with partners
- Contributing towards a bright and sustainable future for post-16 education and training through the medium of Welsh
- Working professionally and effectively.⁵⁶

4.23

There is concern that the COVID-19 crisis will have a major impact on the higher education sector. In a report published as early into the pandemic as May 2020, the Wales Governance Centre stated that Welsh universities face a serious and pressing threat to their financial position. It has been estimated that the sector could lose between £100m and £140m of fee income alone in 2020–21 as a result of an expected fall in the numbers of international students recruited and home students who will not enrol due to the pandemic.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Setting the Pathways of Success: The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Strategic Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25*, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Wales Fiscal Analysis, *Covid-19 and the Higher Education Sector in Wales* (May 2020), p. 4.

Welsh for adults

4.24

Another sector affected by the COVID-19 crisis is the Welsh for Adults sector. However, contrary to the experience of a number of other sectors, there have been positive signs in this area that lockdown restrictions have led to a significant increase in the numbers registering to learn Welsh. This is very encouraging in terms of *Cymraeg 2050* as increasing the numbers learning Welsh is a key part of the trajectory, with an assumption that 2,000 adults will become Welsh speakers each year from 2021 onwards.

4.25

The main development in this area during the reporting period was the establishment of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to lead on the implementation of the recommendations of the *Raising our sights: review of Welsh for Adults* report published in 2013.⁵⁸ In May 2015, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David was awarded the work of establishing the National Centre for Learning Welsh as an arm's length body grant-funded by the Welsh Government for seven years until 31 July 2022.⁵⁹ The Centre is responsible for all aspects of the Welsh for Adults community education programme. It is worth noting the core objectives set out for the Centre by the Government, namely that it should:

- be a visible institution that sets a national strategic direction for the sector
- provide leadership to the Centre's course providers
- raise the standards in teaching and learning Welsh
- develop a high quality, appropriate, modern, engaging national curriculum
- produce resources suitable for a range of learners at all levels.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Welsh Government, *Raising our sights: review of Welsh for Adults* (July 2013).

⁵⁹ A rapid review of the Centre to consider its provision from 1 August 2022 was announced on 24 February 2021: [Written Statement: A Rapid Review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh \(24 February 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#).

⁶⁰ Efa Gruffudd Jones on behalf of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, *Evidence to the Welsh Affairs Committee* (May 2020), p. 4.

4.26

On 1 August 2016 the responsibilities for this provision were transferred in their entirety to the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and the Centre began funding 11 providers following a reorganisation process. The providers offer lessons across Wales, and support Welsh learners. Pre-pandemic the lessons were held locally and aimed to ensure that everyone is able to find a course at the right level within a reasonable distance to their homes or workplace.

4.27

The Centre published a strategic plan for 2016–20 setting five strategic objectives. One of these was to develop an innovative programme of attractive and suitable courses for learners, making full use of the latest technology. As such the Centre has invested heavily in its digital platform which includes a personal learning area; a wealth of digital resources ranging from taster courses to advanced level provision, together with a level checker to enable prospective learners to determine their skill level in order to find the most suitable course. The Centre has also developed a number of other schemes to support learners in an informal way such as the Ar Lafar festival and the Siarad scheme which matches learners with Welsh speakers giving learners opportunities to practise.

4.28

The *Raising our Sights* report identified the need for better methods of gathering and analysing Welsh for Adults data so that learners' progression can be measured and tracked from one level/year to the next. As ensuring such progression has been difficult in the past, the Centre has developed new methods of data collection, and since 2019 it has been a publisher of official statistics.

4.29

Following the implementation of the Centre's Data Management Plan, the 2017/18 academic year is the first full year of data that the Centre has available, and it is not possible to make accurate comparisons with data collected before this. Data for the last three years show a marked and significant increase in the number of learners and in the number of learning activities:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of unique learners	12,680	13,260	17,505
Number of learning activities	19,490	20,330	30,115

4.30

The data for the number of unique learners in 2019/20 show a 38% increase since 2017/18 and the number of learning activities has increased by 54% over the same period.

4.31

In 2019/20, 68% of learners were at Entry level, 11% at Foundation level, and 19% at Intermediate or Advanced levels. In 2017/18, 51% of learners were at Entry level, 18% at Foundation level and 31% at Intermediate or Advanced levels. It is also striking that 15,015 of 2019/20 learners were within the working age range (16–64 years), i.e. 86% of all learners.⁶¹

4.32

One of the Centre's main schemes is Work Welsh which develops Welsh language skills in the workplace and is available to organisations in all sectors. A particular feature of the scheme is the availability of tailored provision to meet the requirements of specific sectors at a number of levels, from online taster courses to intensive residential courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn. These courses have been developed in areas such as the health sector, public services, tourism and hospitality, and childcare, and have supported new sectors in their compliance with Welsh language standards.

4.33

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a cut of 40% in the scheme's budget. This led to the withdrawal of some sectoral schemes and the discontinuation of mentoring schemes and intensive face-to-face provision – which was inevitable, of course, as a result of lockdown restrictions and social distancing rules. The funding cuts and the change in working practices has prompted modifications to the scheme, and digital provision was significantly increased, offering full self-study courses for the first time.

Establishment of a Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales

4.34

In March 2016, a review was published on the supervision of post-compulsory education in Wales. The review's recommendations have led to plans by the Welsh Government to create a statutory Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales. Legislation in this area was due to be brought before the Senedd during 2019–20, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the draft bill was only published for public consultation in July 2020.⁶²

4.35

The draft bill states that the Commission would be required to adopt a strategic approach to planning and funding Welsh-medium education across the tertiary education sector. It is proposed that the Commission would have a duty to:

- encourage individuals to participate in tertiary education through the medium of Welsh;
- ensure that sufficient tertiary education is provided through the medium of Welsh to meet reasonable demand; and
- encourage the provision of tertiary education through the medium of Welsh.

⁶¹ [Learn Welsh Statistics 2019–2020 | Learn Welsh.](#)

⁶² [Draft Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Bill | GOV.WALES.](#)

4.36

It is noted, however, that Welsh Ministers would continue to be able to allocate funding to support the development and delivery of Welsh-medium tertiary education provision. It is anticipated that the Welsh Ministers would continue to provide funding directly to the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Coleg Cymraeg, for example, for a period following the establishment of the Commission.

4.37

It remains to be seen what the fate of the bill will be during the next Senedd and Government, and what its implications will be for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the post-compulsory sector. At a very general level, the desire to develop a more effective and coherent post-compulsory education and training system is one that offers clear opportunities to improve Welsh-medium and bilingual provision.

4.38

The establishment of the Commission would provide an opportunity to take stock of the current situation, and to put more robust frameworks and arrangements in place to ensure that the post-compulsory sector as a whole moves at pace to improve Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. There would also be an opportunity to place the Government's language strategy at the heart of any new system.



The Commissioner's conclusions

There is considerable work to be done to develop Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in further education and work-based learning. The statistics of the past five years show that there has been very little real progress in relation to the core objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*.

The vast majority of the increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the further education and work-based learning sector is seen in those learning activities that include 'a small amount of Welsh-medium learning'. **Once again, this highlights the need to consider carefully the way in which Welsh-medium and bilingual education is defined, and how to ensure that we measure progress in those elements most relevant to the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*.** The whole purpose of gathering linguistic data is to be able to utilise it for language planning. It does seem, at times, that the data currently being gathered often hinder and cloud the process rather than facilitate it. Although all types of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision need to be encouraged, supported and recorded, this should not be at the expense of concentrating on the type of provision likely to lead to the creation of more individuals who are confident in using the language in the workplace and socially.

Having faced an uphill battle to expand Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in this sector, expanding the role of the Coleg Cymraeg, and introducing the further education and apprenticeship action plan is an important milestone. These developments have put a framework in place to enable progress over the next decade to significantly increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. **To realise the vision, and avoid repeating the same messages in five years' time on the position of the Welsh language in the sector, it is essential that the Government provides the necessary funding and resources to fully implement the plan.**

It is clear that the work of the Coleg Cymraeg is bearing fruit in higher education and the current investment in this sector needs to be maintained. It is worrying, however, that a significant number of fluent Welsh speakers choose not to study through the medium of Welsh, and that not all staff who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh do so at present. **Therefore, the Coleg Cymraeg faces a clear challenge in continuing to work with universities to reverse this situation and ensure that more students take up existing provision.**

At the same time, universities need to invest strategically in Welsh-medium provision and proactively promote and market that provision. They also need to continue to work with the Coleg Cymraeg to build on the progress seen over the past decade. This will not be an easy task in the social and financial context likely to face the sector as a result of COVID-19.


The establishment of the National Centre for Learning Welsh has led to a much more comprehensive, coherent and robust system for learning Welsh. But most importantly, it has led to a significant increase in the number of individuals learning Welsh across Wales. The centre's first grant period will end in 2022 and there will be an opportunity to evaluate the Centre's success against the original *Raising our Sights* recommendations. We trust that the evidence that exists provides a basis to support and reinforce the Centre's future work, with a particular focus on developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce in key sectors such as health and education. **It will also be necessary to ensure that the Centre's work focuses on those interventions and schemes that contribute most to creating confident Welsh speakers who use the language in their daily lives.** The first step in this regard will be to develop more robust methods of measuring the impact of Welsh language learning courses on individuals' use of Welsh, whether socially or in the workplace.

5 The education workforce

5.1

Of all the commitments and targets in the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh language strategy, the most crucial to the success of the rest of the strategy in general is probably the one to create an increasingly bilingual education workforce. This is central to all other activities in the education sector: the necessary growth in Welsh-medium and bilingual education cannot be achieved unless an increasing number of the education workforce are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. This is true for the education sector as a whole, from the childcare and early years sector to the higher education and Welsh for adults sector.

Childcare and early years education sector workforce

 Since increasing Welsh-medium early years childcare provision is essential to our aim of achieving a million speakers, we need to ensure a coordinated plan to develop this important workforce.⁶³

5.2

As the quotation above suggests, ensuring that more individuals are able to work through the medium of Welsh in the childcare and early years education sector was one of the Government's objectives during the reporting period. In order to try to meet the challenge, the Government worked closely with Mudiad Meithrin to offer a range of training pathways for the childcare and early years education workforce.

5.3

In 2004, Mudiad Meithrin won a tender from Welsh Government to establish the Cam wrth Gam national training scheme with the aim of ensuring that 200 individuals gained a recognised qualification through the medium of Welsh each year. The scheme came to an end in 2019 following calls to mainstream Welsh-medium vocational provision.

⁶³ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 43.

5.4

In order to continue to meet the needs for a qualified Welsh-speaking workforce, a joint Welsh-medium childcare apprenticeship scheme was launched by the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in February 2020, with the first cohort starting their apprenticeships in September 2020. This scheme is for staff employed (or staff who will be employed at the start of their apprenticeship) by care providers who are members of Mudiad Meithrin, Welsh-medium private nurseries and Welsh-medium schools.

5.5

In addition to the above work-based learning projects, Mudiad Meithrin has been responsible for implementing the Cam wrth Gam Schools Scheme since 2006, to fill the gap in opportunities for secondary school pupils to study for a childcare qualification through the medium of Welsh. The scheme has introduced Level 2 Certificate courses for post-14 students and a Level 2/3 Diploma and Level 3 Extended Diploma for post-16 students in 30 Welsh-medium secondary schools since 2006, with 1,068 students having qualified by July 2019.⁶⁴ At the time of drafting this report, the scheme was still being implemented in 18 schools. There have been significant changes as a result of the development of a new framework of qualifications in childcare, and since September 2020, the Cam wrth Gam Schools Scheme has offered pupils a full range of new qualifications.

5.6

With the establishment of the apprenticeship scheme and the new Cam wrth Gam Schools Scheme, a wide range of recognised Welsh language learning resources have been developed, validated by standard awarding bodies. Confident Welsh speakers and learners alike are attracted to the scheme, and linguistic support is also provided to those who are keen to refresh their language skills.

5.7

In addition to the strategies for training new employees, a range of schemes are in place to develop the Welsh language skills of the existing workforce. In 2016, Mudiad Meithrin launched the Academi scheme. Academi's main aim is to provide opportunities to increase the knowledge and skills of the workforce and volunteers, but there is also an element of language 'normalisation'. The scheme provides a wide range of Welsh-medium training opportunities on various topics relating to the work of the Mudiad, including training on linguistic issues and language immersion.

5.8

One of the most significant developments in recent years in the context of developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce is the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Camau scheme. As part of the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Work Welsh offer, Camau offers specific Welsh language learning courses for the childcare and early years education workforce. This scheme, developed in close collaboration with Cwlwm,⁶⁵ includes a range of courses at different levels of fluency and is fully funded for employers.

⁶⁴ [Secondary School Courses - Mudiad Meithrin](#).

⁶⁵ Cwlwm is a group of five organisations – with Mudiad Meithrin as the central organisation – which aims to help the Welsh Government ensure that families across Wales can access quality affordable care.

The statutory education sector workforce

5.9

The Welsh Government has clearly stated that increasing the size of the Welsh-medium statutory education workforce is crucial to achieving the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*.

5.10

As chart 16 shows, the Government has set targets for the number of Welsh-medium teachers that will be needed for the primary and secondary sector in line with the trajectory for a million Welsh speakers. The scale of this challenge is clear given the trends highlighted in the statistics below regarding the linguistic skills of the statutory education workforce over recent years.

A statistical overview of the statutory education workforce in Wales

Chart 16: Numbers teaching through the medium of Welsh in primary and secondary schools, based on Pupil Level Annual School Census data, and *Cymraeg 2050* targets.

	2010/ 2011	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2021	2031	2050
Primary	2,812	2,867	2,853	2,827	2,789	2,731	3,100	3,900	5,200
Secondary	1,848	1,659	1,664	1,772	1,683	1,666	2,200	3,200	4,200

5.11

Although increasing the capacity and skills of the Welsh-medium workforce is a core objective of the Government's *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* (2010–17), there has been no meaningful progress over the lifetime of that strategy. It is clear from looking at the data that achieving the *Cymraeg 2050* targets will mean a complete turnaround of the trends seen in the past ten years. This is supported by the data on the number of newly qualified teachers, and the numbers of those training to be teachers.

Chart 17: Number of newly qualified school teachers registered with the EWC with Welsh language skills (Source: Education Workforce Council data).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Welsh speaker	453	326	380	373	383	350
Able to teach through the medium of Welsh	388	245	315	273	283	285
Total number of newly qualified teachers	1,268	1,228	1,149	1,207	1,165	1,168

5.12

As shown in the chart above, there has been a marked decrease in the past five years in the number of newly qualified teachers who can speak Welsh or are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The 23% reduction in the number who can speak Welsh, and 27% in the number able to teach through the medium of Welsh, is much greater than the 8% reduction in the total number of newly qualified teachers.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ It should be noted that this overall reduction is due, to some extent, to deliberate policy decisions following a review of initial teacher training in 2006.

Chart 18: Number of first year students (undergraduate and postgraduate) on Initial Teacher Education courses in Wales training to teach through the medium of Welsh, based on Higher Education Student Record data.

	2010/11	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Primary	145	150	145	110	95	145
Secondary	125	95	90	100	75	90
Total of those training through the medium of Welsh	270	245	235	210	170	235
Not training to teach through the medium of Welsh	1,510	1,065	1,010	990	890	840
Not training to teach through the medium of Welsh but fluent in Welsh	165	100	130	115	105	110

5.13

The number of students on Initial Teacher Education courses in Wales in 2018/19 was at its lowest since records began in 2010/11, and the total number of first year students training to teach through the medium of Welsh in 2018/19 (170 students) was 100 less than in 2010/11 (270 students). This decrease reflects an overall decline in the number of students studying Initial Teacher Education courses in Wales. There was a significant increase in the number training to teach through the medium of Welsh in 2019/20, however, and it will be interesting to monitor whether this increase is maintained over the coming years. It is also problematic that a significant number of trainees who report that they are fluent in Welsh at the start of their course are not training to teach through the medium of Welsh.

Chart 19: First year Welsh students on Initial Teacher Education courses in the UK by country of study and year, based on Higher Education Student Record data.

	2010/11	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Initial Teacher Education in Wales	1,430	1,150	1,105	1,025	935	925
Initial Teacher Education in England	420	460	560	530	555	610
Total 1st year Initial Teacher Education trainees from Wales	1,850	1,610	1,670	1,555	1,490	1,535

Chart 20: First year students on Initial Teacher Education courses in Wales by home country and year, based on Higher Education Student Record data.

	2010/11	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Wales	1,430	1,150	1,105	1,025	935	925
England	245	110	105	105	85	65
Scotland	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	20	15	5	5	5	5
Other EU	70	15	10	15	-	25
Outside the EU	15	20	15	45	35	70

5.14

Although the number of first year students from Wales on Initial Teacher Education courses has decreased significantly over the past ten years, the number of Welsh students studying in England has increased in the same period.



2019/20

In 2019/20, more than **one in three** first year students from Wales were studying Initial Teacher Education courses in England.

The number of first year students from Wales studying in Wales has reduced significantly over the past ten years; the number of students from England, Northern Ireland, and other EU countries studying in Wales has also decreased.

5.15

Although there is no evidence of any improvement in the position of the statutory education workforce in terms of the Welsh language over the past five years, there have been positive developments in relation to policy and strategy.

Recruiting Welsh speakers to train as teachers

5.16

The lack of recruitment of sufficient numbers of teachers has become a growing concern in recent years. The first report of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body in 2019 concluded that it was concerned about the 'significant and increasing gap between targets for recruitment into ITE and student numbers recruited',⁶⁷ and that this is now the case for both the primary and secondary sectors. The report emphasises particular concern about 'shortfalls in Welsh-medium provision, especially in the context of the Welsh Government's ambition to achieve one million Welsh speakers by 2050'.⁶⁸

5.17

As part of its teacher recruitment strategy, the Government conducted an Annual Census of the School Workforce for the first time in November 2019. The data from this census will enhance the overview of the linguistic skills of the current workforce and inform the planning of a strategy for recruiting Welsh speakers to the teaching profession.

⁶⁷ Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, *First Report – 2019* (12 June 2019), p. 55.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

5.18

An important part of the strategy for recruiting more Welsh speakers into the profession is the financial incentives offered. Tomorrow's Teachers' Language Incentive Scheme includes grants that encourage eligible individuals to complete a secondary postgraduate Initial Teacher Education programme in Wales enabling them to teach through the medium of Welsh or to teach Welsh as a subject. Eligible individuals receive a grant of £2,500 on completion of the secondary postgraduate programme, and £2,500 on completion of a successful induction period in a Welsh-medium or bilingual secondary school, or teaching Welsh as a subject in any secondary setting in Wales. These grants exist alongside the general grants available to trainees in Wales.

5.19

The Government decided to remove the numbers caps for all subjects (with the exception of Physical Education) for the 2020/21 academic year. It has also placed a requirement on providers to work towards the target of 30% of Initial Teacher Education trainees being able to speak Welsh. In addition to the plans to increase the number of individuals studying these courses, in 2019 the Government introduced the Alternative Routes into Teaching scheme, which includes part-time training routes, in-service routes, and also a route that enables primary teachers to work in the secondary sector.

The teacher training process in Wales

5.20

Initial Teacher Education in Wales has been significantly reformed over the past five years. In 2017, the *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* report was published which set out a series of recommendations to reform Initial Teacher Education in Wales. The most significant recommendations related to the review of professional standards for teachers and the reform of the accreditation of programmes in Wales. The new standards for teachers set out expectations for teachers to have Welsh language skills, to use Welsh, and to develop their Welsh language skills incrementally.

5.21

In terms of the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programmes, there are criteria from the Government that set specific expectations on what the programme should include to ensure that new teachers meet the professional standards, and meet the Government's priorities for education. The criteria also set out clear expectations in terms of the Welsh language. Information must be included about the university or college's provision for those wishing to pursue a career in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, and the provision to improve the Welsh language skills of all Initial Teacher Education students.

5.22

The new professional standards together with the arrangements for accrediting programmes are moving towards integrating the Welsh language provision of Initial Teacher Education into the core provision, rather than it being an add-on, as was the case with the Welsh-medium Improvement Plan, Cynllun Colegau Cymru, as well as the Welsh Language Skills Certificate in the past.

5.23

A recent positive development is the Welsh Language Competence Framework for education practitioners developed by the Government in conjunction with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Initial Teacher Education providers. This is a framework to measure and describe the Welsh language skills of all trainee teachers, and the intention is that it will combine many of the supplementary schemes that existed in the past.

Maintaining and developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce

5.24

As well as focusing on teacher recruitment and training, the Government has introduced interventions to maintain and develop the Welsh language skills of the current workforce. As part of the introduction of a new curriculum for Wales, in 2018 the Government launched the National Approach to Professional Learning. The Government will work with regional consortia to develop and implement a professional learning programme that will include the development of practitioners' Welsh language skills. The Government is also committed to expanding and investing in the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme which provides intensive Welsh language training for practitioners. There is likely to be some revision to the scheme following an evaluation carried out in 2019–20.⁶⁹

The post-16 sector and higher education workforce

5.25

As with the childcare and statutory education sector, increasing the capacity of the Welsh-medium and bilingual workforce is also crucial in terms of the development of the post-16 and higher education sectors. The Coleg Cymraeg's work in higher education generally, and in particular the Coleg Cymraeg's Academic Staffing Scheme, has been key to increasing the sector's Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. The available data show the overall progress made since the establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in 2011.

⁶⁹ The [Evaluation of the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme for education practitioners: summary](#) | GOV.WALES was published in March 2021.

5.26

The number of staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh has increased by 49% between 2011/12 and 2018/19, and the number has remained fairly constant since 2015/16. It is striking, however, that many who could teach through the medium of Welsh are not doing so; across all higher education institutions in 2018/19 there were 1,170 lecturers who could be teaching through the medium of Welsh but just over half did so in practice (605). The number teaching through the medium of Welsh has remained fairly consistent over the past decade.

Chart 21: Staff (full person equivalent) teaching through the medium of Welsh or able to do so in Welsh universities (Source: HESA Student Record).

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Able to teach through the medium of Welsh	785	895	960	960	1,135	1,200	1,090	1,170
Unable to teach through the medium of Welsh	7,705	6,520	7,710	8,795	7,870	8,300	8,290	7,965
Teaching through the medium of Welsh	500	635	590	625	590	635	635	605

5.27

Although the total number of university staff in Wales has increased over the same period, there is no doubt that there has been a significant increase in the capacity of the higher education sector to offer Welsh-medium and bilingual provision over the past decade. The statistical evidence again suggests that the main challenge is to encourage more students to take advantage of the Welsh-medium capacity available in universities in Wales.

5.28

The post-16 education sector has not seen the same investment and strategic focus in expanding Welsh-medium and bilingual provision as the higher education sector to date. As noted above, the publication of the Coleg Cymraeg's Welsh-medium Further Education and Apprenticeships action plan appears to be a significant turning point in that context.

5.29

Although some data is gathered by the Education Workforce Council and by individual organisations, there is currently no complete picture of the Welsh language capacity of the post-16 education workforce. Indeed, one of the first challenges highlighted in the Coleg Cymraeg's plan is the need to map in detail, the linguistic skills of staff in the further education and apprenticeship sectors. It is clear that increasing the capacity of Welsh-medium staff in important strategic areas will be fundamental to the success of the remainder of the vision set out in this plan.

5.30

The National Centre for Learning Welsh's Work Welsh scheme has led to Work Welsh projects in further and higher education. These projects are intended to develop the Welsh language skills of lecturers in order to encourage staff to use those skills in their work. Both schemes have proved extremely popular, with over 450 staff joining the higher education scheme in 2018–19. The Sgiliaith programme also provides practical support to further education college lecturers and to work-based learning providers on the use of Welsh and bilingual learning.



The Commissioner's conclusions

There is no doubt that expanding the Welsh-medium education workforce is one of the most crucial areas to the success of the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*. There is no other area that is as likely to contribute as directly to achieving the strategy's challenging targets. Significant intervention is needed from the Welsh Government to ensure a radical increase in the number of individuals able to teach through the medium of Welsh. **Unless a national strategy is put in place to expand the education workforce from root to branch, it is inevitable that the rest of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy will fail to deliver.**

The scale of the ambition of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy means that bold and radical plans must be put in place to ensure an increasingly bilingual education workforce. The number of current Welsh speakers, and the number of Welsh speakers resulting from the current education system, is unlikely to lead to enough carers, teachers and lecturers to achieve the education objectives of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy. **The education workforce needs to be one step ahead of the general population in terms of Welsh language skills if we are to ensure the radical increase in the number of Welsh speakers leaving the education system in the future.** In other words, the education workforce should reflect the kind of bilingual Wales that we hope to see in the future. Without significant intervention, there is a danger that we will see an endless cycle where a shortage of Welsh-medium carers, teachers and lecturers will be a continuing barrier to ensuring an increase in the number of individuals leaving school able to speak and use Welsh.

As the discussions outlined above show, it must be acknowledged that the Government already has significant plans for increasing the size of the Welsh-medium education workforce. This is true to varying degrees for all sectors of education. With the exception of the higher education sector, the impact of these interventions is not yet reflected in the statistical evidence on the education workforce in Wales.

In August 2020, we published a briefing note on the Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales.⁷⁰ The briefing note concluded that the scale of the challenge that has been set for the statutory education workforce as a result of the *Cymraeg 2050* vision means that a much bolder and more far-reaching intervention is needed to realise that vision. **Without more ambitious action, it is unlikely that we will see the progress needed to achieve the *Cymraeg 2050* Welsh-medium education targets, and as a result it will not be possible to achieve the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.** In reality, the conclusions of this briefing note could be applied to the education sector as a whole: **the level of ambition and action in relation to the education workforce must be increased more generally. It is not an overstatement to say that strategies for planning an increasingly bilingual education workforce must begin to bear fruit over the next five years in order to enable the achievement of the education objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*.**

⁷⁰ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Briefing Note: The Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales* (August 2020).



Name: **Debbie Williams**

Age: **53**

Area: **Tenby, Pembrokeshire**



10.3%
*Speak Welsh
in Tenby*



Debbie was born in England but the family moved to Pembrokeshire when she was a child.

Her father's side of the family is from Wales and non-Welsh speaking, and her mother's family comes from Newcastle upon Tyne. English was therefore the language of her childhood and she speaks English to her two children who are now in their twenties.

"I embrace the Welsh language and certainly see it as a positive when looking for a job in the future. If you have a second language, especially if you live in that country, it can only be positive."

Welsh through Debbie's eyes

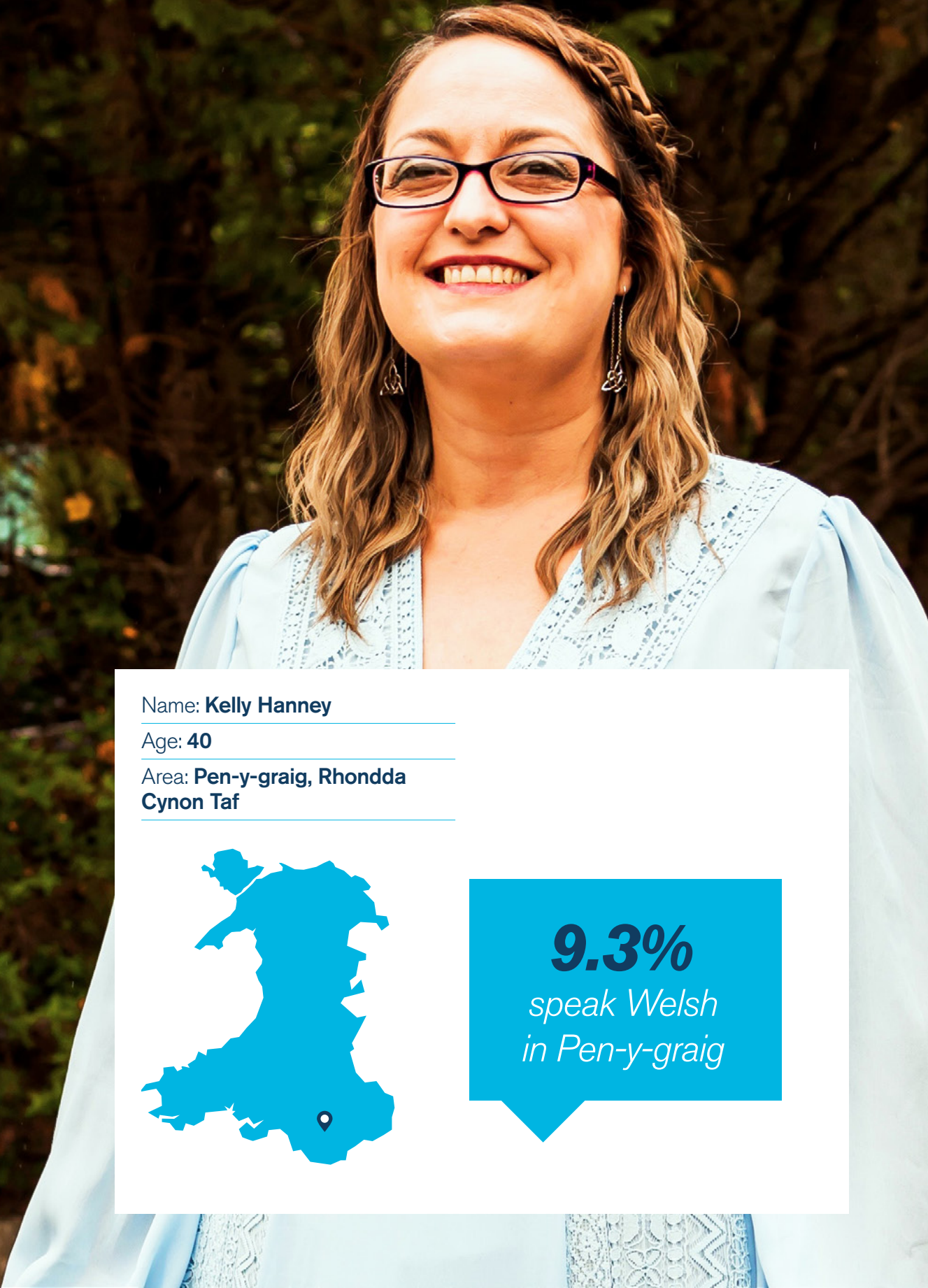
We moved to Wales when I was nine from North Yorkshire. I attended the local primary school in Manorbier in South Pembrokeshire. There was no option to learn Welsh at school but my children, born in the 90s, have learnt basic Welsh from a very young age.

My daughter is now a hospital dietitian and would like to improve her Welsh to make patients feel comfortable, especially when they are very ill. The main problem I face is confidence, and worrying about getting words wrong. If I have a go, I'm worried they'll reply really quickly, which would make me panic and revert to English.

I understand a lot, and if someone asks me a question, more often than not, I will understand. I work as a secretary at the new Welsh-medium school in Tenby and am surrounded by Welsh all day, every day. Around 85% of parents are non-Welsh speakers, although the vast majority attend Welsh lessons at school during the day. And if they don't learn, they are certainly very supportive of the language.

But setting up the school wasn't easy. In 2016, when the school opened, there was a lot of local opposition with people saying 'it will never happen' or 'I don't understand why they're throwing all this money at Welsh-medium education'. But, five years on, having started with 70 children, we now have 203 children on the books and 51 in the Nursery class at the moment.

If you went down Tenby high street, I don't think you would be able to speak Welsh anywhere. But I believe that establishing a Welsh-medium school is going to have an increasing impact on the community and that we will be able to hear more Welsh being spoken in the area in the future.



Name: **Kelly Hanney**

Age: **40**

Area: **Pen-y-graig, Rhondda
Cynon Taf**



9.3%

*Speak Welsh
in Pen-y-graig*



Kelly learnt Welsh at school, and although no-one older than her generation speaks Welsh in her family, she tends to speak it to her sister. Kelly lives with her husband and two children and the language of the home is mostly English.

“I’ve had loads of opportunities through the Welsh language, when I was young to act in a TV series and at work. I get to do loads of things that other people who do the same job as me can’t do because I’m a Welsh speaker.”

Welsh through Kelly’s eyes

I went to Welsh-medium schools, Ysgol Gynradd Bodringallt and then Ysgol Uwchradd y Cymer.

I met my husband at the comprehensive school, and we spoke English together until we had children but we try to speak more Welsh since the children were born.

As for the children, I would say that I speak 70% English, 30% Welsh with them. The youngest has special needs, and finds English easier. But both go to the Welsh-medium school.

My sister and I speak Welsh together a lot. But at any family gathering or whatever, we would speak English to each other as the rest of the family don’t speak Welsh.

I work for HMRC. At the office, no one else speaks Welsh but the Welsh Language Unit sometimes asks for Welsh-speaking volunteers to go to schools. I promote the Welsh language a lot at work, and teach everyone in the office one Welsh word every day.

In Tonypany, I would say that half of the shops have one person who can speak Welsh (although there are only about 10 shops in total). It’s really good up the road at Treorchy. A lot of the area’s business owners used to go to Ysgol y Cymer, and have kept in touch so they work as a small Welsh-speaking community.

Aelwyd Cwm Rhondda also meets in Treorchy. The Aelwyd was set up when women returned to the valley after attending Welsh universities and felt they wanted to carry on with their ‘Aelwyd/ competing’ life.

Without the Aelwyd, I would only have spoken Welsh with my sister and the children, and that would be the sum total of Welsh I would use. The Aelwyd is extremely valuable to me.



Name: **Xiaoling Zhao**

Age: **32**

Area: **Pillgwenlly, Newport**



8.5%

*Speak Welsh
in Pillgwenlly*



Xiaoling is originally from south-west China where she grew up speaking Fuzhouese, a dialect spoken in western China. She speaks Mandarin with her husband and her three children at home.

Xiaoling has recently received Home Office Leave to Remain and has been receiving her Welsh lessons from the British Red Cross asylum seeker and refugee Support service in Newport. The lessons are offered in partnership with Learn Welsh Gwent.

“The best thing about learning Welsh is that I can sing in Welsh with my youngest girl. I certainly want to continue learning the language. My favourite Welsh words are croeso and hufen iâ.”

Welsh through Xiaoling’s eyes

We arrived in Wales in August 2012. I first heard Welsh at the train station years ago, and I liked the sound of the language.

More recently, my sons, who go to Pillgwenly Primary School, have come home from school speaking a little Welsh and I thought – if they can learn Welsh, why can't I? I also want them to look at me, and be motivated to follow my lead and speak more than two languages.

I attend Welsh lessons and the Red Cross Ti a Fi group in Newport with my little girl aged 3 and she loves singing the Welsh songs. Our favourite song is 'un bys, dau fys, tri bys yn dawnsio'.

It's a difficult language to learn when you're my age, trying to remember and learn new words that are so unfamiliar to me. The boys sometimes have to remind me of some words.

I don't get much opportunity to practise outside lessons, but I go to a coffee morning at Community House, a Christian community centre in Newport. Some of the older people at the centre heard that I was learning Welsh and they were surprised, but very happy, so I get the chance to practise with them.

Part 3: Increasing the use of the language



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner



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‘...It requires an act of choice’

The second of the three strategic themes of *Cymraeg 2050*, and set in the centre of its structure, is increasing the use of the Welsh language. This is also the core element of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s work and vision. Although the slogan of ‘a million Welsh speakers’ captured people’s hearts and minds, the Commissioner has consistently emphasised that ultimately the real, most significant challenge, is that of increasing use. The target of a million has hit the headlines and there is a general tendency to neglect the strategy’s second target:

☰ The percentage of the population that speak Welsh daily, and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh, to increase from 10 per cent (in 2013–15) to 20 per cent by 2050.¹

After all, what is the point in counting speakers if those speakers do not choose to use the language every day and are not given opportunities to use it? For a language to live, it must be used. The current Commissioner, Aled Roberts, made it clear when announcing his initial vision that he did not want to see Wales and the Welsh language end up in a similar situation to that of Ireland:

☰ A country where Irish has been an official language since 1926, where they have their million speakers – 1.76m to be precise. But of those 1.76m, fewer than 74,000 of them use it every day – 4 per cent. That would be a tragedy if it were to happen in Wales; so we must work to ensure that we do not simply focus on status and so on, but on promoting the use of the language.²

¹ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* (2017), p. 11.

² This quote comes from the Welsh Language Commissioner’s address at the Conwy National Eisteddfod 2019 [author’s translation].

***Cymraeg 2050* acknowledges the central role of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the influence of the Welsh Language Measure in driving change in the context of the workplace and services. On 1 January 2016, the first day of the reporting period of this report, the Welsh language standards were not in operation by any organisation. The standards became operational for the first group of organisations on 30 March 2016. We therefore have a golden and unique opportunity, five years since the standards came into force, to take a holistic view of these language domains, taking into account the impact of the standards on them. The Commissioner has published data on organisations' performance consistently over that period, but this report brings together these findings for the first time, offering an overview of developments seen over the past five years.**


Those organisations that fall under the scope of the Measure are not the only ones that provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, of course, or the only ones that fall within the Commissioner's remit either. This part of the report also addresses the essential services and those essential opportunities provided by the private and third sectors. Thankfully, we are not just beings who work and access services. 'All work and no play...' as they say, and this part will conclude with an overview of the many festivals, clubs and social events held during the reporting period.

1 The workplace and public services

The advent of standards and regulation

1.1

In laying the first standards regulations before the National Assembly on 24 March 2015, the First Minister at the time, Carwyn Jones AM, said:

 Our ultimate aim is for the Welsh language to be considered as more than just a translation issue, becoming an automatic part of service provision in Wales. We want to see the Welsh language being normalised in all parts of private and public life, and, of course, in the workplace. We are confident, therefore, that the standards will be a key step towards that.³

1.2

The Welsh Language Measure gives authority to the Welsh Ministers to specify standards, a set of directives or rules that require organisations to conduct themselves in a particular way, or to carry out certain activities in relation to the Welsh language. There are several categories of standards, which relate to different areas – service delivery, policy making, internal operations, and promoting the Welsh language through 5-year strategies. There are also standards relating to record keeping and the provision of information to the public and to the Commissioner about how an organisation implements the standards.

³ [Minutes for Plenary – the Fourth Assembly, 24/03/2015 13:30 \(senedd.cymru\)](#).

1.3

By the end of 2020, the Senedd had approved six sets of Welsh language standards regulations, each one slightly different and relevant to a particular group of organisations, and 123 organisations were implementing the standards. The Commissioner is responsible for imposing standards on the different groups of organisations and does so by following the process outlined in the Measure. Standards investigations are carried out in the first instance in conjunction with each organisation individually, before proceeding to impose specific standards on those organisations, specifying a date when they must start complying with their new duties.



**By the end of 2020
123 organisations were
implementing the standards**

Chart 22: Organisations under a duty to comply with Welsh language standards (December 2020).

Group of organisations	Specific organisations	Date standards were implemented
No. 1 regulations	County councils, national parks and the Welsh Ministers (26 organisations)	Implementing standards from 30 March 2016
No. 2 regulations	Various national organisations (33 organisations)	Implementing standards from 25 January 2017
No. 4 regulations	Tribunals in Wales and other adjudication bodies (7 organisations)	Implementing standards from 30 March 2017
No. 5 regulations	Police forces, police and crime commissioners, and fire services (14 organisations)	Implementing standards from 30 March 2017
No. 6 regulations (originally introduced as no. 3)	Universities and further education institutions (25 institutions)	Implementing standards from 1 April 2018
No. 7 regulations	Health boards, NHS trusts, and community health councils (18 organisations)	Implementing standards from 30 May 2019

1.4

The Government has not yet introduced standards regulations for all possible organisations. The aim is to introduce standards regulations for health regulators shortly, and to enable the Commissioner to impose standards on train and water companies thereafter.

1.5

At present, there is no indication that the Government intends to impose language duties on other organisations, although there are several bodies that could be brought under standards according to the Measure (in some cases with the consent of the Secretary of State). These include Crown bodies and UK Government departments, gas, electricity, sewerage, postal, telecommunications, training service providers, and community councils.

1.6

Several of the above organisations therefore continue to implement Welsh language schemes under the Welsh Language Act 1993, which the Commissioner is also responsible for regulating.

1.7

There are a number of fundamental differences between Welsh language standards and language schemes, and between the Commissioner and its predecessor, the Welsh Language Board. Taken together, these differences mean that the standards create enforceable rights and duties. That was not the case with the previous system:

Who decides on the language duties for an organisation?



Welsh language schemes

Commitments in language schemes are decided by the organisations themselves, and so they may be as ambitious or as weak as the organisation decides.

Welsh language standards

The Commissioner decides which standards to impose on different organisations and the requirements are therefore fundamentally consistent from organisation to organisation.

What happens if an organisation does not comply with its language duties?



Welsh language schemes

The Welsh Language Board did not have powers to enforce the compliance of organisations with the commitments in their language schemes, nor can the Commissioner enforce these duties.

Welsh language standards

The Commissioner may use his powers to enforce action by an organisation, or may impose a civil penalty if an organisation does not comply with the standards.

How can individuals complain if an organisation does not comply with its language duties?



Welsh language schemes

The Welsh Language Act requires people to complain to the organisation first if they are dissatisfied with a Welsh language service, before complaining to the Welsh Language Board or the Commissioner.

Welsh language standards

People have the right to complain directly to the Commissioner about the failure of organisations to comply with the standards; the Commissioner must consider conducting an investigation into all complaints; and complainants have the right to appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal if they are not satisfied with the Commissioner's decisions.

1.8

As seen above, the resulting regulatory model is quite different when comparing the framework of the Welsh Language Act to the framework of the Welsh Language Measure. The Commissioner is an organisation with the primary aim of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, and in relation to the standards regime is a regulator with enforcement powers. The Welsh Language Board was essentially a promotional organisation and did not have enforcement powers over Welsh language schemes.

1.9

In accordance with its Regulatory Framework, the Commissioner gathers evidence on the experiences of service users and organisations' compliance with their duties.⁴ This is done through methods such as service verification surveys (mystery shoppers), discussion groups, opinion polls, and regular contact with organisations. These activities mean that the Commissioner has first-hand insight into users' experiences and first-hand evidence regarding organisations' compliance with their duties.

1.10

The data gathered over the years clearly shows that the way in which organisations respond to the requirements of the standards varies. Generally, organisations comply as they should and have appropriate self-regulation arrangements in place. This is true of small and large organisations, in all sectors, and in all parts of Wales. However, a small number of organisations have not taken the standards seriously, where they have not introduced the necessary changes in terms of staffing or monitoring their own compliance with their language duties.

1.11

Users' experiences during the reporting period are entirely dependent on what organisations have done to ensure compliance with the standards. In recent years, the Commissioner has offered clear and detailed guidance to organisations on implementing the standards. However, ultimately, the responsibility and ability to improve people's experiences and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language rests with the organisations themselves.

⁴ Comisiynydd y Gymraeg, *Fframwaith Rheoleiddio Comisiynydd y Gymraeg* (Ebrill 2016).

User experiences: The availability of Welsh language services

The availability of Welsh language services: the Commissioner's monitoring work

1.12

The Commissioner conducts verification checks on organisations' Welsh language services annually and the results provide an idea of the likelihood of service users receiving Welsh language services.

1.13

In the Commissioner's 2016–17 assurance report, *Rights taking root*, it was concluded that there were early indications that people's experiences of receiving Welsh language services were improving, and that those services were increasingly being proactively offered. It is also emphasised, however, that not everyone was able to use the Welsh language with organisations as they wished and that organisations did not always adhere to the principle of treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.⁵

1.14

With the organisations subject to the no. 1 regulations starting the implementation of standards on 30 March 2016, it was seen that, after a year:



The percentage of county council receptions able to provide a response to an enquiry in Welsh had increased from 40% to 61%.



The percentage of telephone enquiries where a Welsh language response to a Welsh language enquiry was received had increased from 33% to 65% (not necessarily meaning a full Welsh language service).



And the percentage of county councils providing each of the website pages visited in Welsh had increased from 32% to 45%.

⁵ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Rights taking root: The Welsh Language Commissioner's Assurance Report 2016–17* (2017), p. 5.

1.15

The 2017–18 assurance report, *A Measure of Success*, reported that organisations offer good quality Welsh language services in a number of areas and that the improvement seen in the previous year was being sustained or was increasing. However, as with the previous year, Welsh language services were not always available, and organisations' performance varied between sectors and between types of services.⁶ The findings in 2018–19 were similar with an increase seen in some services, and a loss of momentum in others.⁷

“Policies, letters etc. now arrive in Welsh, and this improvement has happened over the past year since the introduction of the Welsh language standards.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“You can now go to the Council and there are people at the front desk who can talk to you in Welsh, and this has changed since the standards were introduced.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“I would say that the standards have made a difference.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“I now see the local council doing a bit more planning and preparation across all departments.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“I’ve had a good experience of calling the police non-emergency helpline – a full Welsh language service.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“The standards have changed the way of thinking – it’s not something we aim for anymore, but rather something we have to do.”

Member of staff from an organisation in a discussion group, 2018–19

⁶ Welsh Language Commissioner, *A Measure of Success: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2017–18* (2018), p. 69.

⁷ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Rights in use: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2018–19* (2019), p. 11.

1.16

The results of the Commissioner's latest verification work were published in the 2019–20 assurance report, *Closing the Gap*.⁸ Below it is possible to draw a comparison of outcomes for some services between 2019–20 and 2018–19, and in some cases with 2017–18 also.⁹

Chart 23: Comparing the Commissioner's verification of services 2017–20.

Success rates (Percentage of times a response was received in Welsh)	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
CORRESPONDENCE			
Welsh Correspondence – Percentage of responses received in Welsh (where a response was received)	93%	91%	92%
Welsh Correspondence – response time		2.8 days	1.04 days
TELEPHONE CALLS			
Automated options available in Welsh	-	73%	90%
Dealing with the call and providing a full answer in Welsh	-	52%	55%
Dealing with the first part of the call in Welsh, then transferring to a non-Welsh speaking member of staff to provide an answer on a particular topic	-	11%	4%
Dealing with the first part of the call in English, then transferring to a Welsh-speaking member of staff	-	-	6%
RECEPTION AREAS			
Dealing with the enquiry in Welsh	37%	46%	46%
FORMS			
Form available in Welsh (in full)	79%	73%	78%
PRESS RELEASES			
Statement available in Welsh (in full)	-	77%	82%
BROCHURE/PAMPHLET/LEAFLET/CARD			
Material available in Welsh (in full)	-	78%	68%
CORPORATE IDENTITY			
Logo appears in Welsh	88%	78%	88%
WEBSITES			
Welsh language interface and menus	-	72%	92%
Pages available in Welsh (in full)		73%	81%
FACEBOOK			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	-	63%	74%
TWITTER			
Messages available in Welsh (in full)	-	66%	70%
POSTS			
Job advertisements containing Welsh language skills needs category	-	67%	82%
Job advertisements available in Welsh	-	24%	47%
SIGNS			
Signs available in Welsh	82%	93%	89%

⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Closing the Gap: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2019–20* (2020).

⁹ The 2017–18 results were based on testing the services of all relevant organisations, and the 2018–19 and 2019–20 results were based on random sample testing of a third of organisations.

1.17

In comparing 2019–20 success rates with those of 2018–19, for most services, there has been a slight increase or an increase in consistency in terms of organisations' performance, but in some cases the figures in 2018–19 had fallen since 2017–18. However, neither progress nor consistency are necessarily sufficient, especially in situations where success rates suggest that not all organisations are complying with the requirements placed on them.

1.18

The general pattern is that availability is better in the context of services and materials where they can be provided once and for all by ensuring that text or systems are available in Welsh, such as telephone systems, signs, logos, web pages or forms. Availability is also better for services and materials where text needs to be sent to a Welsh speaker (either to deal with the issue or to translate it), but where there are no significant time pressures, for example when responding to queries, producing press releases or messages on social media.

1.19

However, the fact that the availability of these print services is better than verbal services does not mean that all organisations are complying as they should, and a number of organisations need to improve their performance.

1.20

On the whole, organisations' performance was weaker for personal services where a Welsh-speaking member of staff needs to be available at a specific location at the point of access. The lack of progress in the availability of telephone services (55% in 2019–20) and reception services (46% in 2019–20) means individuals are only able to use Welsh when accessing these services around half of the time.

1.21

Although the yearly results are not directly comparable, the fact that there was a significant increase in the performance of those organisations subject to the no.1 regulations in terms of their reception and telephone services in the first year of implementing the standards (2016–17), but that this increase has not continued to the same degree in subsequent years, simply adds to the mixed picture.

1.22

The results suggest that a significant number of organisations need to recruit additional Welsh speakers in order to provide personal services that comply with the standards.

“Often, Welsh speakers aren’t available on the telephone and they reel off excuses about why someone is not available.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“You have to fight to get things in Welsh, don’t you. Before, I would complain more, but when you’re pregnant, or when you have a small baby, you just don’t have the energy or time to do so.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“Papers, correspondence etc., are better, but with face-to-face services, I have to ask every time for a service in Welsh.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

1.23

As the Commissioner has verified each service more than once for each organisation, it was observed that, for most services:

- between half and three quarters of organisations provided the service in Welsh every time;
- between 4% and 19% of organisations did not provide the service in Welsh at all;
- and the remainder provided the service in Welsh at least once but not every time.

1.24

Although most organisations provide Welsh language services consistently, as required, a number of organisations are failing to provide some services in Welsh, or their provision is inconsistent. In analysing organisations’ performance in 2019–20, the Commissioner warned that some organisations are failing to keep up with the improvement and acceptable performance seen in most cases. There is therefore a risk that a gap is opening up between organisations that are complying well and continually improving, and those organisations that do not have adequate arrangements in place.

1.25

In some organisations, structured arrangements and hard work mean that they are complying with the standards thus creating reliable opportunities to use the Welsh language. However, some organisations have not used the standards as a catalyst for improving arrangements and ensuring that they have sufficient Welsh language capacity to provide the services people are entitled to.

1.26

In addition, there were differences between sectors (although some organisations performed well, and others poorly, in all sectors). Organisations subject to no.1 and no.2 regulations (various national organisations) performed best. The performance of organisations subject to no.5 regulations (police forces and fire services) was mixed, performing better than average in some services and worse in others. The performance of organisations subject to no.6 regulations (further and higher education institutions) was close to the average for most services. The performance of organisations subject to no.7 regulations (health) was poorer than average for most services; of course, this is the sector that has been implementing the standards for the shortest time.

1.27

The results of surveys over a number of years have shown that the services of non-devolved organisations, that implement language schemes, are not available in Welsh to the same extent as the services of organisations that implement standards.

1.28

In recent years, however, there has been an increase in the availability of Welsh language services in UK Government departments. This has occurred partly because of the approval of the Cabinet Office's Welsh language scheme in April 2019, defining the responsibilities for ensuring that the content and services are available in Welsh on gov.uk. A number of key processes are now available in Welsh online and some are mentioned in more detail in Part 4.

1.29

Grouping 2019–20 local authority results by area showed that there was no direct relationship between the percentage of Welsh speakers in an area and the performance of organisations. Performance was best among organisations in the north-west, but the performance was similar for the north-east, mid and west Wales, although very different percentages of Welsh speakers live in these three regions. In 2018–19, the performance of organisations in central south Wales surpassed south-west Wales and south-east Wales, although the percentage of Welsh speakers there was similar, but by 2019–20 there was an improvement that meant that performance was similar in the three south Wales regions. The greatest differences were seen in telephone and reception services, with the regions in the south lagging behind in these services.

The availability of Welsh language services: views of service users

1.30

In April 2016, the first month of the implementation of the standards, an opinion poll was conducted on behalf of the Commissioner. The same survey was conducted annually between 2017 and 2020,¹⁰ with some minor adjustments to the questions. The opinion survey, Beaufort Research's Welsh speakers omnibus, surveys a sample of over 500 Welsh speakers. The sample is representative of the demographic profile of Welsh speakers in terms of age, area, gender, social class and fluency in Welsh.

1.31

In 2017, 2019 and 2020, respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed that opportunities to use Welsh with public organisations had increased. The figures below suggest that the public saw a significant increase in opportunities to use Welsh during 2016–17 – the year when the first organisations began implementing Welsh language standards – and that their impression was that things had stabilised since then.

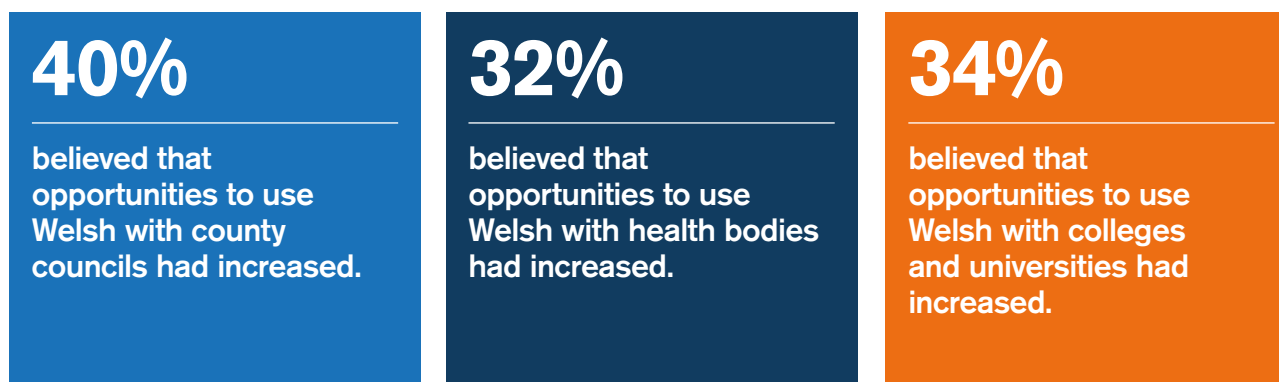
Chart 24: Views of Welsh speakers on opportunities to use Welsh with public organisations (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'Do you think opportunities to use Welsh are increasing, decreasing, or remain the same with public organisations?'

	Increasing	Remain the same	Decreasing	Don't know/ Not applicable
2016	–	–	–	–
2017	57%	29%	9%	5%
2018	–	–	–	–
2019	37%	48%	11%	4%
2020	35%	45%	15%	5%

1.32

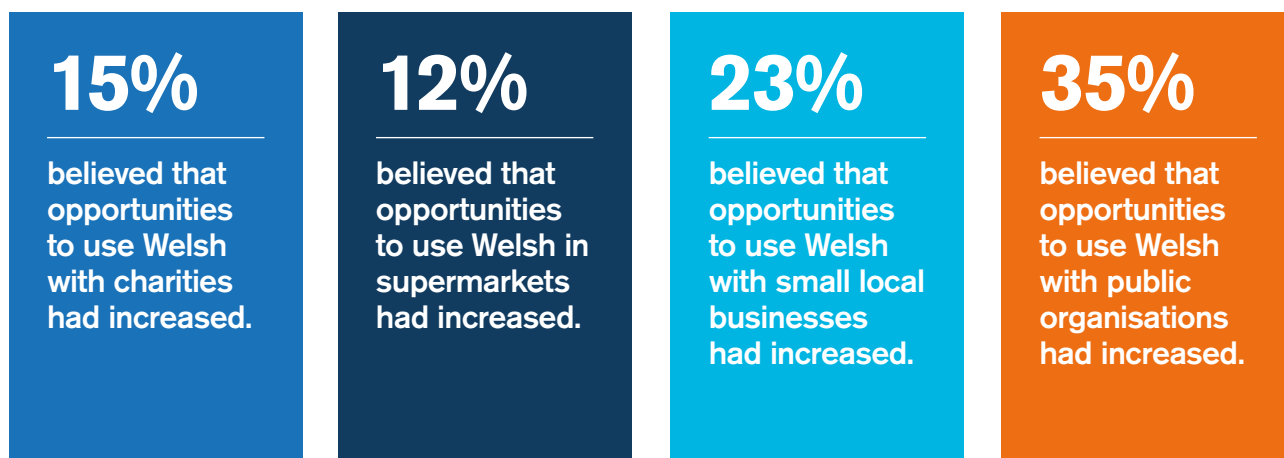
In 2018, the same question was asked but for different types of public services where:



¹⁰ It should be emphasised that the 2020 survey method and sample size were different due to the COVID-19 crisis and therefore these results should not be directly compared with previous surveys. The data is included here for the interest of the reader only.

1.33

The figures for public services have been consistently higher than for other types of services. In 2020, for example:



It is therefore clear from this survey that Welsh speakers are of the view that there is a more visible increase in the public sector, where statutory language duties are in place.

1.34

As can be seen from the results below, responses to other questions in the survey also suggest that the introduction of the standards has made a difference to service users' perceptions and experiences.

1.35

In every survey since 2017, a clear majority have agreed that Welsh language services are improving. The survey conducted in spring 2017 showed a peak in the number of people agreeing that the Welsh language services of public organisations were improving. This could mean that organisations, particularly local authorities, made notable changes as a result of the introduction of the standards, and that the biggest shift was seen in 2016–17.

Chart 25: The views of Welsh speakers on whether the Welsh language services of public organisations are improving (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'The Welsh language services of public organisations are improving.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	–	–	–	–	–
2017	36%	40%	7%	3%	13%
2018	17%	47%	16%	5%	15%
2019	24%	41%	11%	4%	21%
2020	20%	50%	18%	3%	9%

1.36

A clear majority of people who wish to use Welsh with organisations, either sometimes or always, agree that they are able to do so. The 2017 survey also found the highest percentage of people agreeing that they are able to deal with organisations in Welsh.

Chart 26: The views of Welsh speakers on whether they are able to deal with organisations in Welsh if they wish (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

‘I am usually able to deal with public organisations in Welsh if I wish to do so.’

[Only those who preferred to use Welsh, or who preferred to use Welsh depending on the type of service, were surveyed]

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	50%	34%	9%	5%	2%
2017	55%	36%	7%	2%	0%
2018	37%	35%	20%	7%	1%
2019	48%	35%	10%	6%	1%
2020	36%	46%	15%	1%	2%

Service user experience: Quality of Welsh language services

Quality of Welsh language services: the Commissioner's monitoring work

1.37

One of the principles underpinning the Commissioner's work is that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language, and a requirement that includes this principle is included in a number of the standards. The review of services in 2019–20 showed that:

- responses to correspondence in Welsh are similar in quality to responses to correspondence in English; in particular, the average response time was similar (1.04 days in Welsh, 1.12 days in English), 93% of Welsh responses answered the query in full, and similar percentages of Welsh and English responses included additional material, a signature and contact details.
- Around 10% of materials such as forms, statements, documents, web pages, social media posts and signs treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language; the common reasons for stating that the Welsh language was treated less favourably were that text was missing, inaccurate, or less prominent in the Welsh version, or that the format of the English version was better.

Quality of Welsh language services: views of service users

1.38

Service users' views on the quality of Welsh language services were sought in the opinion poll in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Only around half of users agreed that services were of the same quality in both languages, but there was a slight increase in the percentage between 2018 and 2020.

Chart 27: The views of Welsh speakers on the quality of Welsh public services (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'I feel that the quality of Welsh language public services is just as good as the English language services.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	–	–	–	–	–
2017	–	–	–	–	–
2018	19%	28%	25%	17%	11%
2019	25%	30%	16%	13%	16%
2020	25%	36%	22%	8%	9%

“On the website, the Welsh pages aren't updated as promptly, some pages aren't available at all in Welsh. I'm losing faith and feel that the English version is more reliable.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

The right to complain

1.39

The rights of complainants were strengthened significantly during the reporting period as people's rights to complain about the failure of organisations to comply with Welsh language standards were much stronger than the rights to complain about organisations under language schemes.



Welsh Language Act 1993

Under this act, the Commissioner cannot open an investigation into a complaint about a failure to implement a Welsh language scheme unless the complainant has, in the first instance, brought the matter to the attention of the organisation and given the organisation a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond.

Following this, the Commissioner must either investigate a complaint or send a statement of his reasons for not doing so to the complainant.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

Under the Measure, a complainant can make a complaint directly to the Commissioner if an organisation does not comply with the standards, rather than complaining to the organisation in the first instance.

The Commissioner must consider whether or not to conduct an investigation following receipt of any valid complaint, and complainants have a right of appeal to the Welsh Language Tribunal if the Commissioner decides not to conduct an investigation.

1.40

In publishing the 2016–17 assurance report, *Rights taking root*, the Commissioner observed that an individual needed confidence and perseverance to complain directly to an organisation at times, and that it was important for the process to be an easy one for the individual seeking a Welsh language service. That is why the Commissioner's ability to act on behalf of the public by investigating complaints is so important.¹¹

¹¹ *Rights taking root: The Welsh Language Commissioner's Assurance Report 2016–17*, p. 53.

1.41

Responses to opinion surveys highlighted that Welsh speakers support the right to complain.

Chart 28: The views of Welsh speakers on the ability to complain about Welsh language

'It is important that people can complain if they are dissatisfied with a Welsh language service.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2017	80%	17%	1%	0%	1%

Chart 29: The views of Welsh speakers on the ability to complain to an independent organisation about Welsh language services (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'It is important that people are able to complain to an independent organisation (for example the Welsh Language Commissioner) about issues relating to the Welsh language.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2018	51%	30%	10%	2%	7%

1.42

Responses to opinion surveys also highlighted that the majority of people know how to make a complaint, but it appears that organisations can do more to promote this.

Chart 30: The views of Welsh speakers on knowing how to make a complaint about Welsh language services (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'I know how to make a complaint if I am dissatisfied with Welsh language services.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2017	34%	22%	21%	13%	9%

Chart 31: The views of Welsh speakers on organisations making it clear how to complain about Welsh language services (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

‘Organisations make it clear to me how to complain if I am dissatisfied with their Welsh language service.’

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	–	–	–	–	–
2017	–	–	–	–	–
2018	11%	21%	24%	35%	10%
2019	13%	23%	20%	17%	26%
2020	16%	27%	27%	17%	14%

1.43

The number of complaints received by the Commissioner during the reporting period also supports the results of these surveys. In 2016–17, for example, the first year of the standards regime, 151 complaints were made to the Commissioner regarding compliance with the standards compared to the 97 complaints made to the Commissioner about the same organisations in 2015–16 (under the language schemes system). Indeed, there was an overall increase of 74% in the number of complaints during this first year and a total of 263 complaints were received; 151 complaints regarding organisations subject to the standards regime and 121 complaints about those who continued to operate language schemes.



74%

Increase of 74% in complaints during first year of the standards regime.

1.44

Although there has been a slight decrease in the number of complaints since then, they have remained consistently higher than they were before the standards came into force, and the Commissioner received 224 complaints in 2019–20. It is also fair to note that the nature of these complaints has changed in the same period and the Commissioner is now opening investigations into more serious and systemic cases.

1.45

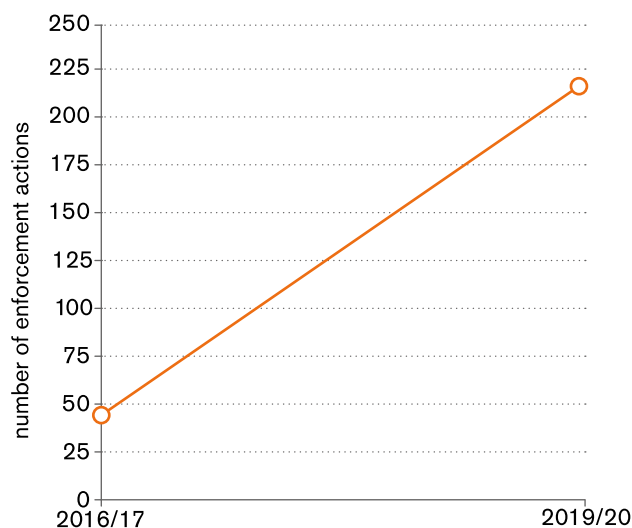
Following a determination in an investigation that an organisation has failed to comply with the standards, the Commissioner may take steps to enforce the organisation’s compliance with its duties. There are several examples where enforcement action has led to improvements in user experience.

1.46

In 2018–19, for example, the Commissioner undertook an investigation into a public body’s telephone services. It became clear through the investigation that it is not acceptable to offer a Welsh language service by calling back the person enquiring, and enforcement action was imposed to require the organisation to develop arrangements to deal with Welsh language calls in Welsh from start to finish, without a break in the service – either by using staff who can provide a Welsh language service, or by using technology. As a result of the investigation, the organisation introduced a new telephone call system which invites callers to press 1 for a Welsh language service and 2 for an English language service. Following this, those who choose a Welsh language service are transferred directly to a Welsh speaker.

1.47

Although the annual increase in the number of complaints has levelled off, the number of enforcement actions the Commissioner is imposing has increased significantly from 46 in 2016–17 to 220 in 2019–20. This increase reflects the gradual change over the period in the seriousness of cases investigated by the Commissioner.



1.48

During 2019–20, the Commissioner placed additional emphasis on verifying that organisations are implementing the enforcement action imposed on them following investigations. Organisations are required to update the Commissioner on the completion of enforcement actions. If enforcement actions are not carried out, the Commissioner has a number of powers at his disposal, for example conducting an investigation or applying to a County Court for an order. Of the enforcement actions monitored between June 2019 and March 2020, 103 had been carried out. Organisations were given an extension to undertake a further 13 enforcement actions, and these were carried out by the revised deadline.

1.49

In the 2017–18 assurance report, the Commissioner noted a significant change in the conduct of organisations in dealing with complaints. They were very willing to cooperate and the desire to rectify their failures was evident. It was reported that organisations responded to requests for information, respecting the process and schedule; were quick to acknowledge that failures had occurred, explaining the reasons for them; and introduced changes to prevent the continuation or repetition of the failure. Often, this was even before the process of investigating and imposing enforcement actions

has been concluded. This did not happen to the same extent in investigations into the implementation of Welsh language schemes.

1.50

The fact that the standards are contained within legislation, and that the Commissioner has meaningful investigative and enforcement powers for enforcing compliance, has certainly led to a change of attitude among some organisations. On several occasions, organisations have indicated to the Commissioner's officers that the statutory and enforceable status of the standards has changed their attitude to compliance compared to their attitude to the language schemes.

Use of Welsh language services

Data on the use of Welsh language services: survey

1.51

Welsh speakers were asked annually which language they would prefer to use when dealing with public organisations. The percentage indicating 'Welsh' remained constant at just under a third between 2016 and 2019 (it should be noted that around a quarter of respondents indicated that, given the opportunity to do so in 2018 and 2019, they may choose to use either Welsh or English depending on the service).

1.52

In 2020, there was a significant fall in the number of those indicating 'Welsh'; the percentage halved. The reasons for this fall are not yet known and it will be important to see whether this trend continues into the future, and whether it is reflected in the actual use of the Welsh language with public bodies.

Chart 32: Preferred language of Welsh speakers for dealing with public bodies (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'What language would you prefer to use when dealing with public bodies?'

	Welsh	English	Don't know	Don't mind	Depends on the service
2016	32%	63%	1%	4%	Option not offered
2017	32%	61%	0%	6%	Option not offered
2018	32%	42%	0%	Option not offered	26%
2019	33%	47%	0%	Option not offered	20%
2020	16%	57%	0%	Option not offered	27%

1.53

Of those who would prefer to use Welsh for all services, almost all indicate that they always try to do so.

Chart 33: The language behaviour of Welsh speakers when dealing with public bodies (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'Do you always try to use Welsh language services when dealing with public bodies?' [People who indicated a preference for the use of Welsh were asked]

	Yes	No
2016	–	–
2017	–	–
2018	89%	11%
2019	94%	6%
2020	98%	2%

Data on actual use of Welsh language services

1.54

There is no reliable and consistent data available on the use of Welsh language services. In the 2018–19 assurance report, it was noted that actual data for the use of Welsh language services was limited and fragmented.¹² Organisations are not required to collect or report on this data at present, and therefore the extent to which any information published by organisations is representative of the situation as a whole cannot be determined.

1.55

However, examining the fragmentary data that are available leaves a clear impression that the number of people choosing to use Welsh language services does not correspond to the number who can speak Welsh.

¹² *Rights in use: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2018–19*, p. 85.

1.56

During 2019–20, some organisations reported that they had seen a significant increase in the use of Welsh, but did not have data to prove it. Others had gathered data that confirmed this trend:

- Following the publication of new e-books on the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales website, they saw a 31% increase in the number of visits to the Welsh language education section of their website.
- South Wales Police has seen an increase of over 10% in the number of Welsh language calls received at their 101 call centre as a result of protecting 25 posts as having Welsh language skills as essential. The organisation is considering increasing the number of staff with Welsh language skills in order to meet the increasing demand.
- The use of several of the DVLA's online Welsh language services has continued to increase, for example the Welsh language Vehicle Licensing service has increased by 14%, Personal Registration Numbers has increased by 41%, and Vehicle Control has increased by 344%. The DVLA has also seen a 35% increase in Welsh calls compared to the previous year, although the number of English calls has fallen in the same period.

Increasing the use of Welsh language services: the Commissioner's research

1.57

It is the responsibility of organisations to provide Welsh language services and to encourage people to use them. Consumer behaviour is a complex issue, based on a lifetime of former experiences and assumptions, and is linked to psychological patterns that are difficult to change.

1.58

The Commissioner carried out research and engagement work during the reporting period to try to understand what needs to happen to increase the use of Welsh language services. In discussions with members of the public regarding what changes could lead to an increase in the use of Welsh language services, some common themes included:

- ensuring that Welsh language services are available in the first instance and are of the same quality, at least, as the English services;
- raising awareness of the Welsh language services that are available;
- offering Welsh first or by default ensuring that people do not feel embarrassed or feel that they are being a nuisance by asking for a service in Welsh;
- ensuring continuity through various aspects of contact with organisations;
- ensuring that people do not have to complain about a lack of service (to avoid causing a nuisance for people and creating a sense that they are being treated less favourably); and
- using plain language.

“The decision to use Welsh or not is often made subconsciously, and we are constantly assessing the likelihood of whether a Welsh language service will be available, therefore we need smart ways of demonstrating that the service is available in Welsh.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“People don’t want to ask. Say that it’s not available or visible, you don’t want to think whether there’s a Welsh option or not – you just want to get on with it... And then, if you do insist on getting stuff in Welsh, it’s a hassle then, isn’t it?”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“It’s my fault, I use English because I assume they don’t speak Welsh.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“People are embarrassed, it’s almost as if it’s a political statement, and it shouldn’t be. Using Welsh shouldn’t be a case of making a statement.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“Fair play, the county council sends out everything in Welsh. But sometimes the way the Welsh has been translated is a bit clunky. It would be better to use more simple language, that’s less stiff.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“More of this bilingual business – without having to ask for it. Without having to opt for Welsh or English – that it’s bilingual either way.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2017–18

“The Welsh language can be very clumsy on official things, and I find that doing these things is difficult enough in English let alone having to interpret things in Welsh on top of that.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

1.59

Responses to opinion surveys highlighted that there is potential for organisations to increase the use made of their Welsh language services by raising awareness of services and offering them proactively. In 2018 and 2019, over 70% of users indicated that they were more likely to use Welsh language services if organisations make it clear that they are available.

Chart 34: The views of Welsh speakers on the impact of organisations making it clear that Welsh language services are available (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'I am more likely to use Welsh language services if organisations make it clear to me that they are available.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	–	–	–	–	–
2017	–	–	–	–	–
2018	55%	24%	13%	5%	3%
2019	42%	31%	14%	6%	7%
2020	28%	33%	22%	10%	7%

1.60

Responses to other questions suggest that there is more that can be done to raise awareness of the Welsh language services available, and to actively offer them to users.

Chart 35: Welsh speakers' awareness of the type of services they are entitled to receive in Welsh (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey).

'I know what type of services I am entitled to receive in Welsh from public organisations.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	34%	32%	17%	11%	6%
2017	34%	29%	17%	12%	8%
2018	29%	32%	18%	16%	5%
2019	35%	34%	15%	6%	9%
2020	27%	38%	20%	5%	10%

Chart 36: The views of Welsh speakers on whether public organisations offer language choice (Source: Beaufort Research Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey)

'Public organisations ask me in what language I'd like to deal with them.'

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
2016	42%	32%	12%	11%	3%
2017	46%	31%	11%	8%	4%
2018	31%	31%	18%	18%	2%
2019	31%	31%	20%	13%	4%
2020	29%	41%	18%	7%	5%

1.61

User-shadowing research, devised and carried out on behalf of the Commissioner by Ateb in partnership with Bangor University, tracked and examined the language behaviour of users in different situations of accessing services in order to identify the factors influencing their decision to use Welsh or English.

1.62

The research was carried out twice, during 2017–18 and 2018–19. During the 2017–18 research, a number of influences on users' language decisions were identified. These included:

- making a comprehensive, subconscious assessment of the likelihood of a Welsh language service being available;
- concern that trying to use Welsh where it is not available would lead to awkwardness or embarrassment, or that using the Welsh language service would disadvantage them;
- previous experiences and knowledge of the organisation; and
- visual and audio cues suggesting that a Welsh language service is available (e.g. signs and badges, the language of staff's conversation, music, and email addresses).

1.63

Similar trends were identified during the 2018–19 user-shadowing work:

- When the Welsh language service was less apparent, or when any barrier, delay or hassle was introduced, some participants decided to use English rather than persevere in seeking a Welsh language service.
- There was a clear social influence on service user behaviour with people following the practices of the users in front of them.
- Participants liked receiving bilingual material; a number of participants chose to refer to the English form while completing the Welsh version, for example, mentioning that the formality and language register of the form meant that they were not confident to use the Welsh form on its own.
- People followed the default language, for example when using self-service machines.
- When asking Welsh speakers who chose the English option when calling a call centre why they did so rather than use Welsh, 48% of them indicated that they would have to wait a long time for an answer on the Welsh line. 31% indicated that they preferred to speak English, and 13% stated that they had not heard the Welsh option (the Welsh option was second, following the English).

“If I’m not greeted in Welsh, I assume that the Welsh language service is not available.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“I don’t like to make a fuss, I tend to just accept what is offered to me.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“It is really really important to know that something is available through the medium of Welsh. I’m personally the kind of person that would never ask. If they offered it in English, I take it for granted that it is therefore English.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

1.64

On the basis of this work, it can be concluded that increasing the use of services is dependent on ensuring that users can trust that the availability and quality of Welsh language services is as good as English versions, designing services so that the Welsh language is actively offered or offered as a default, and promoting Welsh language services.

1.65

It was only recently, as the standards became operational, that the availability of Welsh language services became reliable, although gaps remain in many situations. Years of experiences and negative impressions inform consumer behaviour, and therefore a rapid increase in the use of Welsh language services cannot be expected.

Increasing the use of Welsh language services: the Commissioner's campaigns

1.66

One of the most visible ways of demonstrating that a Welsh language service is available is to use the laith Gwaith (Working Welsh) badge, the orange speech bubble that can be found throughout the country in shops, offices and on websites. The laith Gwaith scheme is now well established and celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2020.



In the last five years, over a quarter of a million badges, lanyards and posters have been distributed to public organisations, businesses, charities and members of the public.

1.67

Indeed, the laith Gwaith scheme is so successful here in Wales, the idea has been adopted in Scotland. The Commissioner worked with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to develop a similar scheme there and since October 2019 they also have badges, lanyards and blue-bubble posters, derived directly from the scheme in Wales, to demonstrate the provision of a Gaelic language service.



1.68

Diwrnod Hawliau/Welsh Language Rights Day is another campaign to encourage people to use Welsh language services. In 2018, the Commissioner provided marketing materials and templates for organisations that came under the standards for the first time to make it easier for them to promote their Welsh language services. The aim was to promote rights in a way that was easy for the public to understand and simplify the standards as relevant rights. This led to the launch of Welsh Language Rights Day in 2019, a day for public organisations to promote their Welsh language services. The campaign was held again in 2020 and the intention is to hold the Welsh Language Rights Day annually on 7 December to coincide with the date of the passing of the Welsh Language Measure in the Assembly.

Promoting Welsh language services

1.69

Welsh language standards include a requirement to promote Welsh language services and to advertise those services in Welsh.

1.70

In 2016–17, the Commissioner undertook a review of the activities of those organisations subject to the no.1 regulations to raise awareness of their Welsh language services. A large proportion of the organisations reviewed (77%) could not provide examples of activities and proactive methods of promoting and advertising Welsh language services.

1.71

Whilst verifying services in 2019–20, we looked at a number of criteria to see if organisations were promoting their Welsh language services in accordance with the specific requirements set out in the standards. It appears that a fairly low percentage of organisations take simple steps to inform users that a Welsh language service is available. This can be as simple as including a statement in an email signature and on materials, for example, or providing a laith Gwaith badge to reception staff.

Chart 37: Organisations promoting their Welsh language services (Source: Assurance Report 2019–20).

Booklets, leaflets etc: English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	7%
Forms: English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	19%
Press releases: English version stating that the document is also available in Welsh	22%
Self service machines: default language is Welsh or bilingual	25%
English correspondence: response contains statement welcoming Welsh correspondence	31%
Reception areas: all reception staff who spoke Welsh wearing a badge indicating this	36%
Welsh correspondence: response contains statement welcoming Welsh correspondence	41%
Telephone calls: voicemail message advising that a message can be left in Welsh	43%
Job advertisements: application form with space to note preferred language of assessment	47%
Reception areas: a sign stating that the use of Welsh is welcome	51%
Job advertisements: statement welcoming applications in Welsh	58%
Telephone calls: an active offer of a Welsh language service at the start of the call	67%
Websites: splash page or similar offering Welsh proactively	69%
Self service machines: an active offer of a Welsh language service	75%
Webpages: a 'Cymraeg/Welsh' button on the English version	91%

“Having to ask someone to speak Welsh, and the possibility of being rejected, is awkward. If I see that they are wearing a laith Gwaith badge, I’ll speak Welsh straight away.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“The logo is the easiest way to promote... Everyone recognises the logo.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

1.72

It is therefore clear that organisations have not responded well enough on the whole to the new requirements to promote their Welsh language services. And this despite the fact that the Commissioner has addressed this failing in assurance reports and has held workshops on the issue for organisations.

1.73

There are some exceptions, however. Carmarthenshire County Council decided to raise awareness of its Welsh language services in general through the Pa Bynnag Ffordd/Learning the Language campaign in 2016–17, for example.



Case study: Carmarthenshire County Council

Data on our customers' use of Welsh with our contact centre did not correspond with census data on the percentage of Welsh speakers in the county. We decided that there was a need to ensure that customers were aware of the Council's Welsh language services.

We decided to do this by running a general campaign highlighting the fact that the Council's services – whatever method people choose to contact us – are available in Welsh.

We came up with a catchy slogan to encourage people to use the Council's services in Welsh. The Welsh slogan – 'Pa bynnag ffordd...' – focused on the choice available to users, and the English slogan – 'Learning the language?' – specifically targeted Welsh learners.

We designed a brand and bright banners for the campaign and placed advertisements with the slogan and brand in prominent locations such as council newspapers, papurau bro, and bus stops.

We followed this up by continuing to monitor the use of Welsh at the contact centre.

Since holding this general campaign in 2016–17, we have focused on promoting specific Welsh language services, for example by working with health practitioners and flying start to promote Welsh-medium childcare services.

1.74

Organisations have made simple and effective changes so that the Welsh language service appears to be the most prominent option, for example by providing their website in Welsh by default, changing the location of the Welsh option to be more prominent on a telephone service, and introducing a pop-up advertisement on the English version of a website encouraging users to go to the Welsh version.

1.75

Dŵr Cymru launched a campaign at the Conwy National Eisteddfod in 2019 to increase the number of customers using the company's Welsh language services to 25,000 by 2025. At the time of registration, customers are actively invited to indicate their chosen language and at the time of drafting this report, Dŵr Cymru was in the process of introducing further updates to its systems to track customers' use of Welsh language services.

1.76

It is clear, however, that all organisations need to implement simple and basic changes to make it absolutely clear to users that their services are available in Welsh.

Acting on language choice

1.77

Some organisations have put in place arrangements to establish the language choice of users and to act on this in all subsequent contact. For example:

- The Lottery Community Fund identifies language choice during the initial conversation with applicants and grant recipients. Language choice is recorded on the organisation's contact management system which is available to staff at each location.
- South Wales Police have developed a method of identifying and recording individuals who choose to use Welsh with them so that services can be tailored for them where possible. Over 4,500 individuals had been identified at the end of the reporting period. Training for staff includes how to deal with Welsh speakers and the importance of recording language choice.

1.78

Some organisations noted that their IT systems do not make it easy to record users' language choice and this is discussed in more detail in Part 4 of this report.

1.79

Specific standards have been imposed on health organisations, which require them to ask inpatients on their first day in hospital whether they wish to use Welsh during their visit, and to inform staff who are likely to communicate with patients of that wish.



Case study: Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

We understand how important it is for Welsh-speaking patients to be able to use the language as much as possible during their time in hospital.

We have actively mainstreamed the requirements of the standards through our Ward Accreditation Scheme. This scheme introduces a set of standards for staff with regard to quality, and the safety and care of patients on wards, and therefore adding Welsh language requirements to this was the most effective and efficient way of implementing the standards.

Our Language Choice Scheme means that patients need to be asked what their chosen language is. Once this has been done – and if the patient agrees to be part of the scheme – the laith Gwaith logo magnet is placed on the magnetic whiteboard at the individual's bed, to show staff that they should communicate with them in Welsh if they can.

Having been successfully piloted on specific wards at Ysbyty Gwynedd in early 2017, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Language Choice Scheme was extended to include all wards at Ysbyty Gwynedd and Ysbyty Glan Clwyd by May 2019.

“In implementing the scheme, the Unit's staff have become increasingly aware of the specific needs of each family. The magnets allow us to see if new parents can speak Welsh, without us having to ask.

When Welsh-speaking members of staff are on duty at the Unit, they are now matched with Welsh speakers.

As our staff also wear the 'I speak Welsh' logo on their uniform, the Scheme works both ways as parents also see which staff members can speak Welsh without having to ask. This ensures that they feel more comfortable, as they are able to communicate with those members of staff in their first language.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“During my stay at Ysbyty Alltwen, I chose to be part of the language scheme, and the staff placed the 'Cymraeg' magnet above me, so that they knew that I preferred to speak Welsh. It's a great idea, and it enables staff to better communicate with the patients who prefer to speak Welsh, which helps to provide even better care.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

The Welsh language skills of the workforce

1.80

The findings contained in this chapter about the availability and quality of Welsh language services, particularly in the context of personal services, highlight how vital it is to have enough Welsh speakers in the workforce in order to improve the experiences of Welsh speakers. Some Welsh language services can be provided through central arrangements, but for services such as reception and telephone services, staff need to be in a specific place at a specific time to provide the service.

1.81

The Commissioner concluded in the 2018–19 assurance report that the main factor influencing the ability of organisations to offer appropriate Welsh language provision is the number of staff with Welsh language skills, and that increasing numbers is therefore crucial.¹³ The standards provide two main ways for organisations to increase their internal capacity in terms of Welsh language skills: developing the Welsh language skills of existing staff, and recruiting staff who already have Welsh language skills.

Data on staff Welsh language skills

1.82

The standards require organisations to assess the Welsh language skills of their staff; to keep a record of the number of staff with Welsh language skills (and their skill level where known); and to publish that number in the organisation's annual report.

1.83

Organisations are not required to use a standard approach to assessment, and they use various models to assess the Welsh language skills of their staff. The records are usually based on self-assessment rather than on a verified test or tutor assessment. It is therefore not possible to arrive at a combined figure of the number of Welsh speakers in each public organisation implementing standards, or to compare the capacity of different organisations with each other.

1.84

The potential to transform this situation was noted during the reporting period. In 2018–19, the National Centre for Learning Welsh ran the National Level Checker pilot and launched it in full in April 2019. The checker is a resource that organisations can use as part of the recruitment and appointment process. It can also act as a tool to measure individuals' progress as they learn Welsh professionally.

1.85

The Centre has some evidence to suggest that there is an assumption among a number of organisations that staff tend to consider their skills to be less developed than they actually are. The checker can assess skills easily and independently, and has the potential to be used strategically as part of a promotion and recruitment programme setting levels according to the post or department. Between 2018 and the end of the reporting period, the checker was used by 334 employers and 2,761 individuals.

¹³ *Rights in use: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2018–19*, p. 66.

1.86

On the basis of the Welsh language standards annual reports published by organisations, it appears there are organisations where 90% and more of their staff speak Welsh. On the other hand, it appears that there are some organisations with fewer than 10% of staff who speak Welsh. There are other organisations in between with varying and less acute percentages. One factor involved is the demographics of the area in which the organisation is located; sectoral and organisational culture and functions are also an influencing factor, and the patterns are usually long-established.

1.87

Although it is not possible to collate the data to establish a national picture at present, assessing the skills of the workforce to enable planning to take place to improve the provision of individual organisations is crucial. Due to the requirements of the standards, some organisations are implementing policies to ensure that a minimum number of Welsh speakers work on each team or shift. Others are committed to ensuring that the percentage of Welsh speakers working directly with the public in each geographical area is equal to or higher than the percentage of Welsh speakers living there.

Increasing workforce capacity: recruiting Welsh speakers

1.88

Recruiting new Welsh-speaking staff is the quickest way to increase the Welsh language capacity of organisations. With the lack of availability of some services demonstrating a clear need for more Welsh-speaking staff, organisations should use opportunities to recruit staff to ensure compliance with the requirements.

1.89

The standards require organisations to carry out an assessment for all new and vacant posts that they advertise in order to consider whether Welsh language skills are needed to carry out the post. It must be noted whether Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, need to be learnt after the person is appointed, or not necessary for the post, and this should be communicated when advertising the post.

1.90

The assessments are important to ensure that the need for Welsh language skills is given due consideration for all posts, but also to avoid racial discrimination and adverse legal consequences as a result. Under the Equality Act 2010, setting Welsh language skills requirements for posts can indirectly discriminate against race groups with fewer Welsh speakers, if setting those requirements is not a proportionate means of achieving a valid aim.¹⁴

¹⁴ Full information on the legal situation, and how organisations can ensure that they do not discriminate illegally against people from ethnic groups with fewer Welsh speakers, can be found in our advice document, *Recruitment: Good practice advice document* (September 2020).

1.91

During the reporting period, several organisations were seen to adopt more formal arrangements for ensuring that assessments were carried out, but the Commissioner's research suggests that more needs to be done to ensure that the need for Welsh language skills is fully and strategically considered when recruiting to all new or vacant posts.

1.92

A sample of some public organisations' job advertisements was verified in 2019–20. Welsh language skills were essential for 17% of posts, desirable for 63%, and not necessary for 2%. 18% of advertisements did not refer to Welsh language skills (either because they were not necessary, or because the need had not been considered).

1.93

When a similar exercise was undertaken in 2015–16, Welsh language skills were an essential requirement for 6% of posts, and desirable for 42%. In 2016–17, Welsh language skills were essential for 17% of posts, and desirable for 40%.

1.94

Progress is to be welcomed, but there is a need to continue in this direction to bring the number of Welsh speakers within organisations to a level that enables them to comply consistently with the standards.

Increasing the capacity of the workforce: developing the Welsh language skills of existing staff

1.95

Organisations are required to provide opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh lessons, and in some cases to provide further opportunities to learn or improve Welsh language skills.

1.96

The majority of organisations have been operating arrangements to improve the Welsh language skills of staff for years. When a study was undertaken in 2018–19, all the organisations surveyed referred to at least one type of provision, with the majority offering a range of opportunities. The most common methods included:

- online Welsh language training (65%), particularly the National Centre for Learning Welsh taster course (52%)
- signposting staff to Welsh language learning courses held in the community (39%) and residential courses (13%)
- running courses in-house or during working hours (65%), including working with a recognised provider (e.g. a local college or a Learn Welsh provider).

1.97

Police forces, in particular, have been effective in making learning and improving Welsh language skills a systematic part of staff career development, with some forces required to have level 1 skills when starting as a police officer, and moving to levels 2, 3 etc., with support and training, before being promoted. In this respect they follow the longstanding example of North Wales Police.

1.98

The establishment of the National Centre for Learning Welsh appears to have led to improvements in the provision of organisations' Welsh language learning in recent years by increasing the provision of Welsh lessons, enabling organisations to better tailor provision to their business needs, and creating a 10-hour online course to give basic skills to a larger number of staff. Part 2 of this report looks in greater detail at the work of the Centre.

“There has been a significant increase in how many people want to develop their language skills – at level 3 and to strengthen them to level 4 or whatever. More staff are keen to develop skills... and there are lots more opportunities too.”

Member of staff in a discussion group, 2019–20

1.99

During the recent period, there have been more organisations targeting staff who already have Welsh language skills, but who are not fully confident in using the language professionally. This may take the form of language refresher sessions, or training on the use of Welsh in a particular context, for example at meetings or online. Alongside Welsh lessons for staff at lower levels of fluency and recruitment, work to increase the confidence of existing Welsh-speaking staff can be a cost-effective method of increasing the number of staff who can engage with the public in Welsh.

1.100

If organisations' work on developing the Welsh language skills of their staff is effective, along with the recruitment of Welsh speakers, it can make an important contribution to ensuring that organisations have the capacity to provide opportunities to use Welsh in accordance with the requirements of the standards.

Staff experiences of using Welsh in the workplace

Using Welsh in the workplace: a legislative context

1.101

Legislating on language use in the workplace is a consistent aspect of language planning in bilingual and multilingual countries. Examples of laws imposing specific language duties in the workplace include the Official Languages Act of Canada 1988, the Catalunya Language Planning Act of 1998, the Charter of the French Language 2002 (Quebec), and the Protection of Inuit Act 2008. These acts provide, amongst other things:

- rights for individuals to work in the language of their choice
- duties on governments and public organisations to carry out their internal procedures in one or more languages
- duties on organisations to ensure that management teams can operate in a particular language or languages
- duties on organisations to offer employees a proactive language choice at the start of employment
- duties on organisations to implement measures to remove any barriers to the use of a minority language.

1.102

Duties are also imposed on public organisations to support employees in using their chosen language by providing central services such as human resources and management supervision, including performance management, in one or more specific languages.

1.103

The Official Languages Act (2003) of Ireland requires organisations to ensure that Irish becomes the language of work in their Gaeltacht offices by a certain date.

1.104

In the final years of its existence, from around 2007 until 2011, the Welsh Language Board undertook a series of joint projects with specific organisations with a view to increasing the internal use of the Welsh language. Grants were offered to organisations to fund the piloting of interventions, and research was commissioned to assess the outcomes. Funded activities included developing methods of increasing the linguistic ability and awareness of staff, facilitating the use of Welsh through information technology, and establishing specific structures or functions to support the Welsh language in the workplace. Further information on this work, and its findings, can be found in the report *Internal Use of Welsh in the Workplace*, produced by Iaiith.¹⁵

¹⁵ Iaiith, *Internal Use of Welsh in the Workplace* (November 2010).

1.105

These projects were taking place without a specific statutory basis, in other words, neither the Welsh Language Act nor the Welsh language schemes required organisations to develop the use of Welsh in the workplace. The Welsh Language Measure, on the other hand, authorises Welsh Ministers to produce operating standards that are language duties relating to the internal operations of an organisation.

Using Welsh in the workplace: the Commissioner's monitoring work

1.106

The category of operating standards contains a number of requirements that create:

- rights for staff to receive materials (such as documents and forms, or support resources such as IT programmes) in Welsh, and to conduct certain processes (such as internal grievance or disciplinary processes) in Welsh
- a duty to provide training that facilitates the use of Welsh at work
- a duty to develop a policy on the use of Welsh internally with a view to promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

1.107

The Commissioner's previous work suggests that organisations are implementing the standards thus achieving these rights, but there is no clear information on how much use is being made of these rights at this early stage in their existence.¹⁶

¹⁶ *A Measure of Success: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2017–18*, pp. 191–203.

1.108

In 2017–18, the Commissioner undertook a review of the compliance of a sample of organisations subject to regulations no.1, 2 and 5 with the operating standards. All the organisations stated that they enabled staff to use Welsh at grievance, disciplinary and development meetings, and that documents, forms, interfaces, templates etc. were available in Welsh in accordance with the requirements of the standards. There was reason to believe, however, that little use was made of the Welsh language in the organisations:

- Organisations did not indicate how often staff chose to use Welsh in meetings relating to grievances, discipline and development, nor to what extent an active offer was being made, or whether staff needed to request the use of Welsh. One organisation noted that Welsh was the natural language of internal processes, and another noted that it knew that no member of staff wished to use Welsh in internal processes.
- A number of organisations reported that the use of Welsh language spellchecking software and interfaces was low. Only a few noted that they promote the use of these facilities. Only two organisations noted that they actively offer software; another was considering setting the Welsh language as a default with a requirement to opt out of this option. Organisations were unable to say how much internal correspondence was being sent in Welsh.
- It was noted that English was the language of internal meetings in organisations on the whole, with meetings only held in Welsh when all attendees spoke Welsh. Organisations were unable to say how many meetings were held in Welsh.
- Apart from one, every organisation reported that English was its written language. Officers who speak Welsh tend to undertake their work in English, either due to a lack of confidence or because a number of people – including non-Welsh speaking colleagues – needed to discuss it or approve it.

1.109

By 2019–20, although they did not usually have a means of providing quantitative evidence, a number of organisations said that the Welsh language was more visible and was used more frequently within the organisation. It was noted that:

- Teams and departments with a healthy percentage of Welsh speakers had increasingly moved to using Welsh naturally, and several organisations with offices in various locations reported that Welsh is the main language of their offices in the north and west.
- The Welsh language was more visible within organisations as more staff were wearing the laith Gwaith logo or displaying the logo or similar text on their email account, meaning that staff realised that their colleagues were Welsh speakers.
- Flexible working in terms of work settings had led to Welsh speakers gathering together.
- Holding informal social events (conversational sessions, eisteddfodau, etc.) provided learners and speakers with the opportunity to practise their Welsh.

Use of Welsh in the workplace: policies on developing the internal use of Welsh

1.110

As a result of the standards, organisations are required to have a policy on developing the internal use of Welsh. In the Commissioner's 2017–18 survey, only 57% of organisations shared a copy of their policy, leading to the suspicion that almost half of organisations were not complying with the requirement. It is fair to note, however, that the requirement was new – there was no such requirement under the language schemes system – and it is a significant one as it places a duty on organisations to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh as a language of work.

1.111

By requiring organisations to formulate their own policy, rather than prescribing specific actions to be taken, the Government recognised that the situations of different organisations meant that what they could aim for in terms of internal administration in Welsh varied widely. The policy enables organisations to do what is possible according to their situation. For example:

- For organisations with low percentages of Welsh speakers, and no history of a culture supportive of the Welsh language, it means that they could take initial steps to increase the visibility of the Welsh language in the office, and use it in a limited way.
- At the other end of the spectrum, however, the Commissioner hopes that these policies will mean that organisations with a greater capacity and strong support for the Welsh language will change their working language to Welsh, or take other far-reaching steps to increase the internal use of the Welsh language.

1.112

There are some organisations that – either formally or effectively – already operate through the medium of Welsh. Gwynedd Council made a formal decision as it was established following local government reorganisation in 1996 to adopt Dwyfor District Council's internal administration policy. There are other organisations, such as the National Library, Theatr Genedlaethol, the Books Council, S4C and Snowdonia National Park, where the vast majority of staff speak Welsh, and most formal and informal communication within the organisation takes place in Welsh, at all levels.

1.113

Two other organisations that have taken significant steps to address the responsibility of promoting and facilitating the internal use of the Welsh language are Welsh Government and Isle of Anglesey County Council.

1.114

Staff skills are the Welsh Government's main vehicle for achieving this. In its Welsh language policy, *Cymraeg. It belongs to us all*, published in July 2020, the Government adopted the aim that 'all staff working for the Welsh Government will be able to understand Welsh by 2050', enabling all staff who can speak or write Welsh to do so and be understood by all their colleagues.¹⁷ It is the Government's intention that it will be possible to use Welsh and English 'in a natural and interchangeable way'.

¹⁷ [Cymraeg. It belongs to us all \[HTML\] GOV.WALES](#) [author's translation].

1.115

Ensuring that all staff understand Welsh is an extremely ambitious aim, and the considerable period of time allowed for achieving the aim reflects that to some extent. But given the scale of the task, the Government will need to operate very effectively in order to create the necessary changes. Actions the Government intends to take in the five years to 2025 include:

- developing a statistical model to record the current levels of Welsh language skills (for example, considering the demographics of those skills, their grade and location), and then consider the scale of change needed to achieve the 2050 goal
- developing new, improved and innovative opportunities to learn Welsh and change the acceptance criteria for formal Welsh language learning
- reviewing the skills necessary for existing posts with a view to gradually increasing the number of bilingual staff joining the Welsh Government and introducing a basic level of 'courtesy' for Welsh language skills.

1.116

In addition to the above actions, which relate specifically to the skills of the workforce, other steps are planned in order to change attitudes and behaviour within the organisation, including:

- reforming language awareness training
- increasing opportunities to use Welsh (particularly for staff receiving Welsh lessons)
- developing a governance tool to measure the mainstreaming of Welsh language policy, legal compliance and use of the language
- increasing the use of Welsh-language IT resources, and using the translation service in a different way.

1.117

Isle of Anglesey County Council's work on internal use, on the other hand, focuses on changing the practices rather than the composition of the existing workforce.



Case study: Isle of Anglesey County Council

We have decided to take steps to stimulate further development in the internal use of Welsh, building on previous progress and positive attitudes. There was already extensive use of Welsh within the Council, with the vast majority of conversations between staff occurring in Welsh or bilingually, internal correspondence in Welsh first, and meetings of the Executive Committee, the Senior Leadership Team etc. taking place in Welsh. But we wanted to continue to support and empower a positive corporate environment that advocates the use of Welsh in the workplace.

There were challenges to be addressed in increasing the use of Welsh within the organisation. Lack of confidence, expertise and skills can influence the willingness of fluent Welsh speakers as well as learners to try to use their language skills in the workplace. Language use practices that have been established for a number of years are also difficult to change.

Since 2018, we have had a six-year rolling programme for intensive work with individual departments to increase the use of Welsh by staff. We start with a questionnaire to establish a language use baseline, and then implement an action plan that includes actions such as identifying language champions responsible for promoting and supporting the use of Welsh among their colleagues, language awareness training, Cymraeg Clir, language refreshers, drafting etc. using Welsh at specific meetings, informal sessions through the medium of Welsh, and skills mapping. We also operate the ARFer programme within the Council.

“I’m a language champion within Leisure and we have eight other champions in the group. We discuss how we can support our colleagues who are not confident, or fluent in Welsh, to use more of the language at work.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

“I’ve had a lot of support to help me speak Welsh at work. I feel I want to speak Welsh now, not “You have to” – I want to speak Welsh. I speak Welsh with the family and now as a volunteer too.”

Member of the public in a discussion group, 2018–19

1.118

The ARFer programme, developed at Bangor University with grant funding from Welsh Government, is an initiative for increasing organisations' internal use of Welsh by influencing the language practices of staff rather than by introducing rights or as a matter of policy. The programme follows a methodology inspired by the Aldahitz project in the Basque Country and is based on two principles derived from behavioural economics, namely the significant influence of commitment-making, and defaults.

1.119

A measurement methodology known as the Bilingual Observation Tool is used to establish a baseline of language use in a particular workplace, then a number of staff are asked to make a language commitment to use Welsh as the default language with their colleagues who can understand Welsh. A trial within the University showed that the programme had doubled the use of Welsh in one particular workplace. There are plans underway by the University and the Welsh Government to extend the programme to other workplaces.

1.120

Building on the work of organisations over recent years, and looking back at the efforts of the Welsh Language Board, the Commissioner intends to actively encourage organisations to introduce interventions to increase staff use of the Welsh language. This will include interventions to change practices – motivating staff to change the language they use in different situations – as well as internal communication, providing the technology infrastructure and resources necessary to support staff in using Welsh, and interventions to ensure that Welsh speakers feel confident enough in their skills to use the language in workplace contexts.



The Commissioner's conclusions

It is clear that the introduction of the standards has improved the experiences of Welsh language service users, but organisations are not complying fully with the duties. We have undoubtedly made great strides in the right direction, and it is important to acknowledge the effectiveness of the standards and the hard work of organisations in that regard.

People's rights to complain about shortcomings in organisations' Welsh language provision have been strengthened, and the existence of the Commissioner's enforcement powers has led to a change in the mindset of organisations. The Commissioner's complaints and investigation work has highlighted failings and ensured that action is put in place to resolve them.

With this in mind, we want to see the Welsh Government introducing standards for more sectors as a matter of urgency.

One of our main concerns is that the improvement seen is limited to just some organisations. Even if those organisations that comply are in the majority, some organisations are not complying as they should. This means that Welsh speakers who have to use the services of those organisations are deprived of opportunities to use Welsh. The minority of organisations that do not comply as they should need to catch up with the others.

Time and time again, we have made it clear that organisations need to have:

- **robust internal arrangements to ensure compliance with the standards and language schemes** – reliable ways of knowing whether their provision ensures that people's statutory rights are met, including rigorous internal monitoring and action based on complaints and user experiences.
- **sufficient capacity in terms of Welsh speakers to provide the Welsh language services required** – sufficient numbers of staff so that people can be confident that they are able to rely on organisations to give them a straightforward and positive experience when using the Welsh language. It may be advantageous to ensure that an individual at a senior leadership level has responsibility for the Welsh language, and officers or a team providing operational expertise.

Despite the need to address the issue of capacity at an organisational or local level, until organisations have a consistent approach to assessing and recording the language skills of staff it will be impossible to gain a comprehensive picture of Welsh language skill levels in the public sector in Wales. **This is an issue that should be addressed over the next five years.**

We have provided clear and detailed guidance on steps organisations can take to make sure that there are opportunities for people to use Welsh when dealing with them. There are plenty of examples of organisations – small and large, in all parts of Wales – operating in accordance with this guidance and pioneering new ways of working to comply in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances.

Welsh language services are not promoted and facilitated as they should be, and as a result the use of Welsh language services is not as high as it could be. **More also needs to be done to design services in a way that encourages people to use Welsh.** We want organisations to be confident enough in their services to be able to actively encourage people to use them, taking advantage of the guidance provided by the Commissioner and resources and campaigns such as Iaith Gwaith and Welsh Language Rights Day.

There is potential for a significant increase in the use of Welsh as the language of work. With many people spending the majority of their waking hours at work, giving people opportunities to get into the habit of spending that time discussing and working through the medium of Welsh may have a significant impact on language practices in the workplace, the home and the community. **This aspect will need a renewed focus over the next five years, ensuring that the change in people's work patterns increases – rather than hinders – the formal and informal use of Welsh in the workplace.**

The Commissioner's view on the impact of COVID-19 on the availability and quality of Welsh language services



This report is not the place to consider the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of Welsh or to evaluate how the public sector in Wales has responded to the challenges during this period. However, we consider that these unprecedented times have highlighted opportunities and risks that are important to record here.

The challenges that arise in planning for the Welsh language at a UK level have been highlighted following the urgent decision to procure and organise some of the pandemic response centrally through the Westminster Department for Health and Social Care. The collaboration seen between the Governments of the four nations to design emergency solutions to new challenges centrally – particularly in the case of the procurement of track and trace services – led to delays in providing some of these core services in Welsh. The way in which the Welsh Government responded to these challenges and its commitment to ensuring that services are delivered in Welsh is to be commended: a commitment also driven by its statutory duties, of course. However, Welsh language services were often delayed, and the understandable pressure to announce or initiate services at pace meant that the Welsh language was treated less favourably at times. **It is therefore essential to learn lessons from what happened, and if similar circumstances or joint working arrangements arise in the future, it will be necessary to ensure that adequate and timely consideration is given to the Welsh language.**

The many successes and opportunities highlighted by the pandemic must also be commended. And one may take some of them for granted. The fully bilingual letter that all households in Wales received from the UK Prime Minister in spring 2020 is an example, and proof, that the status of the Welsh language has permeated and is part of the planning process at the highest level. It is doubtful whether this would have happened at all in previous years.

The increase in our use of technology also provides clear challenges and opportunities. The provision of the NHS COVID-19 app was a significant success enabling many to access and use the app through the medium of Welsh seamlessly if the Welsh language was selected as the default language of their device. It is regrettable, however, that not enough has been done to raise awareness of the availability of the Welsh language service. It would have been possible for the UK Government and Welsh Government to raise public awareness before launching the app, emphasising in advance that this service would only be fully available in Welsh if the device settings allowed.

One of the significant successes of this period is that this app was available in Welsh at the time of its launch. Unfortunately not everyone was aware of this success and a number of complaints were received from some who were unaware that their device settings needed to be in Welsh in the first place in order for the app to work in Welsh. A number of complainants had therefore assumed that the service was not available in Welsh. **As we move to a future of digital services, we must ensure not only the availability of services in Welsh, but that resources are also allocated to promote and facilitate their use.** We must also consider and learn from the response received to the app: there is no doubt that Welsh language standards have raised service users' expectations about what should be available and that is vital as we aim to normalise the use of these services. **It must also be acknowledged that due to long-established practices, some users will assume that Welsh language services are not going to be available: it is essential to inform them otherwise.**

The use of the Welsh language in two sectors



Up to now, we have examined the general experience of Welsh speakers in trying to use Welsh, primarily when receiving services. In this chapter the aim is to focus on what it was like to try to use the Welsh language in two very specific sectors: the prison service and the dementia care service. These sectors were chosen because they are both sectors that people do not *choose* to use as such. Instead, they could be seen as services essential in supporting society and individuals when people need them most. Users will often be vulnerable or stressed, and being able to communicate in the language of their choice in those circumstances is more important than ever, as the studies below highlight.



1 The Welsh language in prisons

i.

In 2017 and 2018, the Commissioner undertook research into the use of Welsh in prisons, which included structured interviews with 18 prisoners and former prisoners as well as interviews with individual prison managers and officers and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) centrally. The Commissioner was of the view that enabling prisoners to speak their own language showed respect for their identity, and enabled them to express themselves better, thus having an impact on their well-being.

ii.

During the research, we heard of a number of examples of prison staff telling prisoners not to use Welsh, either with each other or with people from outside prison, in contexts where this interference could not be justified. On the other hand, the attitudes of the managers interviewed were consistently tolerant or positive, and an informal group was established at HMP Berwyn to provide opportunities for prisoners to use Welsh socially. This suggests that the interference with the freedom to use Welsh was due to negative attitudes or lack of knowledge on the part of prison officers.

iii.

The report published as a result of the research emphasises the need to make it absolutely clear that prisoners have a right to communicate with each other and with external contacts through the medium of Welsh, and to facilitate opportunities for them to do so.

“I choose not to speak Welsh with other prisoners – I don’t want people to know that I speak Welsh, don’t want to be a target; just want to blend in – don’t want to stand out in any way. I fear that officers will treat me differently or make life difficult for me if I wanted to use Welsh.”

“On one occasion when Dad was visiting, a member of staff asked us not to speak Welsh. I felt angry because other people are allowed to speak their language so why not Welsh? I didn’t complain; who would listen? There’s no point making a complaint.”

“During one visit with the family, a member of staff told us to speak English. That had a big impact on Mam because she was worried and thought I’d be in trouble after they left. After this experience, Mam spoke English if officers were around as she was worried about any consequences for me.”

iv.

There was a mixed picture of the availability of services and opportunities to speak Welsh in prisons. There was, for example:

- awareness that Welsh language services should be available, but were not actually available
- services advertised but unavailable
- services dependent on the availability of staff
- better experiences in Wales than in England
- contrasting experiences within the same prison.

v.

In relation to specific services:

- over half of interviewees had failed to obtain forms and similar materials in Welsh
- the provision of education through the medium of Welsh appeared, on the whole, to be limited to classes to learn or improve Welsh
- Welsh books in the library, and access to S4C and Radio Cymru, were available in Wales but not in England
- there was no Welsh-language chaplain service available in any prison, although it was a key part of the emotional and psychological care given to prisoners.

“I understand that I am able to deal with the prison authorities through the medium of Welsh but have not done this – I don’t know how this would work as no-one speaks Welsh here.”

“I know that I was perfectly entitled to use Welsh but thought my life might be a bit more difficult if I insisted on using Welsh; I don’t want to annoy the officers and the authorities. I don’t feel that I can deal with the prison authorities in Welsh – not enough of them understand Welsh.”

“I feel like an outsider when choosing to use Welsh; people look at me with bewilderment. Using Welsh makes you different. I think this is the reason why not everyone who can speak Welsh chooses to use the language. The whole discussion about the Welsh language needs to be more open within the prison.”

vi.

The Commissioner concluded that it would be advantageous to locate Welsh-speaking prisoners in prisons in Wales. Firstly, it is likely to reduce prisoners' distance from home, enabling better contact with families and communities, and increasing the likelihood of successful rehabilitation. Secondly, there are more legal rights in terms of using Welsh in prisons in Wales than in England, due to the freedom to use Welsh, the commitments of HMPPS' Welsh language scheme, and the responsibilities of local authorities in Wales in terms of care and support.

vii.

As there is no women's prison in Wales, and the UK Government's strategy on female offenders sets out the aim to invest in community provision and residential centres for women, and to try to reduce the number of women on short sentences, the need to consider the needs of Welsh-speaking women was emphasised.

viii.

The Commissioner also noted that HMPPS should adapt its data-gathering process regarding prisoners' language needs in order to identify language choice in different situations and identify ability to speak Welsh as well as language choice. The Commissioner noted that the arrangements needed to be strengthened to ensure that data on the Welsh language was collected for all prisoners without fail, and to ensure that all prisons were able to access accurate data to plan their services.

ix.

The evidence received by the Commissioner from organisations providing health and care services in prisons in England and Wales suggested that some processes were in place to take account of the language needs of users, but very little information was received regarding the day-to-day operation of Welsh language services.

x.

As the experiences of prisoners are very dependent on ensuring an adequate supply of Welsh-speaking staff, and ensuring that all staff respect the importance of being able to use Welsh, it was noted that better data is needed on the Welsh language skills of staff, and steps need to be taken, particularly when recruiting new staff, to ensure that there is a sufficient number of staff in order to offer services to Welsh-speaking prisoners in a consistent and reliable manner.

xi.

HMPPS adopted a new language scheme in September 2020 which addresses the report's recommendations. The language scheme commits to:

- explore how Welsh-speaking preference can be factored into decision making on prisoner location, where practical
- determine what staff data is needed to ensure adequate numbers of Welsh-speaking staff in Wales to accommodate Welsh-speaking prisoners and offenders on probation
- review recruitment processes, particularly in Wales, to ensure the best chance of recruiting Welsh speakers at the right level
- encourage the use of Welsh language societies and forums in Wales, and make efforts to ensure that they are active
- continue to raise awareness of the Welsh language scheme and provide clarity on prisoners' freedom to speak Welsh with each other and external contacts, making clear where there are limitations on this within the National Security Framework.

xii.

The Commissioner continues to work to ensure that HMPPS adheres to the commitments of its language scheme. During the second half of 2020, public allegations were made about the treatment of Welsh-speaking prisoners at HMP Berwyn. As a result, the Commissioner has been in urgent and close contact with HMPPS and HMP Berwyn to understand the basis of the allegations, and to ensure that any shortcomings are properly rectified.



2 Welsh speakers' dementia care

i.

There have been major changes in the health sector over the reporting period as local authorities have been complying with Welsh language standards since 2016 and health boards and trusts since 2019, and as associated but more basic language duties are placed for the first time on primary care providers. As a backdrop to this, the Welsh Government's framework for health and social care, *More than just words*,¹⁸ sets out a specific programme of work for the health and social care sector encompassing most of the reporting period of this report.

ii.

More than just words emphasises the fact that care through the medium of Welsh is a clinical need for many, including children and young people, older people and people with disabilities and mental health problems. These groups include people living with dementia. During 2017, the Welsh Government consulted on a Dementia action plan for Wales. The Commissioner provided a joint response with Alzheimer's Society Cymru and a number of other bodies emphasising the need for Welsh-language dementia services.

iii.

The *Dementia Action Plan for Wales 2018–22* recognises that 'receiving care and support in their first or preferred language is a matter of clinical need'¹⁹ for Welsh speakers living with dementia and proposes certain actions to enable this.

iv.

Meanwhile, the Welsh Language Commissioner and Alzheimer's Society Cymru collaborated on research looking at Welsh speakers' experiences of dementia care, and the findings were published in the report on Welsh Speakers' dementia care at the end of 2018.²⁰ As part of the research we visited settings providing dementia care across Wales and interviewed eighteen individuals living with dementia and who were at different stages of living with the condition. We also interviewed practitioners and senior officers of local authorities and health boards, as well as academics working in dementia and health, and social care.

v.

The research found that there are legislation and policies already in place that establish favourable conditions for the provision of care through the medium of Welsh for people living with dementia. Taken together, the legislation and policies that work in favour of the Welsh language in care are comparatively powerful. However, the survey presented a mixed picture of the care received by Welsh speakers living with dementia.

¹⁸ Welsh Government, *More than just words: Action Plan 2019–2020* (2019).

¹⁹ Welsh Government, *Dementia Action Plan for Wales 2018–2022* (2018), p. 31.

²⁰ See the report, *Welsh Speakers' Dementia Care*, in the attachment to a letter to Dai Lloyd AM presenting the research: [Letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Alzheimers Society Cymru regarding Welsh Speakers' Dementia Care.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#).

vi.

Despite local examples of good practice and awareness of the Welsh language and the active offer at a strategic level, the research showed that there were many gaps in care at a local level and there were very few examples where all the needs of Welsh speakers were being met. The report therefore highlighted shortcomings in the implementation of policies and legislation leading to shortcomings in care for individuals living with dementia: shortcomings that constitute a failure of care.

Training and workforce development

vii.

There is no doubt, however, that examples of good and linguistically and culturally meaningful care can be found in the report. Care workers endeavoured to use as much Welsh as they could when providing care for Welsh speakers with dementia and ensured that they had the opportunity to watch and listen to Welsh language media or receive Welsh language reading material, for example.

viii.

However, a lack of training and awareness of the impact of dementia on Welsh speakers was seen amongst the workforce, and the lack of confidence amongst staff in their own Welsh language skills was a significant challenge. Recruiting people to work in dementia care is a problem in general, and recruiting Welsh speakers is an additional challenge. The need for more language awareness training, Welsh language skills improvement training and training through the medium of Welsh more generally was highlighted. It must be emphasised that these findings apply to all parts of the workforce responsible for delivering the care package of people living with dementia, whether they are psychologists, GPs, therapists or care workers.

ix.

In October 2020, the Welsh Government published a workforce strategy for health and social care produced jointly between Health Education and Improvement Wales and Social Care Wales.²¹ The strategy recognises the importance of Welsh as a clinical need and includes a number of actions relating to workforce development in order to be able to provide care in Welsh.

x.

The strategy has seven strategic themes and the intention is to draw up action plans for each theme. It must be ensured that the principles of the strategy are implemented through these plans. In practice this means that there needs to be a Welsh language learning strategy for the health and care sector that will ensure that all practitioners leave publicly funded health and care training with appropriate Welsh language skills and language awareness. Alongside this, significant investment is needed to improve the language skills of all health and care workers building on existing Work Welsh projects.

²¹ [Workforce Strategy for health and social care - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#).

Suitable assessments and resources

xi.

The report by the Commissioner and Alzheimer's Society Cymru highlighted inconsistencies in the range of tools, diagnostic tests and dementia assessment tools available and used in Welsh. There is evidence that the language medium of assessments is essential in cognitive testing and can have a significant impact on people's performance in these tests. This in turn can lead to delays in people being diagnosed with dementia and can also affect the care package they receive.

xii.

The research showed that the linguistic medium of the assessments available often depended on the linguistic ability of the practitioners conducting the tests. There were totally unacceptable examples of dementia tests being carried out by English-speaking practitioners with care workers translating into Welsh. This is unfair in terms of the rights of the patient on the one hand and the care worker on the other. Sadly, this is typical of the situation in a large number of other areas where patients' cognition and skills need to be assessed, for example with learning disabilities such as autism and in speech and language therapy.

xiii.

There is a real need for a wide-ranging study of the cognitive assessments used in Wales including the extent to which they are standardised in accordance with the linguistic needs of the people of Wales, whether they are Welsh-speaking, bilingual or multilingual. It must be kept in mind that we all now acquire languages in different ways, whether as a mother tongue or through the education system as children and adults, which in turn can affect our performance in such diagnostic tests.

Leadership, commissioning and planning services

xiv.

The work of the Commissioner and Alzheimer's Society Cymru showed that the lack of adequate data on the linguistic skills of staff and users, and its sharing between agencies, hinders the planning of dementia services.

xv.

Operational standards applying to both health boards and local authorities now require these organisations to assess the skills of their workforces. It must be ensured that this information is then used to plan services for Welsh speakers and ensure that they are provided in the right place to the right people at the right time. This does not mean that everyone involved in an individual's care package must speak Welsh fluently, but they should have a suitable level for the requirements of their posts in relation to the needs of the people they provide care for.

xvi.

The report by the Commissioner and Alzheimer's Society Cymru also highlighted a degree of doubt as to the extent to which the active offer has developed from being a policy concept to becoming a reality where there is a real understanding of the practical meaning of the concept in practice. The Commissioner believes that there needs to be a review of the extent to which understanding of the active offer and people's clinical ability or need to receive Welsh language services has become established and operational among health workers. That is particularly true of those who provide care to priority groups, including children and young people, older people, and people with mental health problems.

xvii.

The Welsh language standards now require services procured by local authorities and health bodies to comply with the requirements of the standards in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. There were positive examples in the research of including Welsh language requirements when commissioning care services and monitoring those provisions, but it must be ensured that this continues and happens universally.

xviii.

There was very little evidence in the report of widescale multi-agency collaboration in order to ensure the provision of a Welsh language service to those who need it. As there is a crossover in care packages between the work of local authorities, health boards and third party providers, these agencies must work together effectively to ensure that individuals are cared for through the medium of Welsh. It must be noted, however, that there have been examples of good practice such as collaboration with local groups and third sector organisations to fill gaps in staff skills and provide a Welsh language experience for individuals.

xix.

Finally, the conclusion from the research was that there is a need to promote understanding of the clinical need of people with dementia for Welsh language service provision, and that this right needs to be ensured through service planning, inter-agency collaboration, and through recruitment processes and the provision of education and training for professionals involved in the care package for people with dementia.

xx.

In September 2020 Care Inspectorate Wales published a national review of care homes for people living with dementia. The review found that the majority of Welsh speakers living in areas where the language is widely used receive their care through the medium of Welsh. However, there were Welsh speakers in homes where there were no Welsh-speaking staff or any Welsh language activities or resources provided for them. It is reported that less than half of care homes provided a bilingual service and many care homes did not report that staff spoke Welsh. It is said that 'this could be harmful for people whose preference is to communicate in Welsh and an infringement of their individual rights.'²²

²² Care Inspectorate Wales, *National review of care homes for people living with dementia* (September 2020), p. 6.

xxi.

Overall, a number of the findings of this review reflect the findings of the research by the Commissioner and Alzheimer's Society Cymru two years earlier. The Inspectorate notes that 'Commissioners need to align commissioning plans with the predicted need for Welsh language placements and work with providers to ensure service planning includes focus on future population needs. In addition, providers, commissioners and Social Care Wales should support the education and improvement of the Welsh language skills of care staff.'²³ It is therefore disappointing that there has been no improvement in the situation despite our joint work with Alzheimer's Society Cymru.

xxii.

It must be acknowledged that it will not be easy to resolve the difficulties we have highlighted in relation to the provision of dementia care for Welsh speakers, difficulties that are reflected more generally in the provision of care through the medium of Welsh. However, if implemented appropriately, the strategic and statutory actions of recent years offer some hope that improvements in the care provided are possible. In particular, consideration must be given to the importance of standard 110 with which all health boards are required to comply, where they are required to publish 5-year plans setting out the extent to which they can offer to undertake clinical consultations in Welsh and, crucially, the steps they intend to take to increase their ability to do so.

xxiii.

These clinical plans must be directly linked to the national planning of clinical care relating to workforce development and resources and assessments. The importance of workforce planning and of the practical actions that will emerge from the health and social care workforce strategy have already been noted. It must be emphasised again that full consideration needs to be given to how best to use workforce information derived from the implementation of the standards to develop and plan both workforce and services.

xxiv.

It would not be acceptable for the Commissioner's next 5-year report to have to report on unsatisfactory examples of shortcomings in the care of Welsh speakers living with dementia, or any other condition either. That would not do justice to the recent positive action seen in this area.

xxv.

It will require clear leadership and vision from the Welsh Government to initiate and lead the work, and an understanding of the role and contribution of a large number of partners, including health boards and local authorities; private providers; commissioners and providers of education and training; regulators and royal colleges, along with a myriad of other agencies.

xxvi.

All these partners must acknowledge and take responsibility for their actions to ensure that these legislative requirements and strategies are not empty promises. They have a duty to take ownership of the work in order to ensure that no Welsh speaker suffers from lower quality care simply because the Welsh language had not been considered as a core part of providing that care.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

2 Businesses and the third sector

2.1

So far, we have looked at workplaces and services that come under the direct influence of Welsh language standards. However, it is very likely that a high percentage of the services we use and enjoy in our daily lives are provided by sectors that fall outside the scope of the Welsh Language Measure: they are known as 'non-statutory sectors' in this report. The term usually refers to businesses and charities.

2.2

The services offered by these sectors have a major influence on our experience of everyday life. Whether strolling along the high street from a popular large retailer to a charity shop before visiting a restaurant, pub or bank, or popping into the supermarket or ordering goods online, non-statutory services are a big part of our daily lives. Increasingly the services we are used to receiving over the counter are moving online, and this trend has accelerated further due to the COVID-19 lockdowns.

2.3

However, those services provided for our convenience or leisure are not the only ones referred to in this chapter. Individuals can have close involvement with third sector organisations in receiving practical and emotional support, and some rely on such services; a befriending service for companionship, advice and advocacy, or transport to the nearest town or to a medical appointment, for example.

2.4

There are over 267,000 businesses in Wales employing 2.1 million people,²⁴ and over 8,100 charities and 32,000 third sector organisations employing 99,750 people.²⁵ The third sector's contribution to the viability of our Welsh-speaking communities is significant when considering the activities of organisations such as the Urdd, Merched y Wawr, the mentrau iaith and the Young Farmers Clubs. And as businesses and charities line the high street, there is a real opportunity here to influence their use of the Welsh language and the visibility of the Welsh language in general.

²⁴ Welsh Government, *Statistical First Release: Size Analysis of Active Businesses in Wales, 2019* (5 December 2019), p. 1.

²⁵ [WCVA Third Sector Data Hub \(wcva.cymru\)](http://wcva.cymru).

2.5

There is no doubt that the prominence of the Welsh language in this sector has a major impact on our perception of the relevance of the language to the modern world. Here, we will consider some of the efforts made during the reporting period to address the challenge of increasing the opportunities to use Welsh among non-statutory sector organisations.

The benefit to businesses and charities

2.6.

Unless a business is essentially a Welsh language business, required to use Welsh as part of a condition of receiving a grant or sponsorship, or there is a natural desire to use the language on the part of the individuals involved, the benefit of using the language must be actively demonstrated to many businesses and charities. Statistics show that the public is looking for opportunities to use Welsh, with 86% of the population feeling that 'the language was something to be proud of', and '67% thought more effort needed to be put into supporting the language'.²⁶

86%

felt that the language was something to be proud of.

67%

thought more effort needed to be put into supporting the language.

2.7.

According to Citizens Advice research in 2015, 90% of those interviewed 'felt that being able to deal with organisations in Welsh makes them feel valued as a customer', and 94% of fluent Welsh speakers interviewed 'felt that having a good Welsh language service helps a company stand out'.²⁷

2.8.

According to a survey carried out by the Commissioner in 2018,²⁸ the impetus to invest in the Welsh language varies according to the size of the business. For large companies with over 250 staff, for example, factors such as customer expectations, corporate principles, political pressure, competition from other companies, and the commercial disadvantage of not using the language can affect the company's decision to invest. The investment of medium-sized companies with between 50–249 staff depends, on the other hand, on the language of the area in which the business is located, on political opinions and personal principles.

²⁶ Welsh Government, *Statistical Bulletin: The National Survey for Wales, 2017–18, Welsh Language: Confidence and attitudes* (10 October 2018), p. 1.

²⁷ Citizens Advice, *English by default: Understanding the use and non-use of Welsh language services* (2015), p. 8.

²⁸ Research to gather the views of the business sector from Wavehill on behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner (2018).

2.9.

Small companies with between 10–49 staff are more likely to invest in the Welsh language if there is a benefit to the business in doing so, if offering the Welsh language is likely to win contracts, if there is a marketing benefit, or if there are political or personal influences affecting the decision. The investment of micro companies (1–10 staff), on the other hand, is dependent on customer or client requirements and tender requirements.

2.10

By knowing what drives different companies to consider the Welsh language, it is easier to plan strategic support and tailor a business case for them in terms of using the Welsh language. Following the findings of the survey, the Commissioner published a report summarising the business case for using the Welsh language showing how many businesses offer Welsh language services and how they benefit from doing so.²⁹ 82 businesses responded to the survey, and the research shows that many businesses exhibit good practice in using the Welsh language:



60% said that they have bilingual branding.



65% said that they have bilingual signage.



63% said that they had engaged in some bilingual or Welsh language marketing.



79% said that they had staff that can speak Welsh and were able to deliver some services in Welsh.



72% said that using the Welsh language with customers and clients was a key service that works well for them.

²⁹ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Using the Welsh language – the business case* (2018).

2.11

The research also concluded that:³⁰

76%

agree or strongly agree that using the Welsh language attracts customers.

82%

agree or strongly agree that using Welsh adds value to a product or service.

84%

agree or strongly agree that using Welsh enhances the business brand.

2.12

There is therefore no doubt that there is a desire to develop Welsh language services within the non-statutory sectors, but without direct compulsion to consider the Welsh language, significant work is required to persuade and educate companies with headquarters outside Wales. There is also a need to promote the support available to them, and actively offer that support.

Where does the support come from?

2.13

The work of influencing the non-statutory sectors and offering practical support as they develop their Welsh language provisions is shared primarily between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner: the Commissioner focuses mainly on large and medium-sized enterprises and charities, and the Government focuses on assisting small businesses to expand their Welsh language services. There are also a host of other parties such as the mentrau iaith, Menter a Busnes and private companies such as Ateb and Iaith Cyf. who play a part in promoting the Welsh language, either as part of an agreement with the Government or due to commercial opportunities.

2.14

The Welsh Government established the Cymraeg Byd Busnes/Welsh in Business project in April 2017 to be implemented by Mentrau Iaith Cymru between 2017–20. Twelve officers were appointed across Wales to offer intensive one-to-one support for small businesses, free translation and marketing resources such as open and closed signs for shops. In February 2020, Welsh in Business was rebranded the Helo Blod project and the officers as Helo Blod Local officers.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

2.15

Helo Blod is a part of Business Wales and is an online, over the telephone and face-to-face service offering free advice and translation of up to 500 words a month, along with proofreading up to 1,000 words a year for free. There are early indications that the service is popular; between the beginning of February and the end of December 2020, the service dealt with 1,675 requests from businesses, charities and individuals for advice, translation or proofreading.³¹

2.16

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu Team aims to support and guide the journey of businesses and charities to a place where the Welsh language is a long-term strategic consideration for them. This is achieved by focusing on encouraging organisations to state what Welsh language services will be available and then helping them to draw up a policy and timetable in order to deliver on the plans. The team also holds seminars and individual meetings with organisations and conducts and publishes research to present the business case for investing in the Welsh language. Research into the Welsh language in supermarkets was published in 2017,³² and a report summarising the feedback from businesses that have used the Welsh language to their advantage was published in 2019, for example.³³

2.17

The Commissioner also offers a free proofreading service, up to 1,000 words a year, to encourage and develop the confidence of Welsh speakers in businesses and charities to try using their own Welsh language skills rather than relying on translators. The service has been used consistently over the last five years and the number of businesses and charities using the service varies annually; the service was used by over 100 different bodies in 2016–17,³⁴ and by 68 different bodies in 2019–20.³⁵

2.18

A series of guidance documents is also available from the Commissioner to assist businesses and charities with bilingual design and contracts or grants, for example. The latest guidance on the use of Welsh on social media was published in 2018.³⁶ In addition to sharing this guidance, videos have been produced in order to present the business case for using Welsh in a variety of areas.

2.19

'Bilingualism in Action' training sessions are also offered by the Commissioner's officers through the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and the National Lottery Community Fund. Since 2017 the Lottery Community Fund has invited those who receive funding from them in Wales to attend the training sessions. At the end of 2020, 16 sessions had been held and 121 delegates had received the training while the Wales Council for Voluntary Action estimated that 105 people had attended the training sessions since 2016. The aim of these sessions is to share examples of good practice in bilingual design and using Welsh on social media, discuss the benefits of offering bilingual services for the organisation and the user, and raise awareness of the support available for organisations to do so.

³¹ This figure comes from an e-mail from the Welsh Government to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

³² Welsh Language Commissioner, *Welsh in the shopping basket: customer attitudes to the use of Welsh by supermarkets* (2017).

³³ *Using the Welsh language – the business case*.

³⁴ Welsh Language Commissioner, *2016–17 Annual Report* (2017), p. 75.

³⁵ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Annual Report 2019–20* (2020), p. 24.

³⁶ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Using the Welsh language on social media: A practical guide for businesses and charities* (2018).

2.20

The Commissioner launched an online self-assessment questionnaire in 2016 to help businesses and charities identify their strengths and weaknesses and to encourage them to produce a Welsh language development plan. The self-assessment has now been completed over 400 times. Although it is encouraging that so many organisations have used the assessment purposefully and as a tool to consider their Welsh language provision, for a variety of reasons, the number who have taken the further step of drawing up a Welsh language development plan has been low, with only around 15% publishing a formal plan approved by the Commissioner. As such, the scheme was modified and the Cynnig Cymraeg was established.

Y Cynnig Cymraeg (Welsh Language Offer)



2.21

As a result of the research undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2018 into businesses and charities' perception of the value of the Welsh language and their future needs,³⁷ it was found that recognition needed to be given to those who were enthusiastic about the language. The need to raise public awareness of available Welsh language services was also identified. Evidence of increased use of the services was identified as an important factor driving further investment by businesses.

2.22

In July 2020, the Welsh Language Commissioner launched the Cynnig Cymraeg scheme so that businesses and charities can make it clear to the public what Welsh language services they offer with the aim of trying to increase the use of those Welsh language services. The Cynnig Cymraeg is also a means of recognising the efforts of those organisations that take the work of planning Welsh language services seriously.

2.23

In order to gain the Commissioner's recognition, an organisation must complete a self-assessment, produce a Welsh Language Development Plan, and identify at least five Welsh language services that they offer that are ready to be promoted. The self-assessment was completed by 89 businesses and charities in the six-month period between the launch of the scheme and the end of 2020. Six organisations were awarded the Commissioner's official recognition and follow-up support to promote and increase the use of their Welsh language services.

³⁷ Using the Welsh language – the business case.

Public funding bodies

2.24

A number of the public organisations that provide funding or grants to non-statutory projects and initiatives are subject to standards. These public funding providers include the Lottery Community Fund, Sport Wales, the Arts Council of Wales, and a number of Welsh Government departments such as Visit Wales, Business Wales, Event Wales and the Department for the Economy. These organisations, along with a number of others, are required to have a grants award policy in place detailing how they consider opportunities to promote the Welsh language when allocating grants or funding.

2.25

The extent to which organisations promote the Welsh language in their requirements when allocating grants varies widely, and a number do not have a published policy on awarding grants at all. Some organisations that award grants as their main activity, however, such as those named above, now have policies in place to ensure that their grants have a positive effect on the Welsh language. The Arts Council of Wales, for example, asks applicants to demonstrate that they have considered the Welsh language when applying for grants, and failure to do so may be a reason for not offering a grant. Requirements relating to services and marketing in Welsh are also included in their grant conditions. The Lottery Community Fund is another example of a grants body that asks grant applicants to operate their projects bilingually and offers them support in doing so. They also actively seek opportunities to support Welsh language applications through local funding teams by working with community organisations such as the mentrau iaith, Merched y Wawr and Mudiad Meithrin.³⁸

Supermarkets

2.26

The Welsh language is now evident in a large number of supermarkets. Bilingual signs guide us through the shop, and Welsh voices greet us at the till and over the tannoy. We see that the Welsh language has also become part of the business plan of a number of international businesses in Wales, and there is growing evidence that they acknowledge the importance of the Welsh language for their customers.

2.27

According to research commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2015, shoppers in Wales visit a supermarket of some kind on average 4.6 times a week.³⁹ This was before the COVID-19 crisis of course, and practices may well have changed significantly during the pandemic, at least temporarily. It is essential, however, that supermarkets consider how to strengthen their relationship with their customers, and the use of Welsh is certainly one way of attracting and retaining customers.

³⁸ *Closing the Gap: The Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report 2019–20*, pp. 74–5.

³⁹ Research by Kantar Worldpanel for the Welsh Government: *Grocery Shopping in Wales* (July 2015).

2.28

68% of those surveyed in 2016 agreed that they 'like seeing the Welsh language being used by supermarkets in Wales' and over half (55%) disagreed with the statement that 'seeing supermarkets use Welsh doesn't mean anything to me'.⁴⁰ This highlights that the customer sees the value of the Welsh language in the supermarket and that Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers appreciate when the Welsh language is used by the large retailers.



68%

like seeing the Welsh language being used by supermarkets in Wales.

2.29

The Commissioner has been working closely with supermarkets over the last five years, and the *Welsh in the shopping basket* research has been used to persuade them to use more of the Welsh language. Forum meetings were held between 2017–20 with businesses such as Asda, Tesco, Aldi, Co-op, Lidl, Waitrose, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer to share the research findings, share good practice and hear about the challenges and inconsistencies across the sector. There was a positive response with a number of senior supermarket officials in Wales pleased that research and evidence was available to share with business heads outside Wales about the social and economic benefits of offering Welsh language services.

2.30

Despite this progress, the situation remains piecemeal across the country, but the desire to satisfy customers and avoid complaints about English-only signs, for example, is consistently strong. Overall, it is true that new competitors to the market, or companies trying to win new customers by building a 'reputation' in the community, were the most enthusiastic companies to actively offer new Welsh language services during the reporting period.

⁴⁰ *Welsh in the shopping basket: customer attitudes to the use of Welsh by supermarkets*, pp. 15, 17.

2.31

Co-op, for example, decided that they wanted to lead with their bilingual signs, and regularly talk publicly about their positive experiences of using Welsh to market Welsh produce. They also broadcast a bilingual radio programme in their shops once a week and order Iaith Gwaith badges once they have identified the language skills of staff. Lidl is also an example of a supermarket that has worked with the Commissioner, having received complaints about the lack of Welsh signs, to ensure that all their signs are bilingual, with the Welsh language given prominence on some signs.

2.32

But there is still room for improvement. Supermarkets could actively expand their Welsh language services online and tailor the language of their marketing materials by recording the language choice of customers who are members of loyalty schemes. A number of the supermarkets contributing to the forum meetings recognised the need to record or update the information about the ability of staff to speak Welsh, and there are also easy opportunities here to use and promote the linguistic skills of staff more effectively through the use of Iaith Gwaith badges.

Banking

2.33

The way we bank has changed significantly over the years as many of us have moved from using high street branches to banking online or via apps.

2.34

Although Welsh language services, staff and signage are still available in the branches themselves, and Welsh language telephone lines are still available from Lloyds, Natwest, Barclays and HSBC, the four largest banks in Wales, no bank offers an online banking service in Welsh to date. This is a growing problem, where local branches close and the opportunities to engage with the bank in Welsh diminish as a result, particularly in rural areas with a higher density of Welsh speakers.

2.35

At the end of the reporting period of the previous 5-year report, the Commissioner published a review of the Welsh language services of high street banks in Wales. The report found that the Welsh language services available in branches had not moved with the times to an online offering and that the banks were not promoting their Welsh language services effectively. The findings of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's October 2019 report were the same. That report discusses the idea of establishing a community bank for Wales and it is recommended there that the 'Welsh Government should ensure that any community banking proposal in Wales takes full account of the need to deliver bilingual banking services'.⁴¹

41 National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, [Access to Banking](#) (October 2019), p. 52.

2.36

At present, seven of the large banks have language policies, and there is a statement regarding the Welsh language on the websites of six of those banks. Most of the prominent banks use bilingual signs in their branches and most also offer Welsh on their ATMs. However, the situation can be patchy across the country and may vary from branch to branch within the same company. Over the last five years most banks have updated their policies relating to the Welsh language, but despite the Commissioner's efforts and planning by a number of banks, there has been no commitment with regard to providing online banking services in Welsh. There have been some positive signs, however, among some of the new banks that appear much more willing to date in trying to use the Welsh language in an effort to attract new customers and demonstrate their community ethos. These new banks tend to be owned by large international banks that are used to working multilingually, which may be another reason for their anything-is-possible attitude towards including Welsh as part of their services.

2.37

Metro Bank is an example of one of these new banks. It opened two branches in Cardiff in early 2020 and has worked closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner to recruit Welsh-speaking staff and ensure that their signs are bilingual. In 2020, Principality Building Society also expanded its Welsh language service and launched a bilingual app and website to teach children how to save. The Principality noted that around 10% of visits to the Dylan's Den app and the Dylan's Saving Squad website had used the Welsh language version.⁴²

⁴² Statistics were collected by the Principality in March 2021, where they recorded 392 sessions on the Welsh version of the Dylan's Den app, and 440 visits to the Welsh version of the Dylan's Saving Squad website.

2.38

Another bank that has developed its Welsh language service is Santander which launched a new ATM service that remembers the language choice of the user.



Case study: Santander

At the end of 2016, we introduced an ATM that remembers customers' chosen language across the UK. Once a customer has chosen Welsh as a language when using a debit or credit card, the machine then remembers this choice the next time the card is used.

We monitor the use of Welsh on the machines across the UK, and while the statistics on use made in Wales are encouraging, significant use is being made of the Welsh language on machines outside Wales, particularly in densely populated cities such as London and Manchester.

Between 1 January and 31 May 2017, the Welsh language was selected on the machines 53,734 times. The greatest use was seen in north Wales and the Wirral area where the Welsh language was chosen 5,204 times and secondly south Wales with the Welsh language being selected 5,164 times. The third area that made the most use of the Welsh option was seen to be West Central London with 2,101 users followed by Birmingham where there were 2,065 users. Our figures show that the Welsh language was chosen over 1,000 times in 17 other areas outside Wales during this period.

In 2018, we worked with Cardiff and Vale College to deliver a bespoke Welsh language programme over a five month period for employees across the bank's branches in Wales with the aim of improving the Welsh language skills of our employees.

“The Welsh language is one of Wales’ treasures and part of what defines Wales as a nation. It is important that we at Santander reflect the customers we serve by enabling our colleagues in Welsh branches to learn and speak Welsh for the benefit of our customers and the local community.”

*Wayne Blakemore,
Santander regional manager*

Charities

2.39

Demonstrating affinity to the community also helps charities to attract donors: there are therefore clear benefits to using the Welsh language. The British Heart Foundation is an example of a charity that has benefitted significantly from developing a network of Welsh speakers. As a result of the network, the charity was chosen as the charity of the year to be supported by three different organisations and thereby raised £80,000. Macmillan Cancer Support has also noticed the value of using Welsh on their social media, in their marketing material, and in campaigns such as their coffee mornings so that patients and their families in Wales feel that their work and services are relevant to them.

2.40

In January 2016, sponsored by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and in partnership with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, the Commissioner hosted an event in the House of Lords for major charities. The aim of the afternoon was to show that the Welsh language is vital and beneficial to any charity operating in Wales. The event was attended by 120 charity heads where they heard about the benefits of the Welsh language in attracting donations, and where the ethical argument was presented with regard to offering Welsh-medium provision to those seeking the service and support of charities. The event prompted further discussions with a number of major charities which led to significant developments such as the appointment of language officers to Barnardo's and the NSPCC.

2.41

The Welsh Language Commissioner established a charity and third sector organisations network in 2019 to bring together representatives to share good practice and work with the Commissioner's officers. Representatives from around 20 charities regularly attend network meetings, representing charities such as Mind, Shelter Cymru and the NSPCC. As a result of being a member of this network, at least two charities have actively increased their Welsh language provision.

2.42

With the help of the Commissioner, the charity Mind drew up a language scheme, for example, and the Commissioner's officers were invited to give a presentation to the charity's various departments on the importance of offering mental health services through the medium of Welsh. The NSPCC is another example of a charity that has benefited from the network and from the link with the Commissioner as they have been supported with the preparation of a business case in order to appoint a language officer who would lead on mainstreaming the Welsh language into the heart of the charity's services. They now have a system in place to raise awareness of their Welsh language provision in the charity's branches across the UK, and a successful campaign was held in 2018–19 to recruit more Welsh-speaking volunteers to go into schools to teach pupils about the charity's work.

High street restaurants, pubs and shops



2.43

With such a variety of high street shops, restaurants and pubs, it is not surprising that there is a huge inconsistency in their use of the Welsh language. Seeing some bilingual signs in these places is now a familiar occurrence, but as so many of these organisations have their headquarters in England, it can be very difficult to convince them of the benefit of the Welsh language.

2.44

In recent years, the Commissioner's Hybu Team has held discussions with a number of large businesses to try to convince them of the value of the Welsh language to their customers and business. One example of success was seeing Boots shops in Wales expanding their Welsh language services and making firm commitments in terms of bilingual signage and the use of *laith Gwaith* badges. Their self-service tills have also been available in Welsh since 2019.

“Here at Boots, we recognise the benefits of providing services in Welsh to our customers in Wales. As a major employer in Wales with 120 stores, we are always looking to develop and seek new opportunities to meet the needs of our customers.”

Andy Francis, Boots head of customer experience

2.45

As well as holding major events for charities, the Commissioner has been holding business breakfasts in London and in Wales to bring together the heads of major businesses, supermarkets and banks to discuss their Welsh language provision.

2.46

While it can be challenging to convince business leaders outside Wales of the value of the Welsh language, targeting local hospitality businesses where there is a mix of restaurant and pub chains together with independent businesses is a different challenge. There are undoubtedly opportunities to improve Welsh language provision in hospitality, and although the Commissioner has succeeded in working with a few new restaurants that have opened their doors in Cardiff over recent years, the Commissioner does not have sufficient resources to actively target new businesses across the country.

2.47

With the National Eisteddfod visiting Cardiff Bay in 2018, a number of chain restaurants had the opportunity to give the Welsh language a go in order to attract and impress enthusiastic Eisteddfod-goers. Wagamama worked with the Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh in Business officers to translate their activity sheets for children and received an extremely positive response.



Case study: Wagamama Restaurant

Everything we do in Wagamama is based on our concept of *kaizen*: a Japanese term meaning 'change for the better'.

An opportunity to combine my passion for the Welsh language and Wagamama through *kaizen* came with the National Eisteddfod visiting Cardiff Bay in 2018. With a little help, we produced Welsh language activity sheets for children. These leaflets proved extremely popular with children and parents throughout the Eisteddfod week. In fact, they were so popular that they are now permanently available at Wagamama Mermaid Quay, and are available in all four Wagamama restaurants in Wales.

The popularity of the leaflets can be seen on our social media, in face-to-face feedback from guests, emails from guests to the restaurant and to Wagamama's head office, and through websites such as Tripadvisor.

The activity sheets have been a starting point for increasing our Welsh language activity. Since the Eisteddfod we have produced printed marketing materials in Welsh alongside English, our digital screens in the restaurant contain Welsh translations, and we regularly post on our Instagram account in Welsh. We have very ambitious plans for increasing our Welsh language activity, including having Welsh menus, providing our school visiting programme in Welsh as well as English, having a Welsh translation on one side of our food mats, and increasing our Welsh language activity in our digital marketing and advertising and on our social media.

This activity is driven by an acknowledgement of the Welsh language as a core feature of our national identity and its importance in the commercial and domestic world. It reflects the fact that Wagamama acknowledges the place of the language in the landscape of Wales.

Christian Williams, Wagamama general manager

Utilities, bus and train services

2.48

Utility companies such as water, gas and electricity, and bus and train companies providing services in Wales are identified in the Measure as those to which standards may be applicable. The Government has not yet made standards applicable to these services, but the draft of the new transport strategy for Wales shows that preparing standards for those providing bus services in Wales is a priority for the Government over the next five years.⁴³

2.49

At the end of 2020, the Government indicated that the preparation of regulations for water companies was ongoing and committed to preparing standards for companies providing passenger rail services in Wales during the next Senedd term.⁴⁴ After a long wait for such a statement, and as the initial process of conducting a standards investigation was undertaken in 2016, this commitment is certainly an encouraging one.

2.50

The Commissioner published reports on the standards investigation into the bus companies, train companies and Network Rail in October 2016. Then, in February 2017, came the publication of reports following a standards investigation into the gas and electricity companies. However, in June 2018 the then Welsh Language Minister, Eluned Morgan AM, announced that she would not be introducing further standards for the time being, and no further statement has yet been made suggesting that a timetable is in place for the introduction of regulations for the gas and electricity sector.

2.51

Very little consideration has been given to the Welsh language in the gas and electricity sectors. Indeed, at the time of undertaking the standards investigation, only one electricity company out of 25 indicated that it sent out bilingual bills or statements, with three others indicating that their bills were sent in English with some Welsh. Only one company indicated that it also answered general telephone calls bilingually, with one other company doing so in English with some Welsh. A similar picture was seen among the gas companies. Three of the 22 gas companies that responded stated that they had a language policy or scheme, and two out of the 22 offered language training to their staff.



1 in 25

Only one electricity company out of 25 indicated that it sent out bilingual bills or statements.

⁴³ *Llwybr Newydd: strategaeth drafnidiaeth newydd ar gyfer Cymru (llyw.cymru)*.

⁴⁴ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. Annual report 2019–20* (2020), p. 36.

2.52

In terms of the bus and train companies, the picture in 2016 was inconsistent to say the least. Three out of the four train companies operating in Wales at the time of the standards investigation stated that they recorded the language skills of staff, with one stating that 20 out of 56 staff it had in Wales spoke Welsh. Two companies stated that they answered general telephone calls bilingually, but none of the four companies offered a Welsh language telephone line for booking tickets. The picture in terms of correspondence was also inconsistent with two of the companies stating that they sent general information bilingually or in Welsh only to the public. However, none of the companies responded to correspondence in Welsh from individuals bilingually or in Welsh only; two companies stated that they responded in English with some Welsh.

2.53

Since 2016, there has been some improvement in Welsh language provision within the train sector, mainly as linguistic requirements are included in the new contracts for the provision of rail services in Wales. In 2018, Welsh Ministers gave Keolis Amey Wales Limited (Keolis Amey) – through a grant contract – the right to operate and develop rail services in Wales and the Borders for the next 15 years.⁴⁵

2.54

The Welsh Ministers ensured that the contract with Keolis Amey included language requirements, which meant that the company had to provide some services to the public in Welsh. The contract also required the company to develop an action plan explaining how it will ensure that the services are provided in Welsh.⁴⁶ So, although Keolis Amey was not under a duty to comply with standards, it was under a contractual duty to provide some Welsh language services to the public.

2.55

In accordance with the terms of the contract therefore, TfW Trains developed a Welsh language policy⁴⁷ and an action plan to improve their Welsh language provision between 2019–21.⁴⁸ Under this action plan, it has been ensured that a new information system is introduced at more than 170 stations in Wales, which provides clear announcements about journeys together with the latest details in Welsh. Previously, only a quarter of train stations in Wales had an effective information system in Welsh, while the remainder had a text-to-speech system that struggled to pronounce Welsh words and names of stations correctly. The action plan has also brought about other improvements; a 10-hour online Welsh course for staff was launched in March 2020, for example, and new lanyards including the laith Gwaith logo are being worn by staff.

2.56

In October 2020, the then Minister for the Economy and Transport, Ken Skates MS, announced that the new publicly-owned subsidiary of Transport for Wales would take over rail services in Wales and the Borders from February 2021. As a result of this change, it is likely that the standards that have been imposed on the Welsh Ministers will apply to the services provided as part of the Wales and Borders franchise.

⁴⁵ The Welsh Ministers gave Transport for Wales—a company fully owned by the Welsh Government—the responsibility for managing the contract with Keolis Amey. Transport for Wales is under a duty to comply with the standards imposed on the Welsh Ministers.

⁴⁶ [ODP Grant Agreement .pdf \(trc.wales\)](#).

⁴⁷ [Bilingual Policy | Transport for Wales \(tfwrail.wales\)](#).

⁴⁸ [The Welsh Language is a Priority | Transport for Wales \(tfwrail.wales\)](#).

2.57

First Trenitalia was awarded the West Coast Partnership franchise in 2019 by the Westminster Government's Department for Transport, and with that, the Avanti West Coast company was given the responsibility for providing the train services between north Wales and London. There were also some language requirements in this new franchise agreement, including a requirement to ensure that automated announcements made on trains travelling to and from Wales are made in Welsh. In addition, Avanti West Coast adopted a voluntary Welsh language policy in 2019.⁴⁹ The company worked with the Welsh Language Commissioner to formulate the policy and introduce Welsh signs and publications on their trains, meeting the conditions of the franchise agreement.

2.58

The commitment of other independent train companies to the Welsh language still varies widely. For example, Great Western Railway – which runs services from south Wales to London and the south coast of England – has a Welsh language policy published in September 2015.⁵⁰ However, when the company introduced new trains in 2017, there were no Welsh signs or announcements.⁵¹ Also, Cross Country Trains – which operates services from Cardiff to the Midlands – has no language policy at all.

2.59

Although there has therefore been an improvement in the rail sector since the standards investigation in 2016, imposing standards on all the sectors noted above would undoubtedly ensure consistency and significantly increase Welsh language provision. There is also room to argue that devolving further powers in this area to Wales would lead to an improvement in Welsh language services and in the infrastructure of rail services. Ken Skates AM suggested that further devolution for rail services would enable the Government to 'prioritise and properly fund our own needs and meet our own statutory duties – under the Equality, Environment, Welsh Language, and Wellbeing of Future Generations Acts'.⁵²

49 [Welsh Language Policy | Avanti West Coast](#).

50 [GWR Welsh Language Policy](#) [also available in English on request].

51 [Diffyg Cymraeg ar drenau Great Western yn 'annerbyniol' - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

52 Welsh Government, [A Railway for Wales: Meeting the needs of future generations](#) (2019), p. 3.



The Commissioner's conclusions

The use of Welsh in the non-statutory sectors – on a menu in a café or on a football shirt – may be primarily responsible for making it visible or relevant to many people. Without legal requirements on these sectors to consider the Welsh language, however, we must be creative in the way that we seek to persuade them.

The Cynnig Cymraeg is an opportunity to acknowledge the charities and businesses that demonstrate a commitment to the Welsh language and raise public awareness of the opportunities available to use it. **To ensure the campaign's success it must be ensured that the logo is widely visible, from the front door of the bank to the rugby club bar. It must be as prominent as the Iaitth Gwaith badge that the image is based on.** To achieve this, partners must come together to play their part.

Businesses and charities are looking for firm evidence that the Welsh language provides a return on investment. **There is therefore a need to ensure clear outcomes for the support provided by the Commissioner, Helo Blod and others and to work together to ensure a measurable increase in the use of Welsh language services. Alongside that, there is also a need to ensure that any Welsh language services or resources are adequately promoted.** Without that, there will be no increase in their use and as such there will be no incentive for companies to continue to develop their Welsh language provision.

More pressure is needed on these sectors so that they show ambition for the Welsh language, and consistency in the Welsh language provision available. There is a need to ensure that the Welsh language is included from the outset in the introduction of self-service tills in Wales, for example, and that the option to choose Welsh is clear, accessible and that the language can be easily changed in the middle of the transaction. There is also a need to close the large gaps in companies' online Welsh language services and in the face-to-face personal services that they offer.

Although the standards have had an impact on a number of grant-awarding bodies, and their requirements regarding the Welsh language in the provision of funding have strengthened significantly as a result, **there is still room for improved consistency between organisations' arrangements and between different sectors. Setting clear and appropriate requirements regarding the Welsh language in contracts is a way of ensuring that all bodies in receipt of public funding are required to give due consideration to the Welsh language.** The Grants Centre of Excellence will have a key role to play in this work.

As has been learned from standards investigations into private sectors, if the Government is to consider imposing standards on any sector, the final standards must come into force promptly and achieve what is expected by the public and the companies. Without this, it may be difficult to persuade the bodies concerned in the meantime to provide Welsh language services voluntarily. **In that respect, the Government should clearly state its intentions and share clear timescales to avoid delays and uncertainties so that companies can start to prepare for the standards.**

3 Social use of the Welsh language

The language of community

3.1

For people living in areas where the Welsh language is most viable today, the opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh can be numerous, arising naturally with local interests, and are largely taken for granted. Local literary societies⁵³ and eisteddfodau⁵⁴ are organised, lunch clubs and Merched y Wawr meetings are attended, aelwydydd and choirs come together and Welsh chapels and their vestries remain important hubs for some communities. The Welsh language can be heard in local sports club training sessions, on the field among players and by supporters on the sidelines.

3.2

In other parts of the country where the Welsh language is less robust, social opportunities need to be deliberately planned, and more often than not these opportunities are actively created by enthusiastic individuals. There is a good example in the Rhondda where a small group of four set up Aelwyd Cwm Rhondda in 2018,⁵⁵ a choir was established as a result, with the intention of attracting Welsh-speaking sixth formers or older young people to compete at the Urdd and National Eisteddfod. In August 2020, the Rhondda Eisteddfod was held for the first time, digitally of course due to COVID-19, where 83 individuals competed across 11 competitions.

3.3

With so many having turned to the internet and social media during the pandemic period for comfort, companionship, and entertainment, new virtual Welsh language communities were seen forming in 2020, allowing people from all over the world to be part of them. The CÔR-ONA! Facebook page, where people would contribute videos of themselves singing, had 46,300 members, for example.

3.4

Virtual Welsh-speaking communities are not all new in the wake of COVID-19 either. In 2018, the 10,400-member Rhwydwaith Menywod Cymru (Wales Women's Network) Facebook page was created as a virtual community for Welsh women to seek advice, advertise and offer each other support. Who knows how long these communities will last, but they are certainly valuable as a means for people to discuss all sorts of things and socialise digitally through the medium of Welsh.

⁵³ A list of the discussion groups and literary associations can be found here: [Literary Societies - Literature Wales](http://llynyddiaethcymru.org) (llynyddiaethcymru.org).

⁵⁴ Information on the local eisteddfodau can be found on the [Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru website](http://cymdeithas-eisteddfodau.cymru) [available in Welsh only].

⁵⁵ [Rhondda Valley Social Group \(menteriaith.cymru\)](http://menteriaith.cymru).

3.5

As the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy states, not everyone has the time or desire to attend events or be a member of a club or choir, and using Welsh socially can also mean using it naturally in the community, in local shops and when using services, for example.⁵⁶ This is one of the findings of the research carried out by Bangor University on behalf of the Welsh Government in 2014 on the use of Welsh in the community.⁵⁷ Another important conclusion referred to is that some learners find it difficult to practise their Welsh as fluent speakers often turn to English; *Cymraeg 2050* also highlights the need for ensuring opportunities for new speakers to practise.

3.6

In 2019, Learn Welsh North West and Menter Iaith Môn worked together to create a series of videos with the actors of the television series *Rownd a Rownd* to show Welsh speakers how to talk to learners, and these were shared on social media. A Learner Support pack has also been launched to help businesses and societies welcome learners in Welsh. *Shwmae Sumae* day is an annual campaign with the same aim of using Welsh in the community where people are encouraged to start all conversations in Welsh and greet everyone in Welsh. The day has been held on 15 October each year since 2013.⁵⁸

3.7

In relation to the use of Welsh in the community, there are currently few formal opportunities to volunteer in Welsh but the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) has started to collect data on the Welsh language skills of those who register with them. In reporting on their data in June 2020, the WCVA said that 31,206 people had registered to volunteer on their website, 3,385 of those stated that they could speak Welsh and 2,692 indicated that they could speak a little Welsh.

3.8

The Welsh Language Commissioner published research on the Welsh language and volunteering in 2014 which recommended that the Commissioner together with the WCVA 'hold a campaign to raise the profile of volunteering through the medium of Welsh'.⁵⁹ As a result of this research, the WCVA started a project at the end of 2020 to try to ensure that there are more opportunities to use these linguistic skills when volunteering.

3.9

With a number of Welsh speakers volunteering informally in sports clubs, nursery groups and schools, with the *papurau bro*, the *eisteddfodau* and in the community, the WCVA project is intended to encourage more Welsh language associations to use the Volunteering Wales website to advertise their volunteering opportunities. This would increase the Welsh language content on the website in the hope of attracting more Welsh speakers and encouraging them to register to volunteer.

⁵⁶ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 56.

⁵⁷ Welsh Government, *Welsh language use in the community: Research study* (2014).

⁵⁸ www.shwmae.cymru/?lang=en.

⁵⁹ Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Welsh Language and Volunteering* (February 2014), p. 5.

Strategies for promoting the Welsh language locally

3.10

Among the standards imposed on public organisations, a category of specific standards relating to the promotion of the Welsh language has been imposed on local authorities and national park authorities.⁶⁰ The promotion standards require authorities to prepare and publish a 5-year strategy explaining how they intend to promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of Welsh more widely in their areas. Among other requirements, the strategy must include a target for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the five years. The vast majority of promotion strategies were published during 2016 and 2017, so organisations will be expected to review them and publish revised versions of them during 2021 and 2022.

3.11

Of course, there is a clear link between the objectives of the standards and promotion strategies and two of the main themes of *Cymraeg 2050*, namely increasing the number of Welsh speakers and increasing the use of Welsh. It is fair to say that a large number of current strategies focus primarily on increasing the number of Welsh speakers through the education system. It was observed that local authority promotion strategies and their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans often aim to support each other in terms of aims and targets. However, the Commissioner's recent verification work has identified examples of organisations holding events to create opportunities to use Welsh socially or events held specifically to celebrate the Welsh language, by supporting or funding activities organised by the local *menter iaith*.

3.12

Some organisations have also actively provided services in Welsh through partnership, such as Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council who have established a partnership with the local *menter iaith* and the Urdd to enable the Welsh language to develop into the language of social and leisure activities. Wrexham County Borough Council is also an example of an organisation that has actively organised and held events to celebrate the Welsh language. A march was organised on St David's Day, for example, with around 3,600 in attendance, and three days of Hwb Cymraeg events were held in partnership with Focus Wales International Festival to celebrate Welsh music and culture. The council also provides financial support for Focus Wales enabling them to expand their programme of Welsh language music across the festival, with the aim of creating more opportunities for young people to socialise in Welsh.

3.13

In terms of partnership work in the context of the promotion strategies, the main partners are responsible for serving communities of Welsh speakers, learners and prospective learners. It is clear from the promotion strategies that each organisation has a variety of internal and external partners, and it is essential to identify, develop and maintain these partnerships in order to ensure the ultimate success of the strategy.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015, Schedule 4.

⁶¹ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Standards relating to promoting the Welsh language* (2018), p. 30.

Inward and outward migration, and Welsh identity

3.14

The 2011 Census showed that the percentage of Welsh speakers had declined in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Carmarthen and Ceredigion, the areas considered to be Welsh-speaking heartlands. One of the reasons for this is that people migrate and move to towns and cities, of course, while others are inwardly migrating thus affecting the percentage of Welsh speakers in the areas.

3.15

It is often thought that the reasons for the outward migration from the Welsh-speaking communities relate mainly to work or study, but Dr Lowri Cunnington Wynn's research suggests that it is not just economic reasons that draw individuals from their localities. Indeed, 'considerations relating to the Welsh language, culture and nationality' affect people's sense of belonging to their areas and can have a major influence on patterns of integration.⁶²

3.16

She states that Welsh is only a skill in some young people's minds 'and learning the language does not necessarily mean that they adopt the identity of their communities'.⁶³ In that respect, Professor Colin H. Williams suggests that a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is not going to mean a commitment to the language, use of it, or a regeneration of the Welsh communities that have seen the outward migration of young people:



...the somewhat arbitrary target does not necessarily serve the goals of revitalization: a putative set of skills [sic] among a politically symbolic target population matters less than actual usage of Welsh in a wide range of domains in daily life.⁶⁴

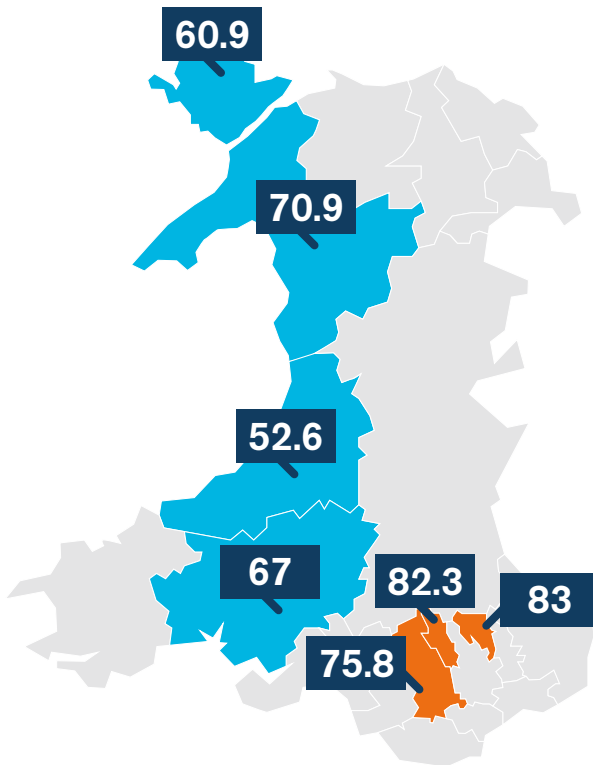
⁶² Lowri Cunnington Wynn, "'Beth yw'r ots gennyf i am Gymru?': Astudiaeth o allfudo a dyheadau pobl ifanc o'r bröydd Cymraeg', *Gwerddon*, 28 (March 2019), p. 60 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Colin H. Williams, *Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales* (19 May 2017), p. 6.

3.17

According to the latest results of the Annual Population Survey in December 2020, it is revealing that only 62.6% of the population of Wales consider themselves to be Welsh in terms of their national identity.⁶⁵ In the traditional Welsh language heartlands, 60.9% identify as Welsh in Anglesey, 70.9% in Gwynedd, 67.0% in Carmarthenshire and 52.6% in Ceredigion. The percentages are significantly higher in the industrial areas of the south east, however, with 82.3% considering themselves Welsh in Merthyr Tydfil, 83.0% in Blaenau Gwent and 75.8% in Rhondda Cynon Taf.



Percentage of county populations who consider themselves to be Welsh in terms of their national identity.

3.18

Inward migration, buying second homes and changing house names from Welsh to English was a burning issue during 2020, particularly in Gwynedd and Anglesey.⁶⁶ A scheme was piloted in 2018 to assimilate newcomers to the area and encourage them to use and respect the Welsh language; the scheme is mentioned again in more detail in Part 4.

⁶⁵ ONS Annual Population Survey results for the year ending 31 December 2020: [National identity by area and identity](#).

⁶⁶ [Beach message highlights North Wales housing crisis that's stopping locals living at home - North Wales Live \(dailypost.co.uk\)](#); [Newid enwau tai o Gymraeg i Saesneg yn 'buro ieithyddol' - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only]; [Pryder am gynnydd ail gartrefi yng ngogledd Cymru - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

Welsh Language centres

3.19

Between 2014 and 2016 the Welsh Government allocated grants to establish Welsh language centres across Wales with the intention of 'providing all kinds of opportunities for people of all ages to use, practise and enjoy the language locally', according to Carwyn Jones AM, the first minister at the time.⁶⁷ Six new multi-purpose centres were established with the Bwrw Mlaen Capital Investment Fund grant funding:



1. Y Lle (Llanelli)
2. Yr Atom (Carmarthen)
3. Tŷ'r Gwrhyd (Pontardawe)
4. Y Man a'r Lle (Cardigan)
5. Popdy (Bangor)
6. Yr Hen Lyfrgell (Cardiff)

3.20

The doors of Y Lle centre in Llanelli closed in 2020 after five years of holding Welsh language events mainly for young people in the area. Weekly rock workshops were held there for a time, the Urdd held a weekly youth club and the centre was used as a venue for yoga sessions and gigs.⁶⁸ The story of Yr Hen Lyfrgell in Cardiff has been much the same. Mudiad Meithrin opened a crèche at Yr Hen Lyfrgell in January 2016 and closed its doors later that year due to a lack of interest in the service. The bar, café and shop there also closed in turn, leaving only offices and rooms to rent. Although a review was undertaken on the future of Yr Hen Lyfrgell in 2017 which recommended the need to establish a new management board and establish the centre's vision,⁶⁹ there is no indication as yet of further investment in Yr Hen Lyfrgell as a Welsh language centre.

3.21

In reality, this appears to be the fate of many of these centres, that do not have the funding to sustain them as bustling centres. Many of them house Welsh language organisations such as the mentrau iaith or branches of the Urdd and offer rooms for hire, but many of them have a limited presence on the web and social media and it is difficult to find any events held by them online. Perhaps the most successful of the Government-funded centres are Yr Atom and Tŷ'r Gwrhyd where there is a café or shop that offers people the opportunity to call into the centre informally.

⁶⁷ [£1.5m i ganolfannau Cymraeg - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁶⁸ Research on the Welsh Language Centres can be found in Manon Elin James' MPhil dissertation, [Astudiaeth ar Draweffaith Canolfannau Cymraeg: Cloriannu cryfder polisi Llywodraeth Cymru i sefydlu Canolfannau Cymraeg, mewn cymhariaeth â Chanolfannau Cymraeg cymunedol](#) (Aberystwyth University, 2018) [available in Welsh only].

⁶⁹ [Ansicrwydd am ddyfodol Canolfan Gymraeg yr Hen Lyfrgell - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

3.22

The Welsh language centres established organically by volunteers in communities are generally more successful than the Government-funded centres. Tŷ Tawe in Swansea, Canolfan Soar in Merthyr Tydfil and Saith Seren in Wrexham are prime examples. Tŷ Tawe was established in 1987, Canolfan Soar in 1992 and Saith Seren in 2012, and all three remain busy, holding regular social evenings and gigs. The Tŷ Tawe Choir comes together to practise at Tŷ Tawe on a weekly basis, conversational sessions – that continued online during the COVID-19 period – are held, and the Tŷ Tawe shop is a window for the centre. Similarly, Canolfan Soar's conversational sessions and autumn folk festival moved online in 2020 and the Saith Seren calendar was full of conversational sessions for learners, jamming sessions and gigs up until March 2020.

3.23

The impact of COVID-19 has been detrimental to Welsh language centres and venues that offer opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh, such as Galeri in Caernarfon and Clwb Ifor Bach in Cardiff, and time will tell to what extent some of these centres will survive with their doors having been closed for so long.

Beyond the classroom

3.24

Ensuring opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh is vital to ensure that the Welsh language is not just a language of learning and work, and establishing practices of using the language from an early age is extremely important, as the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy emphasises.⁷⁰

3.25

The Siarter Iaith programme in Welsh-medium primary schools aims to 'increase the social use of Welsh by children and young people' and to 'inspire our children and young people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives'.⁷¹ The programme has been introduced across Wales gradually over recent years following its establishment by Gwynedd Council in 2011–12. The Welsh Government undertook the project in 2015–16, and by 2019–20, 423 schools were involved in the programme.⁷²

3.26

The programme measures children's use of Welsh in the classroom, in the yard and within the community, and requires the participation of the whole school, including pupils, staff, governors and parents, to implement the Charter as schools aim for a bronze, silver or gold award over a period of time. There is an equivalent programme called Cymraeg Campus in English-medium primary schools and there is a Secondary Siarter Iaith programme and/or Language Practices Support Project in Welsh-medium secondary schools. In English-medium schools, the Urdd is allocated a grant by Welsh Government to run the Cymraeg Bob Dydd project.

⁷⁰ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 55.

⁷¹ Welsh Government, *Welsh Language Charter: Primary Schools* (2016).

⁷² Welsh Government, *Evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes* (9 July 2020), p. 24.

3.27

In 2019–20, a grant of £500,000 was given by the Government to the education consortia for the implementation of the Siarter Iaith, and consortia officers provide advice and support to schools. It is up to the individual schools to decide how to implement the Siarter Iaith and they do so with input from the pupils of the school who have been appointed to the Ciriw Cymraeg, a group of pupils who meet to discuss how to promote the Welsh language in the school and support the school's activities relating to the Charter. These activities vary from school to school and can include trips, guest speakers and working with organisations such as the Urdd and the mentrau iaith.

3.28

The Welsh Government commissioned an evaluation of the Siarter Iaith and associated programmes and this was published in 2020.⁷³ The report notes that the programme is welcomed and valued by schools and consortia officers but that gaining parents' support and understanding of the programme can be challenging. In the case of English-medium primary schools, it was noted that the Cymraeg Campus programme was also welcomed by schools and pupils but that schools needed more support and that finding time to organise activities can be difficult.

3.29

Looking in turn at the universities, the Welsh-speaking communities and unions in universities also continue to bring Welsh speakers together socially, and in September 2020 Neuadd Pantycelyn in Aberystwyth was reopened, five years after the doors closed.⁷⁴ Aberystwyth University received £5m from the Welsh Government through the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme fund to contribute to the cost of refurbishing the hall.⁷⁵ This is a long-awaited and important development for students and alumni who protested against the closure of the hall in 2013 and 2014 emphasising the social value of a Welsh language hall of residence.

Welsh Government grants

3.30

In March 2018, the Welsh Language Minister at the time, Eluned Morgan AM, announced that a £4.2m grant scheme had been established to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language to support the aim of *Cymraeg 2050*. Organisations that received grant funding included the National Eisteddfod, Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru, the mentrau iaith, Merched y Wawr, the Wales Young Farmers Clubs, papurau bro, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru.

3.31

Launching this scheme, which is an extension of similar grant schemes in the past, Eluned Morgan explained that the organisations funded by the grants 'provide a wide range of opportunities for children, young people and adults to use Welsh socially'.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ [‘Cam pwysig iawn’ wrth ailagor Neuadd Pantycelyn, Aberystwyth - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁷⁵ [Welsh Government Minister visits Pantycelyn Hall - Aberystwyth University](#).

⁷⁶ [£4.2m Grants Scheme to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh | Gov.Wales](#).

3.32

During the 2019–20 financial year 27 grant partners received their share of just over £4m to promote the language. In all, 21,000 activities were held as a result, over half of which were activities for children and young people, providing opportunities to ‘more than one million people’⁷⁷ to use Welsh socially.

3.33

But we must guard against being distracted by promising numbers. Although holding high profile events locally and nationally to maintain the status and visibility of the language and the viability of Welsh culture is important, they are not necessarily directly linked to an increase in the social use of Welsh. It may be the same individuals who attend these events and therefore not over a million different people counted in these numbers, and Welsh speakers can of course find and create their own opportunities to socialise.

3.34

It is also important to recognise that the organisations funded do a great deal more for the Welsh language than just organising events; they provide various jobs for people who wish to work through the medium of Welsh, for example. Without doubt, further research is needed to fully understand the significance of this grant scheme. In March 2020 an invitation to tender was issued to undertake a review of the Government’s grants scheme. This work has been delayed as a result of COVID-19.

The mentrau iaith

3.35

The first menter iaith was established in the Gwendraeth Valley in 1991 and there are now 22 independent regional mentrau, as well as two working in specific areas, Bangor and Patagonia. Mentrau iaith Cymru is responsible for supporting and uniting the individual regional mentrau and has its headquarters in Llanrwst.

3.36

The mentrau iaith are part-funded by the Welsh Government⁷⁸ but also receive funding for various projects through sources such as local authorities, Lottery grants and European grants. Less than a third of their jobs are funded by Government grants and attracting funding from other sources has enabled them to create an additional 254 jobs.⁷⁹ Another source of income for the mentrau is the commercial projects they have established, namely cafes, shops, translation companies and nurseries, to name but a few, with their constant emphasis on contributing to the communities of Wales.

⁷⁷ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, annual report 2019–20*, p. 39.

⁷⁸ Cardiff University on behalf of the Welsh Government, *Review of the work of Mentrau Iaith, Language Action Plans and the Aman Tawe Language Promotion Scheme* (2014).

⁷⁹ Mentrau iaith, *The Welsh Language, the community and the local economy: The Mentrau Iaith’s Manifesto for the Welsh Parliament’s 2021 election* (2021), p. 8.

3.37

The work of the individual mentrau varies greatly according to the requirements of the area and also varies in the size of events, from national to community level. One of Menter Caerdydd's great successes is the well-established Tafwyl festival which is now an annual festival attracting thousands from Cardiff and beyond to be immersed in the language and Welsh culture. In 2019, 40,000 people visited the festival at Cardiff castle.⁸⁰ By 2020 of course, the festival had to be moved online due to COVID-19 where there were music sessions, sessions for children and young people, discussions and interviews. There was a live audience of over 25,000 watching the various sessions.⁸¹

3.38

Although Tafwyl is now one of the major festivals in the Welsh calendar, other festivals are organised by the mentrau iaith on a slightly smaller scale with a more local flavour; Gŵyl Cefni has been held by Menter Môn since 2000 and Gŵyl Fach y Fro was held in Barry Island by Menter iaith Bro Morgannwg for the first time in 2015. In 2019, the Welsh Government allocated £50,000 to 11 smaller and new festivals including the Gŵyl Canol Dre in Carmarthen and Gŵyl y Ferch in Anglesey.⁸²

3.39

Another of the national successes comes from Menter iaith Fflint a Wrecsam. In 2014, the menter introduced Magi Ann apps, which include Welsh stories to help primary children learn to read. Since the launch of the first apps, the menter has added to the content and the apps have been downloaded over 200,000 times.⁸³

3.40

A number of the mentrau hold Welsh language events for children, young people and families throughout the year and additional events over the summer holidays. But they also organise a variety of courses, exercise classes, and adult community groups. These groups can be forums for local businesses, for organising cultural activities, groups to come together to chat over a coffee or for learners to practise speaking Welsh.

3.41

Menter Caerdydd reported that 265 adults attended courses held by them in 2018–19, and that 23 weekly clubs were held for primary age children with between 400–450 children as members.⁸⁴ Menter iaith Fflint a Wrecsam said that it held or worked in partnership to hold over 180 activities and events in 2018–19, attracting over 9,000 people.⁸⁵ A year later in the county of Conwy, Menter iaith Conwy held 275 events with over 5,700 attending.⁸⁶ Between all the mentrau iaith, 9,229 events were held in 2019 where there was an opportunity to use Welsh, with 231,366 people attending these events.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ [About | Tafwyl](#).

⁸¹ [Tafwyl Digidol: Evaluation](#).

⁸² [Naming Successful Festivals of Mentrau Iaith Cymru Grants | Y Mentrau Iaith](#).

⁸³ [Magi Ann | Menter iaith Fflint a Wrecsam \(menterfflintwrecsam.cymru\)](#).

⁸⁴ Menter Caerdydd, [Menter Caerdydd's Annual Report 2018/19](#) (2019).

⁸⁵ Menter iaith Fflint a Wrecsam, [Adroddiad Blynyddol 2018–2019 \(2019\)](#), p. 5 [publication in Welsh only].

⁸⁶ Menter iaith Conwy, [Adroddiad Blynyddol Menter Iaith Conwy 2019–2020 \(2020\)](#) [publication in Welsh only].

⁸⁷ [Written evidence paper to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee](#) [available in Welsh only].

3.42

Of course, by 2020, the vast majority of the mentrau iaith's activities had moved online. They produced hundreds of activities over video, supported voluntary organisations such as papurau bro to move online, and ran national campaigns. Between April and September 2020, the mentrau iaith held 6,806 digital events with 755,751 participants.⁸⁸ Although these figures give us a picture of the reach of the work of the mentrau, they are not sufficient for us to measure the impact or significance of the events that took place.



Case study: Menter Iaith Ynys Môn

Menter Iaith Môn is an energetic initiative that works to ensure that Anglesey remains a stronghold of the Welsh language. The work varies as we invest in areas that need support in terms of the Welsh language, and carry out activities in other areas in order to celebrate the Welshness of the community.

The varied provision includes Theatr Ieuencid Môn for children and young people across the county, Bocsŵn sessions to encourage learning and the use of Welsh through music, and digital schemes that ensure a place for the Welsh language in the world of technological innovation.

Beyond this work with children and young people, we hold and contribute to a host of community schemes such as Gŵyl Cefni, the resurrection of the old local tradition of *clapio wyau* (egg clapping), and St David's Day parades in four of the island's main towns. The aim is to raise the profile of the Welsh language locally, as well as offering children, young people, and adults the opportunity to enjoy and socialise. The parades are also a vehicle for holding conversations with local businesses and societies, and are now one of the highlights of the island's calendar.

Further work is also being carried out behind the scenes as we co-ordinate the county's activity at the Fforwm Iaith, and administer grants for businesses to develop their use of the Welsh language, all in order to contribute towards the million Welsh speakers target.

⁸⁸ *The Welsh Language, the community and the local economy: The Mentrau Iaith's Manifesto for the Welsh Parliament's 2021 election*, p. 5.



Case study: Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen a Mynwy

In an area where opportunities to use the language naturally are limited and where a lack of linguistic confidence is a problem, Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen a Mynwy provide opportunities for adults, children and families to socialise in Welsh. We organise walking clubs, coffee mornings, tours to Welsh-speaking areas and social evenings with guest speakers, and the majority of the conversational groups have continued online during the COVID-19 period.

We are responsible for providing childcare in two primary schools and run Welsh-medium arts, music and sports clubs for children under the age of 12 in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools in our area. We also have a Fforwm Ieuenctid (Youth Forum) which helps us organise events such as gigs and clubs for pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Due to COVID-19, all forum activity has been taking place online with the emphasis on creating digital content.

Our provision for families focuses on language transmission within the family, opportunities to learn Welsh as adults, and opportunities for children to use Welsh socially at events such as family fun days, quizzes, Christmas concerts and St David's Day celebrations. We also run a school work support group for non-Welsh speaking parents.

Sport

3.43

It is impossible to mention the Welsh language in sport without reference to the Urdd's contribution. In 2020, the number of Urdd members was at an all-time high. Taking the Urdd's annual report figures for 2018–19, before the outbreak of COVID-19 came to disrupt the organisation's activities, the Urdd had over 56,000 members aged between 8 and 25, of which 21,498 were Welsh learners. In all, 49,000 children and young people visited the Urdd camps at Glan-llyn, Llangrannog and Cardiff, and 12,000 took part in the Urdd Community Sports Clubs each week that year: the largest number ever seen by the Urdd. Over 48,000 attended the Urdd's sports competitions and the goal of creating 100 sports apprenticeships by 2022 was announced in time for the celebration of the organisation's centenary.

3.44

As a result of the Urdd's work and commitment to promoting the Welsh language in sport, there is a danger that other sports clubs are not taking sufficient responsibility for promoting the Welsh language in their activities. Over the past five years, we have seen national bodies leading on different sports such as the Welsh Rugby Union, the Football Association of Wales and Swimming Wales working with the Urdd in holding certain activities through the medium of Welsh, but that often means that the Welsh language is not included in other activities and events that these bodies organise, and the Welsh language is not, in general, the language of the community clubs either.

3.45

The influence that this area has on attitudes towards the Welsh language cannot be emphasised enough, and seeing world-famous Welsh players and athletes using Welsh on social media and in interviews does a world of good for the image of the language, without doubt. This was clearly seen at the time of the Euro Championship in 2016 with all the national team wearing t-shirts with the word *Diolch* on them. There is no doubt that the Welsh language was a core part of the identity of the football team and their supporters at Euro 2016, and the Welsh language was used by large companies such as Adidas and Budweiser in their marketing, and also used by celebrities from outside Wales as they congratulated the team.

3.46

Overall, the use of Welsh in local sports clubs is something that happens naturally with little planning, and relies heavily on the attitude of individual coaches and the demographics of Welsh speakers in the area. In such areas, there is less reliance on the Urdd holding sports sessions in Welsh as local clubs use Welsh naturally in their activities.

3.47

Although few community clubs have purposefully mainstreamed the Welsh language into their activities, research by the Commissioner in 2015 showed that there are very positive attitudes towards the language in local clubs. The research found that there was a desire to increase the use of Welsh but that a lack of confidence and a lack of culture of using Welsh was a barrier. There was also a general perception that Welsh should not be used when not everyone understands the language.⁸⁹

3.48

In an attempt to address these challenges, in May 2016 the Commissioner launched the information pack *Amdani! The use of Welsh in sport*. The aim of the pack is to persuade sporting bodies of the advantage of the Welsh language in attracting new members, forming relationships with other groups, and ensuring that each individual has the best possible experience when engaging with sport.

3.49

The Commissioner also worked with Sport Wales and various sports associations to develop resources and practical ideas on how to encourage community clubs to take advantage of opportunities to increase their use of the Welsh language. It became clear that the way to deliver messages to the community clubs was through the associations as that is where the greatest influence lies. However, at present there are no clear expectations of the Welsh language or clear grant conditions for the funding allocated to the associations by Sport Wales. It has often been seen in recent years that an increase in the use of Welsh is dependent on the enthusiasm of a few individuals rather than a long-term strategic decision.

⁸⁹ These findings are underlined in Lana Evans, "'Defnyddiwch y Gymraeg': community sport as a vehicle for encouraging the use of the Welsh language", *Sport in Society*, Volume 22: Issue 6 (February 2019).

3.50

There was an opportunity in 2017 to strengthen the provision of the associations through a grant from the Welsh Government to develop Welsh language services. Several associations have been successful in winning a grant to mainstream the Welsh language into their training development systems. The FAW Trust developed a 'Welsh in sport' module for coaches, for example, and commissioned a translation of the theory work behind the module. In the same period, the Commissioner developed an e-learning module and published more practical videos on the 'Club Solutions' website, a portal that supports sports clubs.

The arts

3.51

There is no doubt that organisations such as the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod offer invaluable opportunities to use Welsh socially when engaging with the arts. The Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod continue to contribute extensively to Welsh language arts and provide opportunities for young people and adults to come together to form choirs and various parties in order to compete. In all, 70,530 names were registered for the Urdd Eisteddfod competitions in 2019, and over 100,000 visitors were welcomed to the free, borderless field of Cardiff Bay that year.⁹⁰

3.52

Cardiff Bay was also the home of the National Eisteddfod in 2018, which was free to all, and free also of the usual restrictions of a field. It was estimated that around half a million people attended that Eisteddfod and visitors who would not normally attend or be aware of Welsh events were attracted there.⁹¹ In 2019, over 175,000 visited the Conwy County Eisteddfod in Llanrwst. Holding the eisteddfod in different areas also stimulates a community project creating social opportunities in those areas during the two years leading up to the festival, and between 250 and 350 community events are usually held to raise money during that period.⁹²

3.53

With the Urdd and National Eisteddfod postponed in 2020, the Urdd held the Eisteddfod T online giving children and young people the opportunity to compete in the usual competitions and in new fun competitions attracting over 6,000 competitors and entertainment for the whole nation in order to fill the void left by the usual Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfod T provided over 25 hours of live broadcasting for S4C and 28 hours for BBC Radio Cymru.⁹³

⁹⁰ [Cynnydd yn y nifer sy'n cystadlu yn Eisteddfod yr Urdd eleni \(lleol.cymru\)](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁹¹ [Eisteddfod Caerdydd wedi gwneud colled o £290,000 - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁹² [Written evidence paper to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee](#), p. 4 [available in Welsh only].

⁹³ [LLWYDDIANT WRTH I EISTEDDFOD T BLESIO CYNULLEIDFA DDIGIDOL | Urdd Gobaiith Cymru](#) [available in Welsh only].

3.54

The National Eisteddfod also made efforts to fill the gap in 2020 by holding the AmGen Eisteddfod online between May and August with the aim of 'creating activities that would support well-being and encourage digital socialising among our core audience' and 'attract a new audience'.⁹⁴ The AmGen festival was a huge success and was provided on a variety of digital platforms. Viewing figures showed that videos of the festival's events were watched 584,000 times on Facebook and 44,800 times on YouTube between 18 May and 10 August.

3.55

In prioritising bringing people together to socialise digitally, there was an arrangement for the Eisteddfod Choir to practise over Zoom every other week and the Cymanfa Choir met virtually twice a month to sing hymns. Choirs and brass bands were invited to send recordings of the commissioned song *Pont y Glaw* by Gareth Glyn, a project that attracted over 400 contributions. Online workshops were held to learn how to sign the national anthem. The Eisteddfod also organised two weekly courses during lockdown, one an introduction to cynghanedd, watched back 1,191 times, and the other a cerdd dant music-setting learning course, watched back 419 times.

3.56

The Arts Council of Wales is the main third sector arts funding organisation in Wales, funding theatres, galleries, arts centres and various projects and events. During 2018–19, 1,139 arts events were held in Welsh out of 23,149 events in total, and the Welsh events held were attended by 124,462. In the same year, 10,001 participatory sessions were held in Welsh out of 72,383 sessions, and the Welsh sessions were attended by 103,260 people. There is therefore no doubt that there is a need to increase the number of Welsh language sessions. The Arts Council's annual report states that there is a demand for Welsh language events and recognises that 'we're not seeing the range or quality of Welsh language activity that we'd expect to find, especially in Theatre'.⁹⁵ Further discussion of Welsh speakers' involvement in the arts is discussed in Part 4.

⁹⁴ Research provided by the National Eisteddfod.

⁹⁵ Arts Council of Wales, *General Activities and Lottery Distribution: Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019* (2019), p. 51.

COVID-19 and socialising

3.57

The fact that COVID-19 caused the cancellation of large and small events across the country is a cause for concern as Welsh speakers and learners have been deprived of opportunities to use the language face-to-face. The Welsh Government has started to try to measure the impact of COVID-19 on Welsh-speaking community groups and was assisted by the mentrau iaith who carried out a survey in September 2020.⁹⁶

3.58

In all, 2,806 Welsh-speaking community groups were identified and invited to participate in the survey, of which 1,092 responded. Only 2% of the groups reported that they were carrying out online activities before the pandemic period, which means that the groups who wanted to continue to maintain their activity during the first lockdown period had to make significant changes.

3.59

20% indicated that they had been able to adapt to continue their activities since the lockdown began in March 2020 but felt that the activities were less effective, that they met less frequently and that fewer people took part. 68% of the groups' regular activities had ceased, and it was noted that trips, festivals and eisteddfodau, fundraising campaigns, performances and music practice were the activities most likely to have ceased.

3.60

When the groups were asked in September and October 2020 whether they would continue to exist as a group if the rules on social distancing continued in a year's time, 62% indicated that they would be likely to continue as a group. On the other hand, 88% of the groups indicated that they would be likely to continue in existence if the social distancing rules were not in place in a year's time.

3.61

Looking to the future, 45% said that they would adopt some new ways of operating, even if the social distancing rules did not exist in a year. 31% said they would go back to operating exactly as they were: only time will tell to what extent they will be free to do so.

⁹⁶ Welsh Government, *The effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups – survey findings* (10 December 2020).



The Commissioner's conclusions

The pandemic has had a significant impact on opportunities to use Welsh socially during 2020, and it will not be possible to fully assess the impact until the next 5-year report is produced. **One thing is certain, significant support will be required from the Welsh Government to ensure that the momentum seen before March 2020 is not lost.**

Many organisations must be commended on being able to move their activity online so quickly, and organisations such as the Urdd, the National Eisteddfod and the Royal Welsh Show must be congratulated for their digital provision in place of the festivals that are usually central to the Welsh calendar. The Welsh language content available online has increased greatly over the past year, and that is of course a positive thing and something to be developed further even when we are able to meet face-to-face again. It is a convenient way of reaching new audiences in Wales and beyond.

But it must also be acknowledged that not everyone can access the digital provision, due to a lack of internet connection in rural areas or a lack of technological skills. This has meant that some have been deprived of the digital social opportunities, and this has had a detrimental effect on people's mental health, as well as opportunities to use the Welsh language. **It is therefore essential that moving social activity online does not replace face-to-face contact in the future. Getting this balance right will be a challenge for the next five years.**

The number and popularity of Welsh language social events held over the past five years is very encouraging, and new opportunities are constantly arising. Perhaps one thing that becomes clear when looking at the activity of the reporting period is that the events or initiatives that are developed organically within society are usually the most successful. After all, community members often know best the needs and interests of their own communities. **As such, there is room for the Welsh Government to consider ways of nurturing a new generation of local organisers and supporting projects or initiatives that have already been established or need support in order to establish them in the first place.**

It is also important that the language is not just used in 'Welsh language' social events, and there is scope to use more Welsh in sports clubs and arts events beyond the mainstream Welsh language ones.

1 IN A
MILLION



Name: **Cynan Griffiths**

Age: **15**

Area: **Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll,
Anglesey**



71.8%
speak Welsh
in Llanfair
Pwllgwyngyll



Cynan is a year 10 pupil at Ysgol David Hughes in Menai Bridge where he has chosen to study triple science, PE, history and design as GCSE subjects – all through the medium of Welsh. He speaks Welsh with his parents, brother and sister at home. Welsh is also the language of the extended family on both his mother’s and his father’s side.

“We have a language of our own that is unique to our country.”

Welsh through Cynan’s eyes

I went to Llanfair Primary School and I spoke Welsh with everyone there, there weren’t many English children there.

Now I’m a year 10 pupil at Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge. At school, I speak Welsh with most of our friends although one or two of my friends don’t speak Welsh. I then speak a mixture of Welsh and English with them.

I play rugby for Bethesda, and I speak to all the team players in Welsh. However, I speak English with one of the coaches. Then I play football for Llanfair and we only speak Welsh there.

I don’t really go shopping on the high street, so I’m not sure which language would be used in a shop in the area. If I listen to music over the internet, I wouldn’t listen to Welsh music, just English music.

If I post messages on social media, I would do so in Welsh.



Name: **Sarah White**

Age: **36**

Area: **Pentrepiod, Torfaen**



9.3%

*Speak Welsh
in the community of
Pen Transh*



Sarah speaks English to her husband and parents, but speaks Welsh with her three sisters and two brothers. She attended a small Welsh language unit within the area's English medium school, Pontnewynydd School, before the opening of the local Welsh-medium primary school, Ysgol Bryn Onnen. She lives in Pentrepiod, which is part of the community of Pen Transh.

"I think the Welsh language has helped me get jobs – it gave me an advantage and when I look at my brothers and sisters, it has also given them an advantage in getting jobs."

Welsh through Sarah's eyes

My mother is English and my father comes from the area but there were no opportunities for him, or my husband who comes from Blaenafon, to learn Welsh. Luckily for me, mum wanted us to have the opportunity to speak Welsh so we went to a Welsh unit within the English school. I then went on to Ysgol Gwynllyw.

I worked for Thomson's holiday company for a while and was able to speak Welsh with customers, before going to Ysgol Gwynllyw to work for seven years which was great as everything was through the medium of Welsh. I now work for a dog insurance company, and travel a lot to London and Aylesbury and there is very little opportunity to speak Welsh.

However, I'm lucky that I and my brothers and sisters still speak Welsh together. One of my sisters has lost confidence to speak the language, but the other four work in places where they have the opportunity to use the language.

There aren't many places where you can speak Welsh in Pontypool. It's difficult, because I see loads of former Gwynllyw pupils who have lost their confidence. Because you lose the habit of speaking the language, there are many who don't want to try to speak the language after leaving school in case they sound stupid.

I'm really proud to be able to speak the language and I'll always fight for it. We had people shouting 'Welshies go home' and throwing things at our bus in primary school but that has made me more proud and determined to speak the language.



Name: **Shelly Beckett**

Age: **45**

Area: **Bagillt, Flintshire**



9.3%
*Speak Welsh
in Bagillt*



Shelly's parents come from Flintshire and she speaks English to both. She also speaks English to her brother, Paul. Her brother, who lives in Broughton, wanted his children to go to a Welsh-medium school, but their mother, originally from Grimsby, wasn't keen for them to learn Welsh.

“Things would have gone in a completely different direction for me if I didn't speak Welsh – I wouldn't be doing the work that I do now.”

Welsh through Shelly's eyes

My brother Paul has lost his confidence to speak Welsh and he won't speak Welsh anymore. Our grandfather on our mother's side could speak Welsh, but when he moved over to Bagillt from Llandudno, he didn't speak Welsh to anyone afterwards.

Mum and Dad let us choose which secondary school we would go to. I loved the Welsh teacher at the English medium primary school so I chose Ysgol Maes Garmon. Something about the Welsh language drew me to it. Mum and Dad weren't sure about the decision, but my brother followed me too.

I speak Welsh with one school friend, more now than we did before. When I was at school, part of me felt it wasn't the thing to do. Most spoke English. I saw it as the language of education.

I've worked as a nursery assistant at Croes Atti School, Flint for 20 years and that's why, more than anything else, I still speak Welsh. I understand why the children see Welsh as the language of school. When I went home, I would put the Welsh language in a little box, and it didn't come out until I was at school.

I know a few Welsh speakers in Bagillt – they're about the same age as me, and older. If I bump into them, I speak Welsh. Once a month 10 of us go out for a pint to socialise in Welsh.

This area is so close to England. There are no opportunities where we live for the children to use the language. If I wasn't working at Croes Atti, that's what would have happened to me. I would have lost the language.

I love the Welsh language. It's full of feeling, you can't explain it. You feel you're part of something bigger.

Part 4: Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

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A firm footing

We now turn to those areas which belong to the third strategic theme of *Cymraeg 2050*. At first glance, these may appear to be unrelated, grouped together for the convenience of those drafting the strategy to provide a neat, threefold structure. However, these areas provide the scaffolding for the language: they are essential for its use.

Fundamentally, if Welsh is to be spoken at all, there must be communities of speakers and those communities must be sustained economically. The Welsh language needs a vibrant culture and a diverse media if it is to be more than a skill and a soulless medium of communication. The Welsh language must also be the language of technology so that it is not left behind in the digital revolution. Vocabulary and terminology sources are required to allow language use in any context. Underpinning all of these areas must be strategic and responsive language planning policies based on world-class research. And Wales must be prepared to look to the world to learn from best practice in these areas and be equally willing to give back to the world and allow other countries to learn from innovative practices in Wales.

These are the true foundations of the strategy – they must be sound in order to support all the activities covered in the first two strategic themes. They are also essential in confirming the status of the language. This last part will continue with the same pattern of evaluating efforts during the reporting period and presenting practical conclusions and recommendations for the future to ensure that the foundations are set firmly in place.

1 Community and economy

Housing and work to protect the language

1.1

The link between housing, work and language in language planning is not new – indeed, the title of this section is a translation of one of the slogans of the language movement in the 1970s: *'tai a gwaith i gadw'r iaith'*. Although campaigns have been held for close to half a century, and several projects introduced by various governments to ensure the future of Welsh as a community language, the challenge of these three aspects remains amongst the most complex of all to resolve.

1.2

Although the 2011 Census results show that there are Welsh speakers in every community in Wales, there are some communities where there is a higher density of fluent speakers, and it is in those areas that the language is most used on a daily basis. Many are rural or post-industrial areas with communities where the average salary is amongst the lowest in the UK.¹ The agriculture, hospitality, tourism and public sector industries form the backbone of many of these communities. Over a number of decades, the percentage of Welsh speakers in these communities has been falling, and the Welsh Government recognises in *Cymraeg 2050* that a prosperous, sustainable economy must be developed in order to promote the language.²

1.3

There is no doubt that the relationship between language and economy is a complex and multifaceted one. On the one hand, a range of social and economic factors such as employment opportunities and the availability of housing are likely to influence the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities. In particular, there are concerns that these factors may trigger outward migration from the Welsh-speaking communities, particularly by young people. And tied to outward migration, there is inward migration that can affect the linguistic profile of the community. On the other hand, as reported in Part 3, the Welsh language can benefit the economy, for example as a marketing tool or valuable skill in the workplace.

¹ The average weekly salary for the Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituencies is £480 compared to an average weekly salary of £540 in Wales and £580 across the UK: [Constituency data: wages \(parliament.uk\)](#).

² Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* (2017), pp. 61–3.

Town and country planning

1.4

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced legislative provision for the Welsh language in the planning system. The act enables planning authorities to consider the Welsh language when making planning decisions. It also requires local planning authorities to consider the Welsh language when undertaking a sustainability appraisal, as part of the preparation of Local Development Plans (LDPs).

1.5

The basis of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 are amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, following the Welsh Government's decision to tailor the act to meet the unique planning needs of Wales. These amendments meant that there was a statutory basis for planning authorities and the Government to consider the Welsh language in the planning system for the first time. However, the Barrister Gwion Lewis argues that the changes have generally been 'technical and unremarkable' without any 'attempt to fundamentally reform the system to provide Welsh solutions for Welsh problems'.³

1.6

He further argues that Welsh communities should be given more control over developments in their areas, and that there is a 'need to shift the debate so that the relationship between development and the vitality of Welsh-speaking communities is seen as an opportunity, not a "problem"'.⁴ In October 2017, the Welsh Government published a revised version of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20, *Planning and the Welsh Language*. The Technical Advice Note refers to the potential of the planning system to contribute to the vitality of the Welsh language, outlined further in *Cymraeg 2050*, and provides some guidance on how local planning authorities should consider the Welsh language.

1.7

The Technical Advice Note states that planning applications 'should not routinely be subject to a Welsh language impact assessment', as this would 'duplicate' work that the planning authority has already undertaken in preparing the LDPs. It advises that the impact of an application on the Welsh language should instead only be assessed in 'windfall sites', namely sites not allocated for housing in the LDPs, if the site is in an area that is 'defined as linguistically sensitive or significant'.⁵

1.8

The Welsh Language Commissioner disagreed with this statement, and in a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs in November 2017, argued for planning authorities to be given flexibility to consider the Welsh language in individual planning applications. In carrying out an impact assessment of its LDPs, a planning authority could have considered the impact of its plan within the whole of the authority's area, without giving detailed consideration to its impact on each particular community. It is also possible that new evidence could come to light regarding the position of the Welsh language in the area that was not available at the time of preparing the LDPs, or that the impact assessment had become dated.

³ 'Sut i godi tai a chael miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050' - BBC Cymru Fyw [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁴ [Leading Welsh barrister to deliver keynote lecture on community planning and the Welsh language \(swansea.ac.uk\)](https://www.swansea.ac.uk/news/2017/10/24/leading-welsh-barrister-to-deliver-keynote-lecture-on-community-planning-and-the-welsh-language).

⁵ Welsh Government, *Technical advice note (TAN) 20: planning and the Welsh language* (October 2017), p. 12.

1.9

Cymdeithas yr Iaith has also been critical of the Technical Advice Note and said that the note, rather than introducing a methodology for authorities to use when considering the impact of developments on the Welsh language, 'misleadingly suggests that such assessments should be restricted'. Cymdeithas yr Iaith emphasised that 'a law in statute such as the Planning Act 2015 always outweighs an advice note such as [Technical Advice Note 20], or indeed *Planning Policy Wales*, and any impact on the Welsh language is a material consideration at any stage in the planning process.' Cymdeithas yr Iaith called on the Government to amend the Technical Advice Note 'urgently, to reflect the duty on authorities under the Planning Act to consider any matter relating to the Welsh language when dealing with individual applications for planning permission, if that is relevant to the application.'⁶

1.10

In an article in *Barn* magazine, Gwion Lewis wrote: 'No worthwhile consideration can be given to the likely effects on the Welsh language without evaluating those effects.' He argued that the 'superficial linguistic assessment carried out for the LDPs is insufficient and that a plan with a lifetime of around ten years cannot take account of the needs of a changing housing market. He highlighted the environmental requirements involved in deciding to grant planning permission, and noted that environmental law forces local planning authorities to consider the environmental impacts of new development twice: during the preparation of the plan and again when considering individual applications. 'The Assembly's intention in passing the 2015 Act', he said, 'was to make similar provision for the Welsh language. A policy document cannot change the law. [TAN 20] should be looked at again as a matter of urgency.'⁷

1.11

The advice note states that the Welsh Language Commissioner is a consultee on LDPs, 'with the specific role of considering from an early stage the impact of LDP proposals and policies on the Welsh language'.⁸ The LDP Manual, published by the Government in 2015, lists the Welsh Language Commissioner amongst the 'other consultees' with which Local Planning Authorities should consider consulting on their LDPs.⁹

1.12

Although the Commissioner responds to consultations on LDPs and highlights opportunities to promote the Welsh language in planning decisions, he does not have the capacity or resources to provide specialist support to planning authorities on individual planning applications.

⁶ [Polisi Cynllunio Cymru - Ymateb Mai 2018 | Cymdeithas yr Iaith](#) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁷ Gwion Lewis, 'Yr iaith a chynllunio – anghysondeb', *Barn*, 658 (November 2017), p 8. [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁸ [Technical advice note \(TAN\) 20: planning and the Welsh language](#), p. 11.

⁹ Welsh Government, [LDP Manual](#), 2nd edition (August 2015), p. 134.

1.13

With the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and Technical Advice Note 20 having been in place for some years, the Commissioner was keen to understand the reality of the situation, and whether these policies are adequate, and are being implemented in the interests of the Welsh language. In 2019, the Commissioner undertook a study of local planning policies and how planning authorities consider the Welsh language in their work. He sent a questionnaire to all planning authorities in Wales asking a number of questions regarding the Welsh language in the context of their planning policies. In a report analysing the responses, the Commissioner concluded that:

- There is a lack of consistency in authorities' planning policies in the context of the Welsh language. There is no certainty that the potential impact of developments on the Welsh language is assessed reliably, or that appropriate action is taken to mitigate any adverse effects.
- There is a call from the authorities for clear, national guidance on language impact assessments and defining areas of linguistic sensitivity. Linked to this is the call for an independent, specialist arbiter with the authority to validate decisions on language and planning issues.
- A question has arisen regarding linguistic expertise within the Planning Inspectorate. The creation of a specific Planning Inspectorate for Wales will provide an opportunity to consider this further.¹⁰

On the basis of these findings, the Commissioner made the following recommendations:

- The Welsh Government should provide clear and detailed guidance to the Planning Inspectorate and to local authorities on how to assess impact on the Welsh language and how planning policies should promote the use of the Welsh language.
- Responsibility for providing objective and expert advice on planning matters should be given to an independent statutory body, possibly the forthcoming Planning Inspectorate for Wales.

The housing market

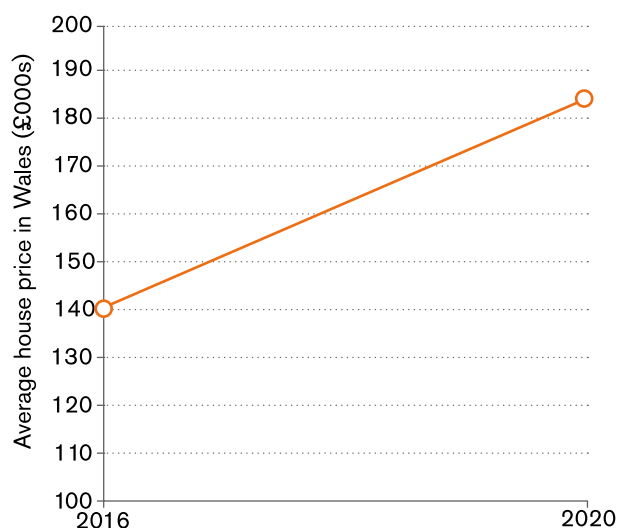
1.14

While there are opportunities and challenges facing the Welsh language through the planning system and new developments, it could be argued that the existing housing market has the greatest impact on the vitality of the Welsh language in a number of communities. The Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities currently have very few powers to regulate this market and put robust policies in place to ensure the vitality of the Welsh language in communities.

¹⁰ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Planning and the Welsh language: a review of Welsh planning authorities' procedures* (January 2019), p. 2.

1.15

In January 2016, the average house price in Wales was £140,015.¹¹ By December 2020, the average price had risen to £184,195.¹² House prices in Wales increased by 10.7% in the year to December 2020, faster than the UK annual rate of 8.5% in the same period.¹³ There has already been much reporting in the press and within the political sphere regarding young people being unable to afford to buy houses locally,¹⁴ and if this pattern continues, it is fair to assume that the situation will intensify.



1.16

In 2016, the Welsh Government announced a target to deliver 20,000 affordable homes by 2021, working with Community Housing Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association to achieve this goal. The strategy has three elements, namely increasing the numbers of affordable homes as defined in Technical Advice Note 2,¹⁵ the Rent to Own – Wales scheme,¹⁶ and the Help to Buy – Wales scheme.¹⁷ Statistics for 2019–20 contained the assumption that the Government would meet the target by 2021.¹⁸

¹¹ [UK House Price Index \(data.gov.uk\)](https://data.gov.uk).

¹² [UK House Price Index Wales: December 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

¹³ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁴ See, for example, [A coronavirus exodus from cities is pricing locals out in rural Wales. We need protection | Mabon ap Gwynfor | The Guardian](#) and [Ystyried deddfu i reoli nifer yr ail gartrefi yng Nghymru - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

¹⁵ Welsh Government, [Technical advice note \(TAN\) 2: planning and affordable housing](#) (June 2006).

¹⁶ [Rent to Own – Wales | GOV.WALES](#).

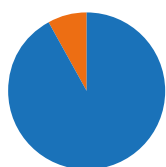
¹⁷ [Help to Buy – Wales | GOV.WALES](#).

¹⁸ [Affordable housing provision: April 2019 to March 2020 | GOV.WALES](#).

1.17

An influx of people from outside Wales is one factor that is having a major impact on the housing market, and on the use of the Welsh language in communities. The 2011 Census results showed that over a quarter of the population of Wales (830,000) were born outside the country; of which only 66,000 (8.0%) speak Welsh.¹⁹ The impact of inward migration on the language is seen at its keenest in areas where the Welsh language has been traditionally strong:

- Although 75% of Ceredigion residents born in Wales speak Welsh, only 15% of those born outside Wales can speak the language. This reduced the average of the county's Welsh speakers to 47%.
- A similar pattern was seen in Gwynedd, with 89% of people born in Wales speaking Welsh, and 20% of people born outside Wales. The average percentage of Welsh speakers in the county was 65%.



66,000

Over a quarter of the population of Wales (830,000) were born outside the country; of which only 66,000 (8.0%) speak Welsh.

1.18

Another factor affecting the Welsh language is the increase in the purchase of second homes and the fact that this often pushes prices beyond the reach of local people. Figures published by the Welsh Revenue Authority for 2019–20 showed that 38% of houses sold in Gwynedd during the year had additional tax payable on them,²⁰ and there were also similar figures for Anglesey and Ceredigion. The suggestion is that many of these houses with additional tax payable were second homes.

1.19

There is a strong possibility that even more homes will be sold as second homes as a result of COVID-19 and the general move from cities to the country with more flexibility for people to work remotely.

1.20

Since 2019, Dr Simon Brooks from Swansea University has been examining policy on second homes in Wales and Cornwall on behalf of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Due to growing interest in this area, at the request of the Welsh Government's Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language, the research was expanded to scrutinise wider issues relating to second homes in Wales and to make policy recommendations.²¹

¹⁹ Welsh Government, *Statistical Bulletin: Census 2011: First Results on the Welsh Language* (11 December 2021).


²⁰ *Land Transaction Tax Statistics: April 2019 to March 2020* | Gov.Wales.

²¹ Dr Simon Brooks on behalf of Welsh Government, *Second homes: Developing new policies in Wales* (10 March 2021). The report was published outside the reporting period of this report and therefore there is no analysis of the findings.

Work and economy

1.21

Cymraeg 2050 notes the importance of economic development for the vitality of the Welsh language:

 The economy is integral to creating the social conditions where Welsh speakers can stay in Welsh-speaking communities, or return to those communities. While we cannot control every factor which influences economic growth, there are things which we can influence. These include skills, the prestige placed on the Welsh language, the location of public sector jobs, clusters, ensuring that the Welsh language is seen as a valuable skill in large developments, and opportunities to use those skills.²²

1.22

The strategy also states that the Government is 'clear about the need for language planning and economic development to work in tandem in order to create Welsh-speaking communities that are economically and linguistically viable'.²³

1.23

Despite the consensus regarding the importance of the link between language and economy, the evidence base about the impact of economic policies and tendencies on language is limited, as demonstrated by *The Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods* by the Welsh Government in February 2020.²⁴ *The Welsh Language Labour Market report*²⁵ also highlights the insufficiency of the evidence base, stating that 'the emphasis tends to be on the relationship between the language and the economy. That is, the focus is on the use of Welsh within businesses, on the benefit of the language to individuals within the labour market or on businesses while trading [...] There are very few discussions on how economic processes may have an effect on the language'.²⁶

1.24

Dr Elin Royles of Aberystwyth University warns that there is an overall tendency for language and the economy to be discussed 'in rather general terms'. There is a need instead to 'differentiate more clearly between facets of the language-economy relationship'.²⁷ Dr Royles goes on to explain the different elements of the link between language and economy, dividing them into two dimensions: Language > Economy, and Economy > Language.

²² *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 59.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁴ Welsh Government, *The Welsh language and the economy* (Government Social Research, 27 February 2020).

²⁵ Marchnad Lafur Cymraeg, *Marchnad Lafur Cymraeg: Summary report highlighting outputs and key recommendations from the Marchnad Lafur Cymraeg project* (September 2020).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷ Dr Elin Royles, *Workshop Briefing Report 3, Workshop Theme: Language revitalisation and economic transformation* (February 2019), p. 3.

1.25

The Language > Economy dimension focuses on how language can influence the economy, for example 'the economic benefits of a bilingual workforce/a workforce able to work in a minority language, or the relative economic impact on companies of operating bilingually'. The Economy > Language dimension relates to how economic development can influence language, for example 'new economic developments within an area, or regional economic planning strategies [and their impact] upon the vitality of minority language, in particular its numbers of speakers or levels of use'.²⁸

1.26

During the 2016–20 Senedd, the Welsh Government introduced the Arfor innovation fund, a £2m fund for creating more, and better, jobs in the Welsh language heartlands and supporting the growth of the language in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthen. The individual counties were responsible for deciding how to spend the money, and the priorities varied somewhat from county to county. Carmarthenshire, for example, decided to focus on providing financial support for the growth of businesses in the food and creative sectors, while the other counties committed to supporting businesses to grow without focusing on specific sectors.

1.27

At the time of reporting, a review of Arfor had been commissioned but not published. There is therefore little evidence publicly available on the success of Arfor or on the individual projects that benefited from the scheme. There was also no certainty as to whether the scheme would continue or be further developed by the next Welsh Government following the Senedd elections in 2021.

1.28

In October 2019, the Government announced a new £4.5m fund to support a series of experimental projects to test how best to support the foundational economy and see which Government interventions work best. The health and care services sector, food, housing, energy, construction, tourism and small high street retailers were identified as examples of the foundational economy on the basis that they provide services and products that keep the people of Wales 'safe, sound and civilized'.²⁹

1.29

One initiative that benefits from the foundational economy fund is Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog which received £100,000 to help local businesses work with social enterprises to develop schemes in community tourism, renewable energy, creating digital media content and establishing a new consultancy service for the foundational economy.

²⁸ [Ibid.](#)

²⁹ [The foundational economy | Gov.Wales.](#)

1.30

During the reporting period, the city deals were established in the city regions of Cardiff and Swansea Bay, together with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Growing Mid Wales Partnership to promote the regional economy in Wales. There are also three regional skills partnerships, in north Wales, south-west and mid Wales and the Cardiff capital region. The skills partnerships are voluntary, non-statutory boards that include employers, education providers and other stakeholders, and they make recommendations to the Welsh Government on college and apprenticeship courses, together with learner numbers.

1.31

In its report on the regional skills partnerships in October 2019, the Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee expressed concern that the Welsh language 'does not yet appear to have been mainstreamed, fully formalised or structured' in their work.³⁰ There will be a need to ensure that the Government's commitment to provide 'strategic direction [...] to enable the RSPs to make informed decisions in relation to Welsh language skills' is implemented.³¹

Brexit and the Welsh language

1.32

The outcome of the 2016 referendum and the decision to leave the European Union will have a long-term impact on the Welsh economy, and this also has far-reaching implications for the future of the Welsh language.

1.33

Sectors such as agriculture and the post-16 sector are extremely important to the Welsh language, and both sectors employ high percentages of Welsh speakers. According to the 2011 Census, agriculture is the sector within which the highest percentage of Welsh speakers work.³² There are areas in west, mid and north Wales where around a third of the local population is employed in the sector, and where over 90% of the agricultural workforce speaks Welsh.

1.34

Agricultural businesses support many rural communities where Welsh is spoken naturally every day, and the post-16 sector is responsible for producing a skilled bilingual workforce. These sectors have benefitted extensively from membership of the European Union; they have received financial support and benefitted from free trade and freedom of movement.

³⁰ National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, *Regional Skills Partnerships* (October 2019), p. 36.

³¹ [Written Response by the Welsh Government to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's report on Regional Skills Partnerships](#), p. 5.

³² Farmers' Union of Wales, *Farming in Wales and the Welsh Language* (July 2017), p. 6.

1.35

In January 2018, the Public Policy Institute for Wales published a report outlining the potential challenges and opportunities for agriculture and rural areas in Wales as a result of Brexit. The report states:

Our scenario analysis suggests that the most likely changes in trading conditions would tend to disadvantage the competitive position of Welsh agriculture vis-à-vis its main current markets and trading competitors (particularly in sheep and beef). Further, we may anticipate generally reduced levels and scope of public funding by comparison with those the sector has enjoyed in recent years.³³

1.36

It also found that some farms faced much more significant challenges than others, and that the challenges were greater in the agricultural communities of north and west Wales:

[...] a decline in the economic viability of sheep production is likely, with these farm businesses especially vulnerable to changes in both market access arrangements and public funding support – this could increase pressure on rural services;

accordingly, north and west Wales are likely to face stronger negative impacts than the south and east, where more potentially positive and diverse impacts can be expected among dairy, horticultural, mixed and other farm types.³⁴

Given the importance of agriculture to the Welsh language, and particularly so in the north and west, the Commissioner concluded that there was a significant threat to the vitality of the Welsh language as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union.

1.37

European funding has also supported the Welsh language more directly. The European Structural and Investment Funds provided £375m to the Welsh economy annually, and organisations such as the Urdd, the mentrau iaith and Four Cymru were able to attract support from these funds to fund projects where the Welsh language was at the heart of the activities. European funding has facilitated other initiatives and projects that promote the Welsh language, including the refurbishment of the Nant Gwrtheyrn language centre and the production of television programmes such as *Y Gwyll/Hinterland*. The UK Government introduced plans for a Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Welsh Government and others voiced concerns about the financial support that would be available after leaving the European Union. The Welsh Language Commissioner also expressed concerns about the extent to which the Welsh language is used in the administration of the fund and the extent to which it will support projects that are beneficial to the Welsh language.³⁵

³³ Public Policy Institute for Wales, *The Implications of Brexit for Agriculture, Rural Areas and Land Use in Wales* (January 2018), p. 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*


³⁵ *Evidence from the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee's inquiry into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.*

1.38

Since the referendum, the UK Government and the Welsh Government have introduced various consultations, plans and strategies for sustaining and growing the economy outside the European Union. The most significant of these is *Prosperity for All: the national strategy*³⁶ and the economic action plan³⁷ associated with it. One of the key themes of the strategy is 'to build a nation where people take pride in their communities, in the Welsh identity and language, and in our place in the world'.³⁸

1.39

The Government has begun work on developing regional economic plans under the Economic Action Plan. These schemes are intended to provide a basis for prioritising a number of future investments in regions, ranging from Welsh Government investments, including funds to replace European Union regional funds, to wider public and private investments. The Welsh Government notes:

 By providing a coherent framework for investment in our regional economies we can ensure an adequate volume of investment for economic development aiming towards shared goals, and building on each region's distinct strengths and assets.³⁹

1.40

The Government consulted on securing the future of Welsh farming in *Brexit and our Land*,⁴⁰ the *International Strategy*,⁴¹ and *A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales*,⁴² and at the end of the reporting period opened a consultation on the *Agriculture (Wales) White Paper*.⁴³ Committees of the Senedd and the House of Commons undertook inquiries into the potential impact of Brexit on Wales, among them an inquiry by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on the impact of Brexit on the committee's remit areas⁴⁴ and an inquiry by the Welsh Affairs Select Committee on the proposed common prosperity fund.⁴⁵

1.41

Four years after the referendum, eleven months since the UK's legal departure from the European Union, and one week before the deadline for reaching any agreement, the corresponding leaders announced on 24 December 2020 that they had agreed a Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Welsh Government confirmed that it had supported the Agreement, as it would 'provide the closest possible relationship with the EU and therefore the least disruption'. However, one may gather that the Welsh Government reached this decision with reluctance, announcing that it 'is not the deal we wanted' and that the 'UK government have short-changed Wales and our communities'.⁴⁶

36 Welsh Government, *Prosperity for All: the national strategy* (19 September 2017).

37 Welsh Government, *Prosperity for All: economic action plan* (2017).

38 *Prosperity for All: the national strategy*, p. 3.

39 [Regional Economic Policy in Wales \(gov.wales\)](#), p. 2.

40 Welsh Government, *Brexit and our land: Securing the future of Welsh farming* (2018).

41 Welsh Government, *Draft international strategy for Wales* (2019).

42 Welsh Government, *A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales* (2020).

43 Welsh Government, *Consultation Document: Agriculture (Wales) White Paper* (2020).

44 National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, *Brexit, the arts sector, creative industries, heritage and the Welsh language* (December 2018).

45 Welsh Affairs Select Committee, *Wales and the Shared Prosperity Fund: Priorities for the replacement of EU structural funding* (October 2020).

46 [The new relationship with the EU and what it means for Wales | GOV.WALES](#).

1.42


The Commissioner provided comments to several consultations on the potential impact of Brexit on the Welsh language during the reporting period. The response to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's inquiry conveniently summarises all of the Commissioner's concerns about the impact of Brexit on the Welsh language.⁴⁷

1.43

Every time the Commissioner raised concerns on these issues, he argued for ensuring that the Welsh language should not lose out as a result of the changes, and called on the Welsh Government to carry out a full impact assessment of the impact of Brexit on the Welsh language. The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee endorsed these arguments, but the Government has not yet committed to undertaking such an assessment except as part of the proposed policy for the agriculture sector.

1.44

In response to a consultation on *Brexit and our Land* in 2018, Cymdeithas yr Iaith warned of the 'nightmarish' implications of the Welsh Government's plans for the agriculture industry as a result of the decision to leave the European Union:

 Indeed, with the emphasis on using Welsh land for forestry, recreation and tourism, it appears that the Government is trying to resurrect the nightmarish scenario in the novel *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* in which the last Welsh speaker has died and the land in Wales is covered by forest. We regret the fact that our devolved Government is opening the door to this nightmare by generously subsidising people, companies and bodies from outside Wales to come and destroy our country's rural communities.⁴⁸

1.45

Although Brexit has claimed a great deal of political attention over the past five years, it is fair to note that the majority of the discussions held in the early years after the vote focused on constitutional issues and the legality of the referendum, and very little attention was given to the impact of Brexit on the Welsh language as a result.

⁴⁷ The Welsh Language Commissioner's response to the short inquiry into the implications of leaving the European Union for areas within the remit of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee can be found here: [BREXIT07 - Welsh Language Commissioner.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#).

⁴⁸ [Brexit a'n tir: Cymorth i ffermwyr Cymru ar ôl Brexit | Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg](#) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

COVID-19, the economy and the Welsh language

1.46


While the uncertainty surrounding Brexit continues, in the early months of 2020 Wales was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing this report, it is too early to predict what the extent of the impact of the pandemic will be on the Welsh economy, and consequently the Welsh language. Early indications, however, suggest that the impact of COVID-19 on the economy will be detrimental, and the short-term impact on the Welsh language, at least, will be disproportionately disastrous.

1.47

Economic setbacks in areas already experiencing rural poverty would likely mean that there would be even fewer economic opportunities in those areas in the medium term. A great many of the Welsh-speaking communities of west and north-west Wales depend on the stability of the sectors hardest hit by the restrictions, namely tourism and hospitality.

1.48

On 15 July 2020, the Urdd announced that the future of the jobs of 80 of its staff, 25% of its workforce, was at risk from financial losses as a direct result of the pandemic.⁴⁹ There are real concerns that the decision to restrict movement, postpone events and clear the cultural and social calendar will destabilise a large number of Welsh language businesses, as well as leading to cultural poverty for the language. In his column in *Golwg* magazine, Dylan Iorwerth wrote:

 The Urdd and the National Eisteddfod are two of the most affected bodies – along with parts of the television, theatre and entertainment industry – and, in a small culture, their contribution is far greater than the income they generate or the direct activities they carry out.

[...] Just as important as the national cornerstones are all the minor events, festivals, gigs and social meetings that take place all year round across the country. Those provide the lining of our culture, maintaining the shape of the garment.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ [80 o swyddi'r Urdd dan fygythiad yn sgil Covid-19 - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁵⁰ Dylan Iorwerth, 'Cadw diwylliant rhag boddi', *Golwg* (13 August 2020), p. 10 [publication in Welsh only, author's translation].

Working for economic prosperity through the medium of Welsh

1.49

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu Team works closely with large businesses in Wales encouraging them to make more use of the Welsh language, providing assistance and supporting them in doing so. Further information on the team's work in influencing businesses and charities to increase the visual and audible use of Welsh in shops and branches can be found in Part 3.

1.50

In addition to this practical work, the Commissioner uses opportunities that arise to highlight the economic value of the Welsh language at a strategic level by influencing public policy. By influencing policy and ensuring appropriate consideration of the Welsh language at an early stage of policy development, the aim is to reduce the risk of developments having an adverse effect on the language or that opportunities are missed to ensure a positive effect on its future.

1.51

The Commissioner argued that the economy should be developed in a way that not only protects and preserves the Welsh language, but also promotes and strengthens it. He also argued that the achievements secured through European funding should be built on by bringing even greater economic and linguistic benefits to Wales in the future. He called for innovative action to use the Welsh language for the benefit of the economy in response to the draft international strategy.

1.52

In his response to a consultation on the Regional Investment Framework, the Commissioner called for investment schemes to be created in industries that are already important to the Welsh language, but also that there should be ambition in establishing Welsh-language workplaces and good quality careers in innovative sectors – whether in developing multilingual technology, renewable energy or providing business support services.

1.53

In *Cymraeg 2050*, the Government states that the challenge is to 'ensure that people have good quality jobs, fulfilling careers and homes so that they can stay, or return to those [Welsh language] communities'⁵¹ and promote the use of Welsh as a language of the workplace and business in other areas. Although these high-level policy statements are in place, and that some experimental projects do support growth, they have not led to the Welsh language being mainstreamed as a general principle across economic development projects. Without ambitious action and purposeful planning, it is difficult to imagine reversing the consistent pattern of decline in the community use of the Welsh language.

⁵¹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 7.



The Commissioner's conclusions

Enabling individuals to stay and live in their communities if they wish to do so is a matter of social justice. It is quite clear that the current system is not working for the benefit of Welsh-speaking and rural communities. The increase in holiday homes risks not only undermining the use of the Welsh language and culture, but also undermining the well-being goal of a more equal Wales, by pricing local people out of the market and leading to a situation where vibrant villages and communities are being replaced by holiday villages.

As the COVID-19 pandemic revolutionises the way we work and influences where we want to live and spend our time, the Welsh Government urgently needs to set up a taskforce to look at the possible solutions to controlling the housing market.

Although the move towards working from home as a result of COVID-19 creates particular challenges for the housing market in some areas, there is no doubt that this change also creates opportunities for the Welsh language. The Welsh Government has already stated its aim of seeing 30% of the workforce working from their homes and communities following the pandemic. There are clear opportunities to increase economic activity in Welsh-speaking communities as a result of this revolutionary change, as there will not be the same expectation on people to move to urban or populous centres and leave rural communities to pursue specific careers. **The Government will need to fundamentally improve the infrastructure in rural areas to enable this vision and support necessary economic growth. The Welsh language must be placed at the heart of planning this fundamental change to the infrastructure of our communities.**

As this is a live situation and change is beginning to take place at the time of writing this report, it must be kept under close scrutiny. **The Welsh Government and local authorities need to work together to monitor the impact of the change in working patterns on Welsh-speaking communities as it develops. It would be unacceptable to allow this structural change to take place without close and proactive monitoring of its impact on the Welsh language. Policy makers must have a sufficient understanding of the situation so that they are in a position to introduce urgent mitigation measures if necessary.**

For this planning to be meaningful, we also need a better fundamental understanding of the relationship between language and economy. **There is a clear need for the Government to commission comprehensive research to ensure a sound theoretical foundation and to identify what economic developments have the potential to strengthen the position of the Welsh language. Without doubt, an evaluation of the Arfor scheme should also be undertaken and the lessons used as the basis for long-term economic strategies for those communities where there are significant percentages of Welsh speakers.**

It is also essential that cities and urban centres are not left behind in relation to language planning. **It must be ensured that the Government, local authorities and the city growth deals mainstream the Welsh language as a general principle across economic support projects.**

In rebuilding and regenerating following Brexit and COVID-19, the new, emerging opportunities must be embraced to ensure that workplaces in all parts of Wales offer opportunities for people to work through the medium of Welsh. **We need to see the public sector in Wales leading in this area over the next five years by creating more opportunities to use the language internally.** Certainly, local authorities in Wales where there is a high density of Welsh speakers should consider emulating Gwynedd Council's language policy of operating through the medium of Welsh. However, there is room for all sections of the public sector to take the lead in this area, wherever they are located. The new flexibility in terms of work locations will also give organisations the flexibility to ensure that people with the right language skills are in the right jobs. This would be a fundamental step forward in promoting the Welsh labour market and promoting the value of Welsh language skills in creating clear career pathways for pupils and students leaving Welsh-medium education.

2 Culture and media

2.1

There has been steady growth in the digital presence of the Welsh language since the publication of the previous 5-year report. This, of course, contributes to expanding the reach and diversity of Welsh language cultural provision. That is not without its challenges for a language such as Welsh as there is also a corresponding increase and diversity in the provision in other languages, not least English, meaning that there are wider options available to Welsh speakers.

2.2

The ongoing challenge is therefore to ensure that Welsh speakers choose to experience Welsh language culture. Digital media facilitates that, of course, but the underlying challenge remains. However, the way in which Welsh speakers embraced digital media in the face of the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, creating new virtual online communities and using digital media to celebrate festivals; sing in virtual choirs and discuss issues as diverse as food and skincare, is a positive sign of a strong and viable culture that demands expression.

Reading

2.3

According to the 2011 Census, 15% of the population of Wales (a little over 430,700 people) were able to speak, read, and write in Welsh; and of those who said that they could speak Welsh, 77% indicated that they also had Welsh reading and writing skills.⁵² The Welsh language book and magazine publishing industry has a central role in normalising the practice of reading Welsh and reflecting the culture and diversity of the people of Wales in print, thereby increasing people's confidence in their skills.

2.4

The Books Council of Wales leads this work by promoting interest in Welsh books; promoting the publishing industry; assisting and supporting authors and distributing grants to assist in the publication of quality material in Welsh.⁵³ It also provides a wholesale service to publishers and booksellers through its distribution centre. In 2019–20, the Books Council supported the publication of 215 Welsh language titles with average sales of 846 books after 18 months; figures which reflect the trends of the period since 2016.⁵⁴

2.5

The Beaufort research report on the reading habits of Welsh speakers showed that there had been an increase in the proportion of Welsh speakers reading Welsh books between 2003 and 2012, from 37% to more than half (55%). Between 2012 and 2016, this percentage remained relatively constant (54%) but there has been a marked growth in the proportion reading a Welsh book relatively often (at least once a month), from 19% in 2012 to almost a quarter (24%) in 2016.⁵⁵ The Welsh speakers' Reading Habits Questionnaire undertaken by the Books Council during the summer of 2020 will reveal more recent reading patterns of Welsh speakers.

2.6

Books for children and young adults are very important to the Welsh language because they foster and develop reading habits in the language that will hopefully continue throughout their lives. At the end of 2017, Dr Siwan M. Rosser's challenging report on books for children and young people was published,⁵⁶ and it has set the direction for the work of the Books Council ever since. The report, for example, led to a greater emphasis on publishing original books for children and young people, and the Council's largest grants are now available for books for older children and young people as well as adults. Smaller grants have also been adapted to encourage new authors to produce original books for young adults, and collaboration with Literature Wales has been undertaken to provide authors and illustrators with training on creating original books for children.

52 [Welsh language skills by local authority, gender and detailed age groups, 2011 census \(gov.wales\)](#).

53 [Our Objectives | Books Council of Wales](#).

54 Books Council of Wales, [Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020](#) (2020).

55 Beaufort Research, [Buying & Reading Welsh Books Research Report: Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey 2016 \(2016\)](#), p. 6 [report available in Welsh only].

56 Siwan M. Rosser, [Survey of Books for Children and Young People: Final Report](#) (20 July 2017).

2.7

The report also led to further research being commissioned in 2018 to try to better understand the needs of parents with limited Welsh language skills who had children in Welsh-medium schools. It provided important suggestions for promoting Welsh language books to this key audience as they supported their children in Welsh-medium education. Another important project is Reading Well⁵⁷ which is the result of collaboration between the Welsh Government, the Reading Agency and the Books Council of Wales since 2018, to ensure that Welsh titles on dementia and mental health are available to promote the well-being of Welsh speakers.

2.8

The Books Council is responsible for acting as a bridge and supporting the activities of readers, booksellers, authors and presses. Increasingly over the reporting period, there have been more opportunities to buy Welsh books on the internet as it can be done through the Books Council's website, donating the commission to a bookshop of the buyer's choice; directly from some presses; and from most Welsh language bookshops.

2.9

It is too early to quantify the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the industry. There was a suggestion that the practice of buying online had increased as a result of the crisis and an increase was seen in e-book sales during the first lockdown.⁵⁸ Research data on Buying & Reading Welsh Language Books suggested that in 2016 there was a significant demand for Welsh e-books at that time: although fewer than one in ten (7%) of those with internet access had bought a Welsh e-book, more than two-fifths of these would consider buying one.⁵⁹

2.10

By the end of the reporting period, the Books Council of Wales also supported the publication of 16 Welsh-language magazines aimed at different audiences. A marked trend over the period is a move towards expanding the digital presence of these magazines. For example, *O'r Pedwar Gwynt* magazine was launched in 2016 as a paper publication appearing three times a year with new weekly material on the website,⁶⁰ while *Lysh*, launched in 2019, as a magazine primarily for teenage girls, is only available digitally.⁶¹

2.11

There is a clear crossover between the Golwg 360 news website and *Golwg* magazine with one directing readers to the other,⁶² and it is now possible to subscribe to a digital version of the *Golwg* magazine itself enabling subscribers to access exclusive content. In 2017, the publication of *Y Cymro* as a weekly newspaper came to an end with the failure to find suitable buyers. However, by the end of the same year it was being republished as a monthly newspaper with support from the Books Council of Wales. Of course, it should also be emphasised that there are Welsh-language magazines and newsletters published in print and online that do not receive public funding. These include denominational magazines and *Y Faner Newydd* as well as newsletters of Welsh language associations, some of which are published bilingually.

⁵⁷ [Reading Well \(reading-well.org.uk\)](http://reading-well.org.uk).

⁵⁸ [Mwy yn prynu llyfrau Cymraeg ar y we yn ystod y pandemig - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁵⁹ [Buying & Reading Welsh Books Research Report: Welsh Speakers Omnibus Survey 2016](#), p. 4 [report available in Welsh only].

⁶⁰ [O'r Pedwar Gwynt](#).

⁶¹ [Lysh Cymru](#).

⁶² [Golwg360](#).

2.12

Literature Wales is the national company responsible for developing literature and facilitating, sponsoring and delivering a literary programme across Wales. It does so in many ways. In terms of writer development, it provides scholarships and mentoring schemes for writers, and writing courses at Tŷ Newydd in Llanystumdwy. It is also responsible for the Bardd Plant Cymru and the National Poet of Wales projects, as well as the Wales Book of the Year Award which inspire and attract people to literature.

2.13

The contribution of the papurau bro in ensuring opportunities for people to read Welsh cannot be underestimated either. More than 50 of these community papers are published regularly across Wales with most receiving some financial support from the Welsh Government. An interesting development over the reporting period was the establishment of the Bro 360 project to create a network of community-focused websites in communities in Arfon and north Ceredigion. There are now seven bro websites with a network of contributors covering local stories. The project also provides opportunities to develop local correspondents. Bro 360 facilitated the digital publication of a number of papurau bro during lockdown, and by October 2020 a hundred editions had been published digitally during lockdown.⁶³

Broadcasting and the Welsh Language

2.14

There has been no change during the reporting period to the fact that S4C and the BBC are the cornerstones of the Welsh language broadcast media, with much of their provision increasingly available digitally. However, it is a concern that there is lack of plurality in Welsh language provision from other providers locally, or nationally, to reflect the myriad of views and experiences of the people of Wales through the medium of Welsh. These issues were discussed in a number of consultations held during the reporting period by the Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on the future of S4C,⁶⁴ radio in Wales,⁶⁵ news journalism in Wales,⁶⁶ and more recently on the devolution of broadcasting.⁶⁷

2.15

During the review of the BBC's Royal Charter by the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2015–16, a debate began about the Welsh language media, and S4C in particular. This led to the publication of a report reviewing the channel in 2018 produced under the chairmanship of the late Euryng Ogwen Williams.⁶⁸

⁶³ [Cant o rifynnau papur bro ar-lein yn ystod Covid – Bro360](#) [available in Welsh only].

⁶⁴ National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, [Outside The Box: The future of S4C](#) (August 2017).

⁶⁵ National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, [Tuning in: Inquiry into Radio in Wales](#) (December 2018).

⁶⁶ National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, [Read all about it: Inquiry into News Journalism in Wales](#) (May 2018).

⁶⁷ Welsh Parliament Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, [Exploring the devolution of broadcasting: How can Wales get the media that it needs?](#) (March 2021).

⁶⁸ Euryng Ogwen Williams on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Building an S4C for the future](#) (December 2017).

2.16

The report's recommendations have informed the channel's work since that time. They included a recommendation for the channel to establish a language partnership with the Welsh Government and others to help deliver the Welsh Government's commitment to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This led to collaboration between the channel and bodies such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh which led to the development of dedicated resources for learners to accompany a number of S4C's popular series. As part of S4C's aim to support Welsh learners, a number of new series specifically for learners were introduced such as *laith ar Daith*. The series was very successful on social media and attracted over 1 million views, 650,000 of them on Facebook.

2.17

In 2019, a further partnership was announced between S4C and Mudiad Meithrin to create opportunities to acquire and transmit the Welsh language and to support children, families and carers in the early years. S4C's provision was crucial during the 2020 lockdown providing opportunities for children to hear and use Welsh when most schools and childcare settings were closed. S4C released a number of children's programmes from the archive and published Ysgol Cyw resources on its website. There has been an increase of 182% in the average number of viewers of S4C's children's programmes.⁶⁹

2.18

Another extremely important recommendation of Euryng Ogwen Williams's report was for S4C to establish a digital hub to develop and improve the channel's digital influence, as well as creating a foundation for a digital cluster in Welsh. In response, S4C has developed S4C Clic's on-demand service to offer exclusive content available only through Clic, such as box sets and drama, together with specific content for Welsh learners and children and young people. At the beginning of 2020, Clic reached 100,000 subscribers in a 6-month period.⁷⁰

2.19

Another important step in S4C's commitment to digital developments was the launch of Hansh in June 2017. It offers a unique platform and content for young people aged 16–34 and offers entertainment, digital drama and factual programmes. There is also current affairs and news provision from trainee journalists in partnership with ITV Cymru Wales. Within just a month in early 2020, Hansh had attracted a million views across Twitter, Facebook and YouTube for the first time ever, and has since expanded to create content on Instagram and TikTok as well as podcasts.⁷¹ The long-term challenge of course is to ensure that Hansh's audience become viewers of S4C's wider provision.

⁶⁹ S4C's evidence to Westminster's Welsh Affairs Committee in its inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh economy: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/5630/pdf/>.

⁷⁰ [S4C Clic hits the 100,000 mark! | S4C](#).

⁷¹ [Hansh reaches 1 million views in a month | S4C](#).

2.20

Rhodri Williams became Chair of S4C on 1 April 2020 replacing Huw Jones, Chair since 2011. In his first interview in office, Rhodri Williams criticised S4C for lagging behind in terms of digital provision and for failing to 'cope with the challenge of deciding what type of services can be provided on the traditional television screen, and what services are better provided on different digital platforms'.⁷² It will be interesting to see what changes will result from his appointment. One of his main responsibilities in his new role will be to negotiate a licence fee settlement for the period from 1 April 2022.

2.21

It is important to ensure that Welsh speakers and people learning the language have access to Welsh language information and content in their areas of interest, and normalising the Welsh language on digital media is an obvious way of doing so. S4C's digital developments have gone hand in hand with an overall increase in Welsh-language digital content, although it is not possible to measure the scale of the increase in a meaningful way. Much of this content has been developed with the financial support of public broadcasters such as the BBC and S4C, but there have also been several websites, blogs, and podcasts⁷³ being developed in Welsh in areas as varied as the history of Wales' forgotten women,⁷⁴ witches of today,⁷⁵ local history and the arts,⁷⁶ mental health,⁷⁷ and technological developments and the Welsh language.⁷⁸ Much of this digital content is now available together through the amam.cymru portal, which facilitates access to Welsh language content.

2.22

There is a close relationship between S4C and the BBC. The Broadcasting Act 1990 requires the BBC to provide no less than 520 hours of content to S4C each year.⁷⁹ These programmes include news and current affairs, drama, sport and the National Eisteddfod as well as some factual programmes. S4C also pays for its presence on BBC iPlayer which is additional to S4C Clic and is an important means of reaching a wider audience, as it gives S4C a presence across a wide range of devices that would not otherwise be available to S4C, and contributes significantly to online content viewing numbers as a result. S4C's broadcasting technical services were originally planned to be co-located with those of the BBC by the end of the 2019–20 financial year, but the pandemic meant that the plans were delayed further until early 2021.⁸⁰

2.23

The BBC is also the main provider of Welsh-medium content on radio and the only one that broadcasts exclusively in Welsh. There is limited Welsh language provision available on commercial stations and Ofcom, the broadcasting regulator, does not have powers to require the Welsh language to be included in commercial radio formats. There are a few radio stations where there is some Welsh-medium or bilingual output, and some radio stations such as Môn FM broadcast bilingually.

⁷² [S4C 'ar ei hôl hi' ar lwyfannau digidol, medd cadeirydd - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

⁷³ A list of Welsh websites, blogs and podcasts can be found on the [Hedyn](#) website, and the Welsh podcasts have been collected together on the [Y Pod](#) website and app.

⁷⁴ [drudwen \(tumblr.com\)](#).

⁷⁵ [Podlediad Gwrachod Heddiw \(ypod.cymru\)](#).

⁷⁶ [Yr Hen Ddeurodiwr – yn dŵad yn ôl o dro i dro i weld be' 'di be' yn 'rhen Ga'r dydd \(wordpress.com\)](#); [Enwau Dyffryn Ogwen: Cyhoeddiadau'r Stamp \(ystamp.cymru\)](#).

⁷⁷ [meddwl.org - Meddyliau ar Iechyd Meddwl](#); [Podlediad DEWR \(ypod.cymru\)](#); [Podlediad Digion \(ypod.cymru\)](#)

⁷⁸ [Yr Haceddiad](#).

⁷⁹ [The BBC's response to the National Assembly for Wales's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee consultation on the devolution of broadcasting \(January 2020\)](#), p. 12.

⁸⁰ S4C, [Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the 12 month period to 31 March 2020](#) (2020), p. 99.

2.24

At the beginning of 2018, the BBC Radio Cymru 2 station was added to the BBC's Welsh language provision. According to the BBC's report for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee in early 2020, 17.5% of Welsh speakers (4.4% of the population of Wales over the age of 15) listened to Radio Cymru on a weekly basis.⁸¹

2.25

BBC Cymru Fyw is the BBC's digital service and it provides varied news, general content and sport through the medium of Welsh. Over the reporting period, the BBC developed dedicated Welsh language content for Welsh speakers under the age of 35 on BBC Sounds, which corresponds to Hansh's aim of appealing to young adults. As with S4C, during the reporting period the BBC has worked with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support learners, for example by broadcasting a radio programme presented by learners on the Cymru.fm website and BBC Radio Cymru 2, as well as producing a dedicated weekly news programme for learners.

2.26

S4C is funded primarily through the television licence fee and additional small grant support from DCMS. Since 2017, it has received licence fee funding directly from the BBC in accordance with the BBC's Royal Charter. This was worth £74.5m a year to S4C in 2018–19, which is a fixed amount until the end of the current licence fee term in 2021–22. The assurance provided by the licence fee allows S4C a degree of stability and the ability to plan for the longer term, an issue that is vital to the channel as Euryng Ogwen Williams noted in his review.

2.27

The report recommended that S4C should be funded entirely by the licence fee from 2022–23 onwards, with all funding decisions being made at the same time as the discussions regarding the BBC's licence fee funding settlement. With that in mind, in November 2020 the UK Government's Culture Minister wrote to the BBC and S4C outlining the scope and timetable of licence fee negotiations from 2022 onwards.⁸² In his letter to S4C, he highlighted the importance of the channel as the only Welsh-language broadcaster, and its unique cultural and social position, referring to its vital economic impact and its key contribution in promoting the Welsh language. He also noted the need for the modernisation of S4C.

2.28

It should be noted in passing that the UK Government undertook a consultation in 2020 on decriminalising tv licence evasion; a move that, if realised, would create uncertainty as to how much of the licence fee would be available to fund the activities of S4C and the BBC through the medium of Welsh.

2.29

In 2019–20, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee held an inquiry into the devolution of broadcasting for Wales. A number of respondents to the consultation believed that doing so would lead to a better foundation for Welsh language media and lead to broader provision.

⁸¹ [The BBC's response to the Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee consultation on the devolution of broadcasting \(January 2020\)](#), p. 11.

⁸² [Letters from the Culture Secretary to the BBC and S4C on the 2022 Licence Fee Settlement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The arts

2.30

The Arts Council of Wales is the official national body that funds and develops the arts in Wales. In *For the Benefit of All*,⁸³ its corporate plan for 2018–23, the Arts Council committed to increasing its investment in the work of people who wish to work through the medium of Welsh. Information on the participation of Welsh speakers in the arts, as well as the Arts Council of Wales' commitments in relation to the language and bilingual activities, can be found in annual reports on the Welsh language on its website.⁸⁴ The 2019–20 report reinforces the Council's commitment to supporting the Welsh Government's ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 through activities and opportunities in the arts.

2.31

According to 2019–20 figures,⁸⁵ 92.3% of Welsh-speaking adults attended at least one arts event, once or more a year. This compared with 86.9% in 2018–19 and was 11% more than in 2015–16 (81%). Figures for 2019–20 showed that 49% of adults who can speak Welsh participate in the arts once a year or more.

2.32

In 2018–19, the Council funded 437 projects supported by the National Lottery, of which 26 were Welsh-medium, three fewer than in 2016–17. These numbers fall well below the 41 projects funded in 2014–15, but it should be noted that there was also a notable reduction in the overall number of Lottery funded projects during this period. In 2018–19, 194 bilingual Welsh/English projects were funded with Lottery funding – 17 fewer than in 2016–17. The Council itself recognises that there needs to be a better understanding of what 'bilingual' activity means.

2.33

Of all the events held by organisations from the Arts Portfolio Wales in 2018–19, it is noted that there have been a total of 1,139 Welsh language events which is 4.9% of all events held; there were also 124,462 attendees which is 3% of the total. This was an increase of 13.4% in events and an increase of 13.1% in attendees compared to 2017–18. Within these organisations 4,797 people were employed or volunteering and 1,042 (21.7%) speak Welsh.⁸⁶

2.34

In June 2019, the Arts Council published the outcome of its consultation on future arrangements for Lottery funding for the arts⁸⁷ which presents interesting views on the funding of Welsh language projects and artists. It concludes that the fundamental principle of creating work through the medium of Welsh must be protected and promoted. All organisations and artists will be required to consider providing more opportunities for people to learn Welsh and engage with the language when creating and presenting work, as part of achieving the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*.

⁸³ Arts Council of Wales, *For the benefit of all: Corporate Plan 2018–2023* (2018).

⁸⁴ [Welsh language annual reports | Arts Council of Wales](#).

⁸⁵ Please note that 2019–20 figures have been affected by COVID-19 as not all portfolio bodies reported on time.

⁸⁶ Arts Council of Wales, *Arts Portfolio Wales: Highlights of the 2018/19 Survey* (2019), p. 7, 9, 11.

⁸⁷ Arts Council of Wales, *Transformation and change: Results of the Arts Council of Wales' consultation on the future arrangements for National Lottery funding for the arts* (June 2019).

2.35

It also sets out the actions it will take, including increasing the Arts Council's investment in Welsh language work; providing financial incentives to commission, produce and promote Welsh language work and investing in initiatives that develop the capacity and skills of creative professionals who want to work through the medium of Welsh. As such, in 2020 the Arts Council of Wales commissioned a comprehensive new package of bilingual promotion resources for the arts sector. The aim of the pack is to help increase the use of Welsh in arts activity; create more bilingual places of work, and offer support to anyone in the arts who wants to learn Welsh, improve their language skills or boost their confidence in speaking Welsh.

2.36

At the beginning of 2020, the Arts Council funded work to map out as much as possible the arts activities taking place through the medium of Welsh in order to create a full, up-to-date picture of the situation. The report on arts activity was published in late 2020 along with the Arts Council's response to it.⁸⁸ The research considered the role of the arts in Wales as part of the development and promotion of the Welsh language with a focus on how that could be increased.

2.37

The report, which itself emphasises that it only provides a snapshot of all activities, underlines how many arts activities are available through the medium of Welsh, and most of them without core funding from the Arts Council. The report makes a number of recommendations to the Arts Council in relation to the Welsh language, including the creation of a long-term partnership and associated memorandum of understanding between the arts sector and the language development sector.

2.38

The Arts Council has responded positively to the review, fully accepting the report's recommendations and recognising the need for action and not without a sense of urgency. One of the recommendations is that an individual should be appointed to lead on Welsh language activities in the arts sector. As such, an Agent for Change will be appointed in 2021 to challenge the Council and its key stakeholders to think and act differently in relation to the Welsh language agenda. The hope, therefore, is that the report's recommendations will bear fruit during the next period, bringing benefits to both the Welsh language and the arts.

2.39

Of course, as already discussed, by the end of the reporting period, COVID-19 had significantly affected the hosting of arts events of all kinds, and it soon became clear that the arts sector would need targeted support. In conjunction with the Welsh Government in April 2020, the Arts Council reallocated funding to create an emergency response fund of over £7m through the Arts Resilience Fund.

2.40

Later in the year, in July 2020, the Welsh Government announced a £53m Cultural Resilience Fund to be administered jointly between the Arts Council and the Government. Of the £53m, the Council received £25.5m of revenue funding and £2m of capital funding. By the end of the reporting period, a further lockdown was announced in Wales which would again impact the arts sector. Funding and support will need to be made available to support the arts sector to survive beyond the pandemic, particularly in the case of Welsh language activities given the opportunities they offer in terms of using and celebrating the language.

2.41

In 2016, the Government launched Dydd Miwsig Cymru (Welsh Language Music Day),⁸⁹ an annual event to celebrate Welsh language music of all kinds through gigs and social media. Dydd Miwsig Cymru reflects the overall health and vitality of the Welsh language music scene during the reporting period with music of all kinds being produced, and gigs and music festivals in all parts of Wales providing an opportunity to hear music, particularly over the summer.

2.42

Not that it is a measure of the success of Welsh language music of course, but a number of Welsh language groups have also had the opportunity to perform at international festivals, and streaming now means that Welsh language music can be heard anywhere in the world. One indication of its international appeal was the success of the band Alffa with the first Welsh-language single to be streamed over a million times on Spotify in December 2018, and their two singles breaking the Welsh language music streaming record by being streamed over 3 million times in 2019. There is a playlist of the songs that have been streamed more than a hundred thousand times on Spotify under the name Y Clwb Can Mil.⁹⁰ This is proof of the value of including Welsh language content on global platforms as a means of attracting users.⁹¹

2.43

However, streaming through technology such as Spotify and Apple Music means that there is very little return for the Welsh language music industry. In response, Cwmni Sain developed the Apton streaming app which launched in October 2016 and invested its own money in the initiative, receiving support from the Welsh Government. At the beginning of 2020, however, Sain noted that it was unlikely that Apton would be able to continue without further support from the Welsh Government as it was unable to compete with Spotify, Deezer, Apple Music etc.⁹²

⁸⁹ [Dydd Miwsig Cymru GOV.WALES](#).

⁹⁰ ['Gwenwyn' yn croesi 3m ffrwd – Y Selar](#) [article available in Welsh only].

⁹¹ [Y Clwb Can Mil – playlist by Ywain Gwynedd | Spotify](#).

⁹² ['Annhebygol' y gall ap Apton barhau heb fuddsoddiad - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [article available in Welsh only].

2.44

The Welsh Government also provided funding to Pyst in 2018 to support a dedicated digital distribution and advice service for music in Wales.⁹³ The publication of the magazine *Y Selar* continued four times a year together with the annual Selar awards.⁹⁴ One of the low points during the reporting period was the early closure of Maes B at the National Eisteddfod in 2019 due to adverse weather and the cancellation or postponement of a number of cultural festivals in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Although a number of festivals have been held digitally, such as Tafwyl, and a number of artists have continued to share their music digitally through streaming technology, the end of the reporting period was disastrous in terms of people's opportunities to listen to Welsh language music live and thereby socialise through the medium of Welsh.

2.45

Increasingly, the importance of Welsh language culture, arts and media to the vitality of the language must be acknowledged. Not only because they provide a mirror and expression to the aspirations and lives of those who speak the language, but because they also offer opportunities for Welsh speakers to work through the medium of the language and demonstrate the value of the ability to speak Welsh. In turn, therefore, the importance of the economic contribution of Welsh language culture and media to the vitality of Welsh-speaking communities must be emphasised as they employ so many people in those communities.

2.46

In the case of S4C, for example, in 2018–19 it worked with more than 50 production companies and creative sector partners in Wales and the UK.⁹⁵ The annual report notes that every £1 of S4C's investment is worth £2.09 to the Welsh economy and that £0.51 of every £1 is returned to the Treasury in taxes.⁹⁶ The 2019–20 annual report explained that 47% of S4C's expenditure takes place in north and west Wales, areas where there is a high density of Welsh speakers.⁹⁷

⁹³ [PYST – Music Services in Wales](#).

⁹⁴ [Y Selar – Y diweddara am gerddoriaeth Gymraeg gyfoes](#) [website available in Welsh only].

⁹⁵ S4C, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the 12 month period to March 2019* (2019), p. 7.

⁹⁶ [Ibid.](#), pp. 82–3.

⁹⁷ *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the 12 month period to 31 March 2020*, p. 84.

2.47

The Commissioner and others highlighted the potential impact of COVID-19 on Welsh language culture and media in response to the Senedd Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's consultation into the impact of the outbreak on its remit. In the Committee's view its 'implications for the Welsh language are also significant with the pandemic bringing about the loss of many opportunities for individuals to enjoy and participate in Welsh language arts and culture'.⁹⁸

2.48

In its inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh language the Committee took evidence from a number of organisations that work to promote the Welsh language. The report noted that the bodies were dependent on holding community, regional, and national activities and events to generate income 'and more importantly to support and promote Welsh language and culture'. It also stressed that 'the economic benefits of many of the cultural activities go further than just the revenue streams of the organisations involved' and underlined the importance of jobs in the sector.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Welsh Parliament's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, *Report on further work on the impact of COVID-19 on the arts* (December 2020), p. 8.

⁹⁹ Welsh Parliament's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, *The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Welsh language* (December 2020), p. 6.



The Commissioner's conclusions

Digital has become an essential medium as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and only time will tell to what extent some of our practices will have changed forever as a result. It will be interesting to see whether the increase in e-books continues into the longer term, for example. Increasingly in other languages, there has been growth in the popularity of audio books during the reporting period. It is easy to see the appeal of this medium in households where parents are unable to read Welsh books to their children, for example. The costs of producing audiobooks are very high, however, and therefore growth in that direction will need to be carefully planned. **It will be essential for the Books Council of Wales to keep a close eye on these trends and ensure that there is adequate provision for the Welsh language to attract readers of various ability and interests as well as to present the many experiences and views of Welsh speakers in Wales today.**

Ensuring digital access to papurau bro was one of the great success stories of the reporting period. Of course, not everyone has access to an electronic device or the internet, and not everyone would choose to read a papur bro online rather than the paper version. One must also bear in mind that paper versions generate sales revenue which is more difficult to replicate from digital publications. **The papurau bro will need support to adapt in order to serve their communities after the COVID-19 period.**

The COVID-19 crisis underlined the British media's serious and misleading lack of understanding of the difference in public policy between Wales and the rest of the UK, and this has already led to further debate on the devolution of broadcasting to Wales. The debate will no doubt continue following the publication of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report, and broadcasting to meet the needs of Wales in both Welsh and English will certainly be a topic of discussion during the next Senedd.

There is no doubt that there are real dangers to Welsh culture because of the current reliance on publicly funded broadcasting services, and in particular the BBC. A number of key decisions on broadcasting are made at UK level and it must be ensured that the views and priorities of the Welsh Government and the Senedd are fully respected in such decisions. It is essential that S4C's final financial settlement enables the channel to adapt and prosper for the future and to continue with the work of supporting the vision of *Cymraeg 2050* to which it has already contributed. **Adequate support and funding must be made available in future to ensure that S4C, the BBC and others can offer suitable provision in Welsh in line with the changes in the digital world and contribute fully to the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*.**

There is therefore no doubt that COVID-19 had a very significant impact on Welsh language culture at the end of the reporting period. We must also acknowledge that we do not yet fully understand the extent of those effects now and for the future. **It must therefore be ensured that the cultural promotion of the Welsh language is a crucial part of the way in which Wales comes out of the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on the Welsh language must also be reviewed in the long term so that plans and support are adapted and delivered as necessary. The impact of COVID-19 on cultural and artistic opportunities to use Welsh must continue to be reviewed whether at community, regional or national events, ensuring that support is provided to secure their survival.** This will be essential to ensure that we do not lose the talent, expertise, experience and commitment of volunteers, professionals and centres that promote opportunities to use the Welsh language.

However, we must not despair. Positive steps are already being taken by a number of our national bodies to embrace opportunities to promote the language by celebrating our culture and arts through the medium of Welsh, and there are positive signs that there is a long-term commitment to continue to do so. The way in which many aspects of Welsh language culture have adapted over recent years to embrace the opportunities offered by social media is a clear indication of the vitality of the language and the enthusiasm of its speakers to express and celebrate it in every way possible. However, the challenge remains for the language, like all other minority languages, to ensure that it rides the wave, taking advantage of these opportunities without being overwhelmed by the larger wave of English language culture.

3 Wales and the wider world

The Welsh language on the map

3.1

Perhaps one of the main events in the last five years that put Wales and the Welsh language on the map was the Euro 2016 championship. With the names of Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsey on everyone's lips that summer – in Wales and beyond – the Welsh language was given prominence by the national team and the language was used as a marketing tool.

3.2

The language was taken to all corners of the world during the period in question, for policy discussions in the context of minority languages and collaboration on cultural projects. Ifor ap Glyn was appointed national poet of Wales in 2016, a post that has enabled him to take Welsh language poetry to festivals and events in China, Poland, Cameroon, Germany and Ireland. Literature Across Frontiers and Mercator have also linked up Welsh language poets and writers with counterparts from Europe and beyond, and the Arts Council of Wales co-ordinated programmes to take Welsh music to the *An Oriant* inter-celtic festival in Brittany in 2018 as well as bringing together Welsh language, Irish and Gaelic musicians to collaborate on the Mamiaith project as part of the 2019 UNESCO year of indigenous languages.

3.3

In addition to its commitment to promoting the Welsh language at international events such as Diffusion: Cardiff International Festival of Photography, Llangollen International Eisteddfod and the Cricket World Cup in 2019, the Welsh Government also piloted a project to make the Welsh language more visible to visitors and those moving to live in Wales. As part of this effort, it began piloting the Welcome to Wales, Welcome to Welsh scheme in conjunction with the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Carmarthenshire County Council in 2018. In reviewing the scheme, it was noted that the target groups were hard to reach and therefore work began to introduce the pack on registration with a GP surgery or arranging council tax payment. The packs also now seek to demonstrate to business owners the importance of considering the Welsh language in their business plans.

3.4

The Welsh Language Commissioner received a number of invitations to share expertise with language communities across the world, and it is clear that there is widespread international recognition of the innovative work taking place in Wales in promoting the use of the Welsh language. In 2016, the Commissioner welcomed members of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami language committee from Nunavut to Wales to discuss the standardisation of orthography, and the preservation and promotion of minority languages, and during 2018–19 alone, the Commissioner was invited to share good practice from Wales with language communities in Georgia, Abkhazia, Romania and Taiwan.

3.5

It is fair to say that minority language communities certainly look to Wales as a shining example to follow. Indeed, the Irish Language Commissioner is quoted as saying that he would like to see Ireland follow Wales' example by introducing a system of standards to replace the current language schemes system:

 We do look to Wales as a good example of how to get things done, especially within the International Association of Language Commissioners. The Welsh Language Commissioner has been a huge part of that organisation, a former chair of the organisation, and they've had groups from Nunavut and from Kosovo and from Canada over to view the workings of the office. The main success, I suppose, as I would see it from an outside view looking in, is that they have moved to a system of standards [...]¹⁰⁰

International Association of Language Commissioners (IALC): Learning, sharing and collaborating



3.6


The Welsh Language Commissioner has been a member of the International Association of Language Commissioners since the Association was established in 2013, and which now has 11 members. Meri Huws, the former Commissioner, chaired the association between 2016 and 2018, and the Welsh Language Commissioner's office was also responsible for the secretariat between 2015 and 2018. The main aim of the association is to support and promote linguistic rights, equality, and diversity across the world and support language commissioners in upholding the highest professional standards in their work.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Contribution of Rónán Ó Domhnaill, Irish language Commissioner, to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's evidence session for 'Supporting and promoting the Welsh language: Inquiry into the legislative, policy and wider context' on 10/01/2019: [Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee - Fifth Senedd 10/01/2019 - Senedd \(cynulliad.cymru\)](#).

¹⁰¹ [International Association of Language Commissioners - About Us](#).

3.7

The association has been advising governments on language rights issues and has presented evidence to committees in recent years. As the Welsh Government held a consultation on the Welsh Language Bill in 2017, the other 10 members of the association responded to the consultation pressing the Welsh Government to reconsider the abolition of the post of Welsh Language Commissioner, recognising the value and influence of the Welsh Language Measure and the Welsh Language Commissioner to the international debate on the protection and promotion of minority languages:

 The international community of language ombudsman [sic] has truly benefited from the opportunity to learn from the Welsh example, and we hope that we will continue to learn, and to share in our experiences.¹⁰²

3.8

With the chairmanship of the association transferred to Ireland in 2018, the Welsh Language Commissioner's officers continue to be active within the association. A series of webinars are organised each year to share good practice, and the association's first volume, *Constitutional Pioneers: Language Commissioners and the Protection of Official, Minority and Indigenous Languages*, was published in 2019 under the editorship of officers of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Ontario French Language Services Commissioner.¹⁰³

3.9

Four conferences were held during the reporting period, in Ireland, Wales, Kosovo and Canada, where successful practices were shared together with an opportunity to discuss and see the language policies of the various countries in action. In May 2017, the conference was held in Cardiff on the theme of language of work and presentations were given by representatives of a number of national organisations in Wales along with talks from other members of the association on the impact of technology and strategic planning on the bilingual workplace. There was also an opportunity for members of the International Association of Language Commissioners to experience part of the Senedd's bilingual plenary meeting and mark the 50th anniversary of the Welsh Language Act (1967) at the conference launch event.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² [Letter to Welsh Government on behalf of IALC.pdf \(languagecommissioners.org\)](#), p. 1.

¹⁰³ Further information on the volume, *Constitutional Pioneers*, can be found on the website of the [International Association of Language Commissioners: International Association of Language Commissioners](#).

¹⁰⁴ The talks can be viewed together with the conference programme with further information on the launch of the conference on the Website of the International Association of Language Commissioners: [International Association of Language Commissioners - Conference 2017](#).

The Welsh language across the world

3.10

Welsh speakers are found not just in Wales of course. You only have to listen to the news bulletins on Radio Cymru or S4C to understand that Welsh speakers are to be found around the world and are available to talk about experiences and events in other countries through the medium of Welsh.

3.11

But it is also not surprising that the highest number of Welsh speakers outside Wales are located across the border in England, with the 2011 Census showing that 507,000 people born in Wales live in England.¹⁰⁵ Welsh language societies are still found in some communities in England and the Manchester, Liverpool, Derby, Nottingham and London Welsh Associations, together with the Wales and the World Union, are still active. The Welsh Government provides an annual grant of £90,000 to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain in London noting that many of the children who receive their primary education there return to the Welsh-medium education system in Wales.¹⁰⁶ It was reported that the school had 33 pupils in September 2020.¹⁰⁷

3.12

The Welsh Government also supports a project to send teachers from Wales to Patagonia. The Welsh Language Project is run by the British Council and was established in 1997 to promote and develop the Welsh language in the Chubut area of Argentina. Between children and adults, there were 1,411 people learning Welsh in Patagonia during 2019; the highest number since the start of the project. There has been an increase in Welsh-medium education in Patagonia in recent years, and the doors of Ysgol y Cwm, a new Welsh-medium and Spanish-medium school, were opened in 2016. With 50 children attending the school at the time of opening, by 2019 this number had increased to 94.¹⁰⁸ The National Centre for Learning Welsh also funds three annual scholarships for students from Patagonia to come to Wales to study.

¹⁰⁵ Welsh Government, *Statistical Bulletin: First Results on the Welsh Language* (11 December 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Action plan 2020–21* (2020), p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ [London Welsh School](#), [London Welsh School - GOV.UK \(get-information-schools.service.gov.uk\)](#).

¹⁰⁸ Rhisiart Arwel, *The Welsh Language Project in Chubut: Annual Report 2019* (2019), p. 24, 26.

‘Standing out from the monolingual crowd’ with an International Strategy for Wales

3.13

In January 2020, the Welsh Government published an international strategy detailing how the Government would like to engage with the world and the image of Wales it would like to project. With the Minister responsible for international relations also responsible for the Welsh language at the time of publication, there was a golden opportunity here to combine the two functions.

3.14

The Welsh language is given a comparatively prominent place within the strategy, with the acknowledgement that the language is ‘one of the treasures of Wales’ and that it is ‘part of what defines us as people and as a nation’.¹⁰⁹ It states that Wales will share its experience of increasing the number of Welsh speakers with countries and communities of other minority languages and share our methods of language immersion. The strategy also outlines the desire for Wales to become known for developing language technology for minority languages and that Welsh language music will be used to promote and represent Wales on the international stage.

3.15

In recent years, the Government has reinvented the Wales brand. Fonts have been designed to be used specifically for any opportunities to market Wales to the world giving them the unique features of the Welsh alphabet and its digraphs. The Cymru Wales Sans and Cymru Wales Serif font is found on the Visit Wales and Wales.com websites, publications and campaigns, for example, with the fonts winning the gold award at the European Design Awards in 2020. As part of the rebranding, there is also a special colour palette to be used with bilingual names such as Coch y Ddraig Dragon Red, Fagdu Black and Llechen Sych Blaenau Dry Slate.¹¹⁰

Llechweðð
Llanelli

Wedi ei chuððio yn Abereiðði
She was hidden in Abereiððy

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyr-
nðrobwlllantysiliogogoch

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¹⁰⁹ [Welsh Government, International Strategy](#) (January 2020), p. 37.

¹¹⁰ [Smörgåsbord \(smorgasbordstudio.com\)](#).

European protection

3.16

The UK has signed up to the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages since 2001. The Charter commits states to take active measures to promote the use of minority or regional languages in education, the courts, administration, the media, culture, and in economic and social life. The implementation of the Charter is monitored by the Council of Europe and governments are required to report on their implementation of the Charter every three years.

3.17

The UK's latest report was submitted in January 2018 where all the Celtic languages of the UK, including Welsh, were covered. The Welsh language is of course in a much stronger position than the other Celtic languages, and most of the Council of Europe's requirements have now been met in the case of the Welsh language. In the report of the committee of experts scrutinising the implementation of the Charter, there are three recommendations in relation to the Welsh language:

- Take further steps to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the use of Welsh.
- Continue to provide technical and vocational education in Welsh, a substantial part of technical and vocational education in Welsh or teaching of Welsh as an integral part of the curriculum at least to those pupils who so wish in a number considered sufficient.
- Ensure that local branches of the national authorities use Welsh.¹¹¹

3.18

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is also a European association where the Welsh language is represented.¹¹² The Welsh Government is a full member of the network, and the Coleg Cymraeg and a number of Welsh universities as well as Mentrau Iaith Cymru are associate members. Wales played a leading role in establishing the network in 2008 under the leadership of the Welsh Language Board, and although the headquarters moved from Cardiff to Brussels in 2016, Wales remains a leading member. Since 2019, the Deputy Director of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division has been vice-chair of the network.

3.19

In 2019, the Welsh Government contributed to an event which discussed the social use of minority languages, and event participants and the network were invited to work with the Government to develop the national policy on the transmission of the Welsh language and its use within families. One of the forum's objectives is collaboration on language policies, and the Welsh Government also now has a formal relationship with Québec in order to collaborate on such policies.¹¹³

¹¹¹ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, *Fifth report of the Committee of Experts in respect of the United Kingdom* (1 July 2020), p. 32.

¹¹² NPLD – Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity.

¹¹³ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. Annual Report 2019–20* (November 2020), p. 50.

The language on the world stage

3.20

Continuing to work with counterparts in Europe and beyond is now even more important following Brexit, with the Welsh language having lost its 'co-official' status in the European Union.

3.21

A timely opportunity came in 2019 to raise the profile of the Welsh language and Wales as a bilingual country through UNESCO's International Year of Indigenous Languages. Reference was made above to the Mamiaith project which was part of that year's events. Other events were also held to mark the year including a symposium in Bethesda to discuss opportunities for artists to perform in Welsh across the world, and the Gŵyl Ein Llais yn y Byd/Our Voice in the World Festival was held in Aberystwyth. This was a two-day conference to discuss all sorts of aspects of linking the Welsh language with other countries. A partnership between the National Eisteddfod and an Irish company was established for the Eisteddfod's opening concert, *Tylwyth*, and an international delegation was invited to the Eisteddfod in Llanrwst.

3.22

On St David's Day 2020, the Welsh Government published a video on the Welsh Government's International Twitter account introducing the Welsh language to the rest of the world.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ [Y Gymraeg / The Welsh Language - YouTube](#).



The Commissioner's conclusions

It is clear that Wales has much to learn from countries across the world, and sharing good practice and hearing about the policies and approaches of other countries through the International Association of Language Commissioners has certainly been valuable to us over recent years. Indeed, these relationships have proved extremely useful as we are able to engage with officials from the offices of other Commissioners as necessary to explore how they deal with specific situations, and we also receive similar requests from them in turn. The information on the practices of other countries is often used by us in responses to consultations and in our day-to-day work. **It is therefore vital that we do not just try to sell the Welsh language to all corners, but also build meaningful relationships with individuals and organisations in order to learn and share good practice.**

With so many Welsh speakers scattered throughout the world, it is important that the Welsh language is available to these people through Radio Cymru, S4C and the internet, and it is also important that it is an inclusive language that welcomes everyone who wants to use it or wants to feel connected to it in some way. It would therefore be good to see more publicity for the Cymru Wales brand and for resources such as the Welsh Government's video introducing the Welsh language. They could certainly be used not only as marketing tools for other countries, but also here in Wales to instil a feeling of pride in the language among Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers.

The position given to the Welsh language in the Welsh Government's International Strategy is to be welcomed and the objectives of the strategy are ambitious. **If we are to lead and innovate in language technologies for minority languages, there is a need for significant investment and planning for developments in these areas over the next few years with urgent action required.** There is also potential to give more of a platform to popular Welsh language music and proactively promote it to large companies and international connections if we want others to also use it as a way of promoting and representing Wales.

Despite the quality of the campaigns and opportunities that have arisen over the last five years to build connections and share the Welsh language with the world, **we must guard against these events and opportunities being a one-off if we really want to raise the profile of the Welsh language on the international stage and build fruitful relationships.**

4 Digital technology

The Welsh language in the digital revolution

4.1


Technology is now such a core part of our everyday lives that it is easy to take gadgets and digital services for granted. Using our mobile phones as an alarm clock in the morning, getting the news from a personal assistant device, using the car's GPS system to navigate, and using self-service machines in supermarkets are all activities that many of us do on a daily basis without a second thought.

4.2

The need for the Welsh language to be included in today's technology and in the technologies of the future cannot therefore be overstated. This has long been recognised by the Welsh Government, and it appears that the vision and requirements in terms of the Welsh language and technology are becoming more specific and more sophisticated as the Welsh language tries to catch up with the latest developments. Where the strategy *A living language: a language for living* focussed predominantly on Welsh-language interfaces, *Cymraeg 2050* places more emphasis on developing the infrastructure that enables voice technology, for example.

4.3

In 2018, when the UK was still a member of the European Union, Jill Evans, then a Welsh Member of the European Parliament, submitted a motion to the European Parliament on linguistic equality in language technologies. The report notes the importance of developing policies relating to language technology so that the official languages of the European Union and languages in a similar situation to Welsh, are treated equally. It also stresses the importance of language technology to the survival of minority languages:

 The preservation of a language, and thus of the culture develop around it, is critically tied to its ability to function and be useful in modern and changing environments as the digital world.¹¹⁵

4.4

The motion was passed, but now that the UK has left the European Union, Welsh is no longer one of the co-official languages, and it is primarily a matter for the Welsh Government to ensure linguistic equality for the Welsh language in the digital age.

¹¹⁵ Jill Evans, *Report on language equality in the digital age* (27 June 2018), p. 13.

Welsh language technology action plan

4.5

Cymraeg 2050 states that the Welsh Government intends to 'transform the Welsh language digital landscape with particular focus on language technologies'¹¹⁶ in order to meet the strategy's targets. In order to address this in more detail, the Government published a *Welsh language technology action plan* in 2018 which states that the Government will not 'shy away from leadership or financing' developments in digital technology.¹¹⁷

4.6

The plan focuses on the three specific areas of Welsh language speech technology, computer-assisted translation, and conversational artificial intelligence. It does so through the introduction of 27 work packages, each addressing a specific technological area.

4.7

In early 2020, the Culture and Welsh Language Committee undertook an inquiry into the Welsh language in the digital world in order to ascertain stakeholders' views on the Government's *Welsh language technology action plan* and to examine the progress made on the various work packages. By the end of this reporting period, the Government is in the process of implementing or completing 19 of these packages.¹¹⁸ However, the Committee's inquiry was delayed due to the pandemic.

¹¹⁶ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 12.

¹¹⁷ Welsh Government, [Welsh language technology action plan](#) (October 2018), p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Welsh Government, [Welsh language technology action plan: Progress report 2020](#) (2020), p. 6.

Welsh language interfaces and systems

4.8

In the previous 5-year report, the discussion on technology gave considerable attention to developments relating to Welsh-language interfaces. Now, with the implementation of standards, a number of public organisations are required to ensure that there is a Welsh language interface to their website and intranet. An increasing number of shops, supermarkets and banks have also included a Welsh language interface on their self-service systems.

4.9

There has been a change of emphasis during this period. Rather than focusing on developing Welsh language interfaces, more consideration has been given to how those interfaces can be made accessible and available without someone having to ask or search for a Welsh option.¹¹⁹ 'Frictionless' is the term used by policy makers to describe this ideal where a user can access a service in Welsh without the added 'cost' of 'time, frustration or cognitive strain'.¹²⁰ An example of the practical implementation of this theory is the Welsh Government's work during the reporting period to preset Microsoft 365 interfaces on the HWB platform to Welsh in Welsh-medium schools as part of one of the work packages of the *Welsh language technology action plan*. This means that tens of thousands of school pupils are gaining a Welsh language computer experience without having to do anything to choose it.¹²¹

4.10

In addition to the increase in the number of Welsh language systems as a result of the standards, there has also been an increase in recent years in the number of Welsh language systems available from Crown bodies. With the Commissioner having worked with UK bodies for many years trying to influence their use of the Welsh language, it is now possible to apply for a new passport online and apply for universal credit in Welsh, for example. A full list of Welsh language services available from the UK Government can be found on its website; these include services relating to driving tests and licences, tax, benefits, and pensions.¹²²

4.11

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service introduced the latest of their Welsh language systems in August 2020 enabling users to apply for an uncontested divorce in Welsh. Digital services can now be used in Welsh in order to apply for a grant of probate and divorce.

¹¹⁹ Research on changing linguistic behaviour can be found in Gwenno Elin Griffiths, *Newid Ymddygiad Ieithyddol: Cynyddu'r niferoedd sy'n defnyddio rhyngwynebau cyfrifiadurol yn Gymraeg* (Changing Linguistic Behaviour: Increasing the take-up of computer interfaces in Welsh) (PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2018).

¹²⁰ [Welsh language technology action plan](#), p. 20.

¹²¹ [We're making Welsh even easier to use on Hwb! - News - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#).

¹²² [Using government services in Welsh - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [content available in Welsh only].

4.12

Another of the UK bodies increasing their Welsh language services is the DVLA which has made four new Welsh language systems available since 2016, to pay an online enforcement fine; for fitness to drive, getting a vehicle log book and changing the address on a vehicle log book. At the time of producing this report, the DVLA had 12 systems available in Welsh and there has been a significant increase in the use of these services online, partly as a result of introducing a message at the start of the English service indicating that the service is also available in Welsh. In 2016–17, the Welsh language system was used to license a vehicle electronically 7,718 times, while the same system was used 16,579 times in 2019–20. Similarly, in 2016–17 the Welsh language system was used for vehicle enquiries 44,970 times, and 95,642 times in 2019–20.

4.13

New websites and systems were also introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions, developed as a result of COVID-19, all of which were available in Welsh. In addition to these new services, the Department for Work and Pensions developed 12 of their systems to be available in Welsh during 2016–20, including a new system for all the Universal Credit services. Six new bilingual websites were also developed together with a bilingual portal to submit complaints online.

4.14

One aspect of Welsh language interfaces and systems is the ability of systems to save and store the user's language choice. Part 3 referred to Santander bank's pioneering work with this in 2016 with their ATMs remembering the language choice used with a debit or credit card if the consumer has chosen to use Welsh on one of their machines.

4.15

Conwy County Borough Council is another example of an organisation that has recorded the language choice of all its staff, and in the development of its own internal systems, has been able to link the language level of staff to the email system. This enables the email system to clearly display those staff who are fluent in Welsh and has meant that more internal emails are sent in Welsh within the Council.

Customer language choice recording systems

4.16

As the first sets of standards were imposed, some of the standards that a range of organisations had difficulty with were those standards requiring organisations to ask an individual whether they wish to receive correspondence and telephone calls from them in Welsh, in which case a record must be kept of the individual's chosen language with correspondence or telephone contact provided in Welsh from then on. It became clear that the ability of organisations to record the language choice of individuals was entirely dependent on the IT systems they used, and the situation is that data between different systems cannot be easily shared, even between one department and another within an organisation.

4.17

It also became clear that modifying systems to be able to record the language choice of individuals can be a long and costly process. It is therefore much better to include this requirement from the outset when developing or procuring new systems. An example of this can be found in the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS)¹²³ which is currently being introduced at the time of producing this report across local authorities and Welsh health boards to provide care closer to people's homes.

4.18

With the situation varying between different organisations, let alone different sectors, the Commissioner convened a task and finish group to investigate organisations' practices in recording and sharing language choice, difficulties encountered, and possible solutions. The results of the group's work were published in a 2020 report containing a series of practical recommendations for the Welsh Government and the Commissioner.¹²⁴

4.19

One of the recommendations to the Welsh Government was that consideration should be given to the role of national developments (such as WCCIS) to ensure that organisations are able to record and share language choice effectively. This would lead to an active offer of Welsh language services to individuals who have indicated when engaging with a different service that they wish to receive correspondence in Welsh. Another recommendation made to the Government was that it should share guidance with other public bodies on the procurement of multilingual software. At the end of 2020, the Government was in the process of piloting a draft toolkit internally and the expectation is that it will publish a final version following the trial period.

4.20

The inconsistency and inability of systems currently used by organisations to record language choice poses a number of problems as organisations comply with the standards, and the current systems do not encourage the proactive use of Welsh. However, the hope is that steps will be taken to improve the situation in the coming years with the Government having already started to take action.

¹²³ [Digital community care record - Digital Health and Care Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#).

¹²⁴ Welsh Language Commissioner Recording and Sharing Language Choice Task and Finish Group, *Recording and Sharing Language Choice Task and Finish Group: Final Report and Recommendations* (September 2019).

Speech-to-text technology and Welsh conversational artificial intelligence

4.21

Although it is not possible to speak Welsh with popular smart devices such as Alexa, Google or Siri at present, speech technology in Welsh has continued to develop over the past five years thanks to the work of Bangor University's Language Technologies Unit and others with Welsh Government grant support.

4.22

In 2014, the Language Technologies Unit developed the Paldaruo app to gather recordings of voices in order to form a corpus that would lead to the development of a speech recognition system in Welsh. The app collected recordings between 2014 and 2018 and in January 2016 the prototype versions of the Welsh speech recognition files were released on an open licence on the software development platform GitHub. A later version of the downloadable corpus was published in December 2018.

4.23

Also in 2018, the California-based multinational Mozilla launched a project to collect recordings of Welsh sentences and words through its Common Voice project, in cooperation with the Language Technologies Unit. Common Voice is a crowdsourcing platform that invites people to contribute their voices to an open-code bank that will in turn allow developers to create speech technology. The Language Technologies Unit supported this project and transferred the data collected through the Paldaruo app to Mozilla. As well as collecting recordings of volunteer voices, Common Voice also allows people to review and validate other volunteer recordings to ensure quality.

4.24

In 2016, the Language Technologies Unit launched a prototype of a personal assistant system called Macsen that was able to understand and answer some specific questions in Welsh. By the end of 2020, Macsen could answer questions in Welsh about the weather forecast and the news, and could offer S4C programmes on S4C Clic, facts from Wikipedia and could play Welsh music through Spotify.

4.25

In developing this artificial intelligence technology, there is also a need to develop a transcription programme to convert speech to text on screen. Useful resources were published by the Language Technologies Unit to develop speech technology in Welsh, including speech recognition models. In 2020, the Unit launched a prototype system for transcribing videos automatically in Welsh to be used for creating Welsh subtitles.¹²⁵ Thanks to the Welsh Common Voice data it is now possible to transcribe standard Welsh with an 85% accuracy.

¹²⁵ [Trawsgrifiwr \(Welsh Transcriber\)](#) | ([techiaith.cymru](#)).

Translation technology and synthetic voices

4.26

The technological developments in translation are discussed in chapter 5 below together with the advent of neural translation which has significantly improved the quality of machine translation. Another development in recent years has been the ability to point a mobile phone camera at text and receive a translation directly on the phone's screen. That technology is currently available for the Welsh language in Google's translation app and it's also possible to receive a translation from another language to Welsh on the Microsoft Translator app. Google's translation app also uses text-to-speech technology and enables users to listen to the Welsh translation being spoken by a synthetic voice, although the voice is not natural and much better voices are available.

4.27

Text-to-speech technology in Welsh is now common enough and is used on websites, self-service machines and announcements at train stations. There may be opportunities here to bring technology together to create resources to assist with accessibility and additional educational support, for example a smart pen that can read pages.

4.28

The Lleisiwr project is a speech project, developed jointly between Canolfan Bedwyr's Language Technologies Unit and the NHS in 2017, as a result of a grant from the Welsh Government, that creates Welsh-language personal synthetic voices for patients who are about to lose their ability to speak.¹²⁶ With this technology having been available in English for years, creating a Welsh voice has been a vital development in order to treat Welsh-speaking patients equally to non-Welsh speaking patients. The Unit further developed this technology in 2020 to enable one voice to be used for both Welsh and English.

¹²⁶ <https://lleisiwr.techiaith.cymru/?lang=en>.

Wikipedia

4.29

According to the Digital Language Diversity Project, having Wikipedia in a minority or regional language is one way of improving the digital presence of that language, and detailed guidance on how to set up Wikipedia and increase the number of articles is included in the *Digital Language Survival Kit*.¹²⁷ The number of Wikipedia articles available in a language is also a measure of the vitality of the language and a metric used by large companies in their decisions to extend their provision to other languages.

4.30

The Digital Language Diversity Project's guidance states that a Wikipedia with between 10,000 and 100,000 articles was considered to be at the 'development' stage and the Welsh Wikipedia reached 100,000 articles in March 2018 which was a major milestone for the encyclopaedia. At the time of producing this report, it contained over 131,000 articles and continues to grow. In 2015, a resident Wikimedian was appointed to the National Library of Wales and since 2017 this has been a permanent post. The National Wikimedian is responsible for working with National Library staff to add content, train editors and hold workshops to produce more articles.

4.31

Several projects have been carried out over the past five years to increase the number of articles in specific areas, with the help of grants from the Welsh Government. These include:

- the Wicipop project in 2016 which saw 783 new articles published on pop music;
- the Wicilechyd project carried out between 2017 and 2018 which created 4699 new articles on health-related topics;
- and the Wicipobl project which took place between 2018 and 2019 which resulted in 1444 new articles on celebrities and notable people from Wales.

One of the latest projects to receive a Government grant in 2019–20 was Wici-Llên, a joint project between the National Library and Menter Môn, and the Wici-pics project was awarded a grant in 2020–21.

4.32

In addition to these specific projects, regional projects were established such as Wici Môn which won a Government grant to produce articles about local features, and Wici Caerdydd, who won the Wikimedians of the year award from Wikimedia UK in 2018 for their work in translating articles. Cof y Cwmwd is also a local project started in 2017 with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to record the history and traditions of Uwchgwyrfai. The project has produced 1000 articles to date.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The Digital Language Diversity Project, *Digital Language Survival Kit: The DLDP Recommendations to Improve Digital Vitality* (2018).

¹²⁸ [Cof y Cwmwd \(uwchgwyrfai.cymru\)](http://Cof.y.Cwmwd.uwchgwyrfai.cymru).

4.33

Another recent project established in 2019 is MenywodMewnCoch which is an effort to increase the number of articles about women, after the Wikipedia Cymraeg was found to be the only Wikipedia in any language to have more articles about women than about men in 2016.

Websites and apps

4.34

Over the past five years, the Welsh Government has offered specific grants for technology development to try to address gaps in provision. The result of one of these grants is the event online ticket service, Tocyn Cymru, launched in 2016 to manage events where tickets can be booked and purchased bilingually.

4.35

The Government also offered grants in line with *Cymraeg 2050*, some of which have gone to technology development projects. These include the Cwtsh app which promotes mental health and well-being through mindfulness, the Mapio Cymru project which aims to create a Welsh version of OpenStreetMap, and the Dementia yn fy Nwylo project which is a virtual Welsh language experience to improve people's understanding of the experiences of individuals living with dementia.

4.36

One of the most popular apps in Welsh is the Ap Geiriaduron from the Language Technologies Unit. Between June 2015 and December 2020, the app was downloaded 200,180 times and continues to be updated regularly.

4.37

It is also important to develop Welsh gifs and stickers for use on popular media such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and Facebook Messenger. There has also been an increase in these over recent years, and organisations such as the Urdd, the mentrau iaith and the Coleg Cymraeg together with Welsh businesses have produced attractive stickers for use on social media.

4.38

As well as supporting projects to develop Welsh language technology, in 2017 the Welsh Government established a scheme called Cracio'r Cod/Cracking the Code to develop the interest and skills of children and young people in coding.¹²⁹ By April 2019, there were 105 coding clubs registered by the Code Club in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Welsh Government, [Cracking the code: A plan to expand code clubs in every part of Wales](#) (June 2017).

¹³⁰ Welsh Government, [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. Annual Report 2018–19](#) (January 2020), p. 42.

Technology providing windows on the world in the age of COVID-19

4.39

As people rely on electronic services of all kinds during the Covid-19 crisis – and as these technologies develop apace to serve dispersed communities – it became clear that it is more vital than ever that the Welsh language is not left behind.

4.40

With homes across the country turning into little classrooms in spring 2020, there was a warm welcome for the announcement in May 2020 that the Welsh spelling and grammar checker, Cysgliad, was available free of charge to individuals, organisations with less than 10 workers and all schools in Wales. By the end of 2020, it had been downloaded over 5,000 times.

4.41

The Google Classroom Welsh language interface was also a means of normalising the Welsh language as teachers taught remotely. It is possible that ensuring that Google Classroom was available in Welsh was down to the Government's purchasing power, as it was essential that this resource was available in Welsh in order to meet the requirements of the bilingual education system in Wales. This is a hint of what could be achieved with the big technology companies if the Government used its purchasing power to the full.

4.42

We have yet to see that same success with Microsoft Teams. As the country began to hold virtual meetings from the comfort of their homes, it became clear that the Microsoft platform did not provide a dedicated channel to facilitate simultaneous translation. The Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, Eluned Morgan MS, wrote to Microsoft in May 2020 to highlight this need. By the end of the calendar year there had been growing disquiet among organisations in Wales who relied on Microsoft services about this lack of provision, and the Commissioner wrote to Microsoft to remind them of the Minister's request. Despite this, a solution was not released by Microsoft before the end of the reporting period.



The Commissioner's conclusions


It is clear that the Welsh Government has a plan in place to drive forward developments in information technology, and that diligent and continued work is ongoing to try to catch up with technologies available in English. It is fair to say that it is small groups of people who are involved, however, and as a result, any significant developments in speech-to-text technology or conversational artificial intelligence in Welsh are slow. There is no denying that it is an uphill battle to hold discussions with large technology companies such as Google, Microsoft and Apple, and this is certainly a barrier to accelerating the development of popular technologies in Welsh. **We believe, however, that there is more potential for the Welsh Government – and indeed the whole of the Welsh public sector – to use their purchasing power to the full in order to invest in further developments in conjunction with large popular companies, whose technologies are used on a daily basis by Welsh speakers. Without the support or co-operation of the large companies, serious consideration will need to be given to increasing the resource available to work on developing the technologies ourselves in Wales in order to move forward with the work.**

The Government's *Welsh language technology action plan* addresses the development of a number of different technologies, and this is to be welcomed, without doubt. **There is need, however, for the Government to make it clearer who is responsible for which packages in the plan and what the timetable is for their development. It may also be necessary to revise the plan in the light of COVID-19 to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements following the far-reaching changes introduced to work-life patterns at the end of the reporting period.** As households stayed at home in 2020, without any sign that those patterns are going to change overnight, it became more apparent that technology provides windows to the world. If the Welsh language is to flourish, it must be able to shine through these windows.

The standards have certainly meant that there has been an increase in the Welsh language content on websites and in the Welsh language interfaces on organisations' websites. There has also been an increase in the provision offered by Crown bodies, although there is room to do more and ensure that Westminster policy makers are aware of the expectations and needs of users in Wales. **There is also further work to be done to encourage the use of Welsh language interfaces by actively offering them or making Welsh the default language.** Sometimes, a splash page is enough to provide a language choice before a user engages with a website or service, but increasingly cookie settings on websites remember a user's language of choice and therefore there is a need to ensure that enabling or encouraging the user to choose Welsh is part of the process of accessing a website. We would also like to highlight the recommendation by the Task and Finish Group on Recording and Sharing Language Choice for the Welsh Government to consider technology that may be available nationally to assist organisations in recording and sharing the language choice of customers or service users.

5 Linguistic infrastructure

What's the Welsh word for *infrastructure*?: Defining the term

 Our aim: ensure the continued development of Welsh language infrastructure (dictionaries, terminology, the translation profession) as integral to the delivery of this strategy.¹³¹

5.1

So unfamiliar to the ordinary reader is the term 'linguistic infrastructure' used in *Cymraeg 2050* that it needs to be clarified and defined between brackets. It is also revealing that this term, or a definition of it, could not be found in any of the dictionaries or terminology resources referred to in this chapter at the time of writing. We will therefore stick to the concise definition in *Cymraeg 2050*, adding 'place-names' to it on account of the Commissioner's unique responsibility in this field, and the recognition of the Commissioner's role, to provide 'advice and guidance with regard to the development and coordination of terminology and place names'.¹³²

5.2

Despite the unfamiliarity of the term and the specialist nature of the field, it is absolutely essential that it is not seen as a narrow discipline on the margins of the language planning agenda. There is a direct relationship between efforts in this area and the status and viability of the language.

¹³¹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 74.

¹³² Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers - Work Programme 2017–21* (10 July 2017), p. 37.

The foundations of *A living language: a language for living*

5.3

This area was included as part of the strategic theme of 'infrastructure' in *A living language: a language for living* and there was acknowledgement at that time that this strategic area was absolutely essential to sustain all others. *A living language: a language for living* asked the Commissioner to 'support and develop the translation industry' and 'coordinate the standardisation of Welsh language terminology and place names'.¹³³ And although *A living language: a language for living* was still operational during the start of this 5-year report's reporting period, the Commissioner's main activity in relation to these targets had already been achieved during the previous reporting period.

5.4

Between April 2013 and March 2016, Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru received a grant from the Commissioner to focus on regulatory issues and the representation of its members. And in order to address the work of strategically co-ordinating the terminology field, the Commissioner convened a Panel for the Coordination of Terminology Standardisation and Lexicography in 2013 which represented the main policy makers and funders in the field.

5.5

This Panel reached a number of key conclusions on activities in Wales and came to the view that the system in Wales was unsustainable, that it did not offer best value for money, or meet all the needs of users. The Panel's view was that there was a need to ensure reliable and stable funding streams and better co-ordination and integration of existing resources, and – fundamentally – that the Welsh Government was the organisation with the appropriate authority and resources to take forward this important area.

Transfer of responsibility

5.6

Indeed, within the reporting period in question, this transfer of responsibility began to take place. From April 2016, the Welsh Government was responsible for providing a grant to Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru. And by the time the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy Work programme 2017–21 was published, the Government was committed to reviewing 'the current structures to ensure that we have a sustainable corpora...policy'.¹³⁴

¹³³ Welsh Government, *A living language: a language for living - Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17* (March 2012), p. 53.

¹³⁴ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Work programme 2017–21*, p. 37.

5.7

During the reporting period, there were several suggestions from the Government that this review of structures was taking place. In August 2018, the then Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan AM, held a consultation session on the future of Welsh language infrastructure during the National Eisteddfod. And on 5 December 2018 she made a written statement clearly stating that 'more needs to be done' and confirming her intention to give 'long-term strategic direction to this important field and how the different elements work together'. She stated that she intended to make a further statement in spring 2019 about the way forward and propose a structure that would 'coordinate the various linguistic infrastructure elements effectively'.¹³⁵ No such statement was made before the end of the reporting period but the strategy's action plan for the financial year 2020–21 includes a commitment to 'consult on a policy to encompass the different elements of the linguistic infrastructure [...] with the aim of publishing a final policy in due course'.¹³⁶

New emphasis and importance

5.8

During the reporting period there has been an increasing emphasis on the integral link between linguistic infrastructure and digital technology, and the importance of linguistic infrastructure – specifically having a huge corpora – to enable the development of Welsh language technology. This is not really surprising, because as Eluned Morgan AM pointed out in her written statement of 5 December 2015, 'the two areas intertwine naturally'.¹³⁷

5.9

In *Cymraeg 2050*, 'corpora' is included as part of a heading alongside dictionaries and terminology and it is argued that the 'important focus' on corpora has been insufficient in Wales in the past.¹³⁸ An attempt to rectify this was seen in the Government's *Welsh language technology action plan* where there is an emphasis on the importance of corpora for training systems. The emphasis placed on the linguistic infrastructure in this action plan is also significant, and 'long-term support for the development of the linguistic infrastructure of the Welsh language, including corpora, lexicographical and terminological resources'¹³⁹ is included in one of the work packages 'necessary' to realise its vision.

5.10

During the reporting period, the CorCenCC project received significant grant funding of £1.8m from the ESRC/AHRC to create a contemporary Welsh language corpus from all registers across all media. The vision of the CorCenCC team is that this open corpus that contains over 11 million words will support research and assist in the creation of educational resources.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ [Written Statement: The Future of Welsh Language Linguistic Infrastructure: Development and Coordination \(5 December 2018\) | GOV.WALES.](#)

¹³⁶ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Action plan 2020–21*, p. 38.

¹³⁷ [Written Statement: The Future of Welsh Language Linguistic Infrastructure: Development and Coordination \(5 December 2018\) | GOV.WALES.](#)

¹³⁸ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 72.

¹³⁹ *Welsh language technology action plan*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ [CorCenCC – National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh.](#)

5.11

While CorCenCC is valuable in terms of the content and scope of the corpus, it is not the type of corpus that is needed to train speech technology systems. The launch of the Welsh language Common Voice campaign¹⁴¹ in June 2018 referred to in chapter 4 above was based on meeting that particular requirement. By December 2020, 124hrs had been recorded but up to '10,000 hours of audio may be required as a realistic amount in order to have a speech recognition machine that works well with a variety of different voices and accents and in situations of natural background noise'.¹⁴²

Dictionaries and terminology

5.12

The Government's aim in *Cymraeg 2050* is to see the infrastructure 'continue to develop', and the past five years were certainly a period of continuity in the history of the main lexicographical and terminological resources of the Welsh language. The Government continued to fund the main historical dictionary of the Welsh language, *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*,¹⁴³ as well as the main Welsh language terminological resources: *The Termiadur Addysg*¹⁴⁴ for the education sector and *Byd TermCymru*¹⁴⁵ which allows access to terminology, a style guide and some of the translation memories of the Government's Translation Service. Each of these resources continued to expand and develop in their own directions.

5.13

The Welsh Language Commissioner continued to maintain an electronic version of the online *Geiriadur yr Academi*. Unfortunately, as a result of budget cuts, this dictionary was not developed during the reporting period. There is now an urgent need to develop and update this important resource so that it continues to be an indispensable aid to translators and to all those who wish to work bilingually.

Translation and interpretation

5.14

There is no doubt that the advent of Welsh language standards has created ripples in the translation world in Wales. As the language skills of the workforce have not changed overnight, it was almost inevitable that the standards led to further demand for translation services.

¹⁴¹ [Common Voice \(mozilla.org\)](https://www.mozilla.org/).

¹⁴² [5. Speech Technology \(techiaith.wales\)](https://techiaith.wales/) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

¹⁴³ [Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru](https://www.geiriadur.academi.org/).

¹⁴⁴ [Y Termiadur Addysg](https://www.termiadur.academi.org/).

¹⁴⁵ [BydTermCymru | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/bydtermcymru/).

5.15

However, Welsh language standards have also created relatively new requirements in the context of simultaneous translation services, such as the duty to provide a simultaneous translation service from English to Welsh in situations relating to the well-being of individuals.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, this duty was the subject of the Welsh Language Tribunal's first case in 2017. The wording of the Tribunal's ruling is significant in that it implies that the standards are setting new trends in the future of translation services:



The standards under consideration do not reflect, necessarily, the demand which there has been in the past but set standards for the future, and that on the basis of need.¹⁴⁷

5.16

Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru responded to this new situation and created a new membership category during the 2017–18 financial year. In March 2020, the association had a record 410 members.

5.17

There is no restriction on who can work as a Welsh-English translator in Wales or, as a result, any compulsion on translators to belong to a professional body such as Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru. During the reporting period, however, a number of significant contracts included membership of a professional body as an essential criterion. The National Procurement Service's framework agreement on behalf of the public sector is one example.

5.18

In September 2016, the first students were admitted to the postgraduate Professional Translation Studies Course provided by Aberystwyth University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David on behalf of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The Coleg Cymraeg has convened a Consortium from the profession to advise the course providers and try to ensure that the qualification meets the requirements of the translation profession.

5.19

Machine translation continued to develop at an accelerated pace and revolutionised the translation world as neural machine translation systems – which introduce an element of artificial intelligence technology – were adopted by Microsoft and others. There is no doubt that this has led to a clear increase in the quality of machine translation. However, this technology presents new challenges, as the Language Technologies Handbook published in 2019 states. Training the networks needs 'significant supercomputing resources' as well as 'truly massive datasets to be able to train better quality models'.¹⁴⁸


¹⁴⁶ See, for example, standard 26 A in the [Welsh Language Standards \(No. 1\) Regulations 2015](#), p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ See paragraph 31: [170426-decision-pembs-county-council.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#).

¹⁴⁸ [1. Cyflwyniad i Dechnolegau Iaith | \(techiaith.cymru\)](#) [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

5.20

And on a practical level, the expectations of users and organisations commissioning translation work must be managed: the technology does not omit the need for a human translator. The translation profession must also adapt to these new developments as the Head of Translation & Reporting Services at the National Assembly for Wales stated:

 The challenge is to adapt to a changing world. Inevitably this will lead to some change, but it will not replace the need for qualified, professional practitioners. The translator's craft has already changed to one of post-editing text produced by a machine. Perhaps the craft should be considered slightly differently – the skill to handle data.¹⁴⁹

5.21

Adapting to a world of change has been true for us all during the COVID-19 crisis. As the people of Wales started working from home in March 2020, virtual meetings became part of daily life. However, the translation profession proceeded to innovate and experiment ensuring that bilingual meetings could continue, as highlighted in the urgent advice note released by the Commissioner.¹⁵⁰



Case study: Street signs

One of the places where the language and its treasures are most evident on a daily basis, is on street signs. In order to respect the principles of the Welsh language standards and to take advantage of this excellent opportunity to promote the Welsh language, we decided in November 2015, some months after the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 came into force, to adopt an innovative (at the time) revised policy and procedures for naming streets in the county. Although the Welsh language standards and the Public Health Act 1925 do not provide a clear mechanism where the Council can require street signs to be in Welsh only or bilingual, we were determined that there was sufficient flexibility in the law to implement a new policy in order to have a positive impact on the Welsh language in the county. We decided that all names on any new development or street, as well as unnamed streets, would have a Welsh-only name from now on. We also decided that existing signs for street names that were in English only would be erected bilingually when renewed, either by adding relevant prefixes/suffixes, and/or in cases where the main element of the street name was English, by providing a suitable Welsh translation. We had a clear advantage in the county as many of the street names referred to historic settlements that already had Welsh-only names! This work opened the door and presented us with an opportunity to start work to ensure that official and standardised Welsh versions were available for almost 3,000 streets. This list will be mainstreamed into the Council's mapping and electronic address data systems in due course, giving an even more prominent platform for the Welsh language and the county's rich heritage.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

¹⁴⁹ National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh, *CorCenCC Newsletter* (January, 2019), p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Holding bilingual video meetings* (2020).

Place-names



Enwau Lleoedd Safonol Cymru
Standardised Welsh Place-names

5.22

Place-names, and in particular the changing of place-names, have remained a hot topic during the reporting period. There is insufficient data available at present to be certain about the extent of the problem, but one thing that is certainly true is that there is a general perception that the historic names of Wales are under threat: that they are being changed, translated or disregarded. This perception is fed by occasional media and social media campaigns and the public response to them is striking. On 5 October 2020, the petitions committee was presented with a petition with 18,103 signatures calling for a law to prevent changes to the Welsh names of houses.¹⁵¹

5.23

There have been several campaigns and attempts during this period to introduce legislation to protect the historic place-names of Wales. The attempts by the Welsh Place-Name Society and others to introduce measures to protect place-names in the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 were unsuccessful. Dr Dai Lloyd AM was also unsuccessful in seeking to introduce an Individual Member's Bill in 2017.¹⁵²

5.24

However, during Stage 2 of the scrutiny of the Historic Environment Bill, the Welsh Government tabled an amendment requiring Welsh Ministers to compile and maintain a list of historic place-names in Wales. In May 2017, the List of Historic Place Names maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales was launched on behalf of Welsh Ministers – the first statutory list of its kind in the United Kingdom.¹⁵³

5.25

This list is a first step in the *recording* of names and the public bodies named in the act have a statutory duty to 'take account' of the List when making decisions on naming.¹⁵⁴ During the summer of 2018, we also launched the List of Standardised Welsh Place-names, the recommendations of the Commissioner's Place-Names Standardisation Panel for the standard forms of Welsh settlement names, which can be searched and downloaded under an open licence.

5.26

However, these lists mainly record and publish forms of names. They are not sufficient in themselves to protect place-names or to ensure that standardised forms are adopted and promoted. The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee held a session to discuss this again in October 2019¹⁵⁵ but the committee's findings have yet to be published.

¹⁵¹ [Legislate to prevent people from changing Welsh house names - Petitions \(senedd.wales\)](#).

¹⁵² [Colli pleidlais Cynulliad ar ddiogelu enwau lleoedd - BBC Cymru Fyw](#) [article available in Welsh only].

¹⁵³ [Home - Historic Place Names \(rcahmw.gov.uk\)](#).

¹⁵⁴ Cadw, *Historic Environment Records in Wales: Compilation and Use* (May 2017), p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ [Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee - Fifth Senedd 24/10/2019 - Senedd \(assembly.wales\)](#).

5.27

This is also an area that has benefited from the close link between it and digital technology in terms of funding sources. Standardised forms of place-names are required to find somewhere on a map or through SatNav software, for example. It was this need for digital Welsh language maps that led the Government to provide grant aid to Mapio Cymru to create a Welsh version of OpenStreetMap.¹⁵⁶ Although this project is a useful one to highlight the need for Welsh maps, it will not meet the basic demand among organisations to obtain maps of the detail and quality of the Ordnance Survey in Welsh or bilingually.



Case study: Place-names

We have been undertaking ongoing research into town and village names since 1999. The aim was to ensure that signs were accurate and consistent. Over the years, we have worked closely with local history groups, writers and experts, as well as the former Welsh Language Board.

Over time, however, the work has expanded to being much more than just ensuring accurate and consistent signage. Road signs are visible every day and play a spontaneous but important role in linking the Welsh language to local geography, history and heritage in a unique way. The *Place Names in Caerphilly County Borough* booklet was published for the first time in 2014 and copies were sent to all schools in the county borough. A revised version was published in 2016 following receipt of new information. The work has also led to presentations being given to local groups on the history of place-names and how they link to the heritage of local residents themselves.

Since 2018, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Place-Names Standardisation Panel has worked in close partnership with the Council to agree a definitive list for national use. The discussions and further evidence-gathering undertaken since 2018 has proven to be very constructive and revealing to both parties, balancing the Panel's national expertise with the Council's local expertise and experience. The 2020 version of the booklet will include new entries and additional information. And in the very few cases where there is a lack of agreement regarding a standardised form, these are identified and explained.

Caerphilly County Borough Council

¹⁵⁶ [OpenStreetMap Cymru](#).



The Commissioner's conclusions

What, then, is *infrastructure* in Welsh? And where in the world can one get an accurate or authoritative answer?

A number of sources of terminology and vocabulary currently exist, with those sources often providing contradictory suggestions. Neither is it clear what the relationship of these sources is to each other, and this is a cause of confusion for those looking for authoritative answers. Wales does not have one national body responsible for planning, commissioning, publishing, or approving lexicographical or terminological resources. We are therefore still waiting for this field of work to be 'joined-up'.

Whilst it is beneficial to emphasise the relationship between language infrastructure and technology on the one hand in order to mainstream the field and secure funding streams, it is also important to remember that its aim is not solely to facilitate the development of technology. For the Welsh language – and all other living languages – to flourish it must have accessible, standardised and authoritative sources of vocabulary.

Cymraeg 2050 warns that it is easy to 'underestimate the importance of high-quality lexicographical resources'.¹⁵⁷ And until we see improved investment and co-ordination of existing valuable lexicographical resources – together with a commitment to update and develop them so that they meet the requirements of the contemporary consumer – it may be argued that this is exactly what has happened in Wales during the reporting period.

As noted in *Cymraeg 2050*, what characterises living languages is that they continually evolve, reflecting the world around them. There is no doubt that this is true of the Welsh language: everyone from translators to radio presenters are busy creating and popularising terms as part of their day-to-day work. Discussion groups and Twitter campaigns rapidly ensure that all aspects of modern life can be discussed through the medium of Welsh.

The flaw in the process is that these are not necessarily recorded and published in our dictionaries. **There is a need to ensure long-term funding streams for corpora projects, terminology, and Welsh language dictionaries ensuring that these projects are strategically coordinated and meet the requirements of today's users. Appropriate training in these areas must also be provided to ensure that Wales has a skilled and ready workforce of linguists equipped with the appropriate technological skills to develop the language industry in Wales.**

It must also be ensured that the standardised forms of Welsh place-names are consistently adopted by Welsh organisations and included on maps and in address databases.

¹⁵⁷ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 72.

6 Language planning

Why the specific heading?

6.1

Cymraeg 2050 dedicates a specific section to the aim of embedding 'language planning and promotion nationally, regionally and locally, with a better understanding of and support for bilingualism and the needs of Welsh speakers'.¹⁵⁸ In one sense, each of the chapters of this 5-year report, and all aims and themes in *Cymraeg 2050*, relate to aspects of 'language planning'. The other chapters have all dealt with the practical aspects of status planning, procurement planning, language use planning and corpus planning. Why then does this title merit a standalone heading as an aim in itself in the strategy?

6.2

For the purposes of this report, it is assumed that what is at issue here is the science of language planning – the theory behind the implementation. The aim of *Cymraeg 2050* noted above suggests the Government's ambition to better understand the nature of bilingualism and the needs and psychology of Welsh speakers in order to plan interventions that will ultimately promote the language.

6.3

The Government's strategy *Work Programme 2017–2021* recognises that language planners exist everywhere. There is not opportunity here to take stock of the efforts of all the language planners in Wales. Instead, scrutiny will be given to the three main activities prioritised by the Government under this heading in the *Work Programme 2017–2021*, namely the establishment of a programme board, the launch of a national training programme and working with local authorities.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 76.

¹⁵⁹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Work programme 2017–21*, p. 39.

The broad shoulders of Government

6.4

The publication of a language strategy is a statutory requirement established by the Government of Wales Act (2006), of course, but the publication of a language strategy is also an act of language planning.

6.5

Officers and members of the Welsh Language Board were central to the establishment of the first strategies of a devolved Wales, but with the abolition of the Board in 2012, the state's main language planning agent changed. Steve Eaves' view in his unpublished PhD thesis is that this change is the 'most significant' one in the history of language policy in recent years, namely 'the Government's willingness to take responsibility for setting the Welsh language policy agenda.'¹⁶⁰ Indeed, the Government itself acknowledges its willingness to 'assume this responsibility' in the policy statement *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward*.¹⁶¹

6.6

Cymraeg 2050, however, is the first strategy to be developed entirely by the Government with the support of the Welsh Language Partnership Council's external experts. And there is no doubt that this long-term plan with its three-pronged structure, announced during the reporting period, is an ambitious one. As well as formulating the strategy, the Government is also ultimately responsible for funding its implementation – through specific grant schemes and through grant partners. This responsibility for funding also gives the Government planning power, of course, and a strategic opportunity to ensure that what is funded is 'in keeping with the strategy'.¹⁶²

6.7

Despite the Government's apparent willingness to take responsibility for establishing a language policy agenda in Wales and putting in place its funding streams, the Government is unwilling to take full responsibility for its implementation or success. This is common in all policy areas, of course, the Government setting the high-level agenda and strategy and external agencies primarily responsible for their implementation.

6.8

The Government's language strategy goes a step further, however, by sharing the responsibility with everyone. All language strategies since *Iaith Pawb* (2003) have emphasised that everyone has a role to play in ensuring success. Everyone must take ownership of the challenge, and *Cymraeg 2050* and its associated work programmes place the same emphasis on the responsibility of the individual:



This Welsh language belongs to every single citizen of Wales and what we as individuals choose to do with our piece of living heritage is ultimately up to us.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Steve Eaves, *Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru* (PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 2015), p. 127 [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

¹⁶¹ Welsh Government, *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward* (August 2014), p. 16.

¹⁶² Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Annual Report 2017–18* (March 2019), p. 27.

¹⁶³ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 79.

6.9

The Foreword to *Cymraeg 2050* emphasises the need for the whole nation to be part of the journey, regardless of their linguistic ability. This inclusive approach was described by one of our leading experts on language policy, Professor Colin H. Williams, as a 'doctrine of inclusive bilingualism for all'.¹⁶⁴ In essence, therefore, the inclusive ambition of *Cymraeg 2050* means securing the support of the *majority* of the population (who do not speak Welsh) to adopt a particular approach and to act differently for the benefit of a linguistic *minority*. The consensus and support of the majority must be won and maintained, as Steve Eaves observed:



The majority, in a democracy, lead the debate; the majority influences the scope of elections and the formation of government and the policies developed regarding the Welsh language. And, quite significantly, the necessary growth in Welsh language acquisition comes from the majority, either in terms of choosing Welsh-medium or bilingual education for their children, or as they attend Welsh for adults classes and other language training courses.¹⁶⁵

6.10

To address the challenge of influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the majority, it is no wonder that we have seen policy makers in Wales becoming increasingly interested in the science of behavioural economics – a science based on behavioural influence that rapidly gained popularity among policy makers across the UK following the influential MINDSPACE report and associated efforts.¹⁶⁶

6.11

This emphasis on positively influencing the behaviour of individuals was clearly seen in the strategy in place at the beginning of the reporting period, *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward*. 'Changing linguistic behaviour' is one of the cornerstones of that policy statement where it is claimed that 'changing the way we talk and feel about the language' is needed to change patterns of linguistic behaviour. There is a commitment that the Government would adopt 'more positive' approaches and narratives to 'learn from and utilise other appropriate social marketing and behavioural change techniques' for the benefit of the language.¹⁶⁷ This is the approach behind the implementation of this reporting period.

¹⁶⁴ Colin H. Williams, 'Iaith Pawb: The Doctrine of Plenary Inclusion', *Contemporary Wales*, 17 (2004), pp. 1–27.

¹⁶⁵ *Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru*, p. 99 [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

¹⁶⁶ Institute for Government, *MindSpace: Influencing behaviour through public policy* (January 2010).

¹⁶⁷ *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward*, p. 21.

Establishing a programme board

6.12

This is the first of the activities outlined in the strategy's *Work Programme 2017–21*. There was a commitment there to 'establish a programme board to embed the principles of language planning and the vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 across the work of Government'.¹⁶⁸

6.13

One of the main barriers to the scrutiny of developments in this area, however, is that there is no consistent reporting of developments within it. The 2018–19 annual report confirms that the Cymraeg 2050 Programme Board had been established during that year and that the board would be responsible for scrutinising progress and providing advice in implementing *Cymraeg 2050*.¹⁶⁹ By the 2019–20 annual report, it is explained that senior officials from across Government are members and it is confirmed that they meet on a termly basis, but no single example of success or outcome is provided.

6.14

It is therefore impossible to evaluate the merit or direct successes of the board, and it would be easy to disregard it as part of the Government's internal mechanism or bureaucracy. However, if it succeeds in its objectives to mainstream the vision of *Cymraeg 2050* across all the work of the Welsh Government, it has the potential to be more influential in the long run than all efforts funded and planned directly under the banner of *Cymraeg 2050*.

¹⁶⁸ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers – Work Programme 2017–21*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Annual Report 2018–19*, pp. 43–4.

Understanding bilingualism

6.15

Developing a national programme to increase understanding of bilingualism is recognised in the strategy as one of the necessary 'transformational changes' to enable the Government to meet its targets.¹⁷⁰ There was a commitment in *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward* that the Government would 'undertake further research to find out exactly at what points in a person's life these techniques are appropriate and provide guidance to organisations so that they change their behaviour towards the Welsh language'.¹⁷¹ This desire to 'understand' and establish understanding is also reflected throughout *Cymraeg 2050*.

6.16

The strategy's *Work Programme 2017–2021* explains that 'Understanding Bilingualism' is a 'national training programme'.¹⁷² In March 2020, before the COVID-19 crisis hit, pilot sessions of the critical language awareness programme 'Leading in a Bilingual Country', developed jointly by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division and Academi Wales, were held. As a result of the pandemic, the programme had to be redesigned to be conducted online. It is a language awareness course for public sector leaders that is in line with the experience of innovators in the field that influence should begin 'at the top'.¹⁷³

6.17

Whilst recognising that the provision of a critical language awareness programme targeting strategic leaders is a major language planning intervention, during the lifetime of the strategy there has been a growing recognition that 'Understanding Bilingualism' is more than a training course. In reporting on 2018–19 activities, for example, it becomes clearer that the Government considers that the 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' course is one of a number of projects that come under the banner of the Understanding Bilingualism programme.¹⁷⁴ It is explained that the main aim of the programme 'is to facilitate and normalise the Welsh language, to increase relevant critical awareness of it, to challenge prejudice and, consequently, to increase the use of Welsh'.¹⁷⁵

6.18

The Government seems to consider that many other aspects of its work are also part of this programme: such as aspects of the *Cymraeg for Kids* programme, the *Siarter Iaith* and the Language Transmission policy, for example.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, any activities aimed at changing linguistic behaviour are included under this banner, including marketing activities. There is a commitment as part of the programme to look again at the 'brand' and narrative of the Welsh language. Research work was commissioned by Welsh Government to explore this question during the reporting period and the findings of that report will undoubtedly be a significant influence on the marketing efforts of the next five years. These marketing efforts will be a key part of the effort to gain the support of the non-Welsh speaking public and turn the inclusive rhetoric of *Cymraeg 2050* into a reality.

¹⁷⁰ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 12.

¹⁷¹ *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward*, p. 22.

¹⁷² *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers – Work Programme 2017–21*, p. 21.

¹⁷³ *Hyfforddiant Ymwybyddiaeth Feirniadol am yr Iaith Gymraeg, a'i Gyfraniad at Gynllunio Ieithyddol Cynhwysol yng Nghymru*, p. 48 [available in Welsh only, author's translation].

¹⁷⁴ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Annual report 2018–19*, pp. 33–5.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁷⁶ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Action plan 2019–20* (2019), p. 28.

Working with local authorities

6.19

The strategy's *Work Programme 2017–21* recognises the potential of local authorities to act as regional local language planning agencies and commits to working with them to 'support their efforts to build capacity around Welsh language planning, supporting their implementation and co-ordination of the county strategies to promote the Welsh language, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and meeting their duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'.¹⁷⁷

6.20

The Commissioner has also identified the need for Local Well-being Plans produced by Public Services Boards, in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being Act, to take full account of the Welsh language.¹⁷⁸ The Government's main involvement with local authorities in this regard at present appears to relate to the creation of speakers through Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, and an overview of these efforts is provided in Part 2. There is recognition, however, that 'planning Welsh-medium education and promoting the use of the language go hand in hand' and it is reported that in 2019–20 the Government is seeing increasing examples of authorities establishing promotional sub-groups to raise awareness of Welsh-medium education.¹⁷⁹

6.21

A *Fforwm Iaith* (county language forum) exists in almost every county in Wales. They were originally formed as a means of bringing together partners involved in promoting the Welsh language within the county to share information and good practice and to plan strategic collaboration. It is fair to say that their influence and effectiveness have varied in the past.¹⁸⁰ Carmarthenshire County Council is an example of a local authority that had been planning strategically before the statutory promotion standards were imposed on it. The results of the 2011 Census highlighted the fact that the Welsh language had 'reached a crossroads' in the county and had prompted it to act urgently.¹⁸¹

6.22

The statutory requirements under the Welsh Language Measure on local authorities to prepare and implement 5-year promotion strategies have provided an opportunity to review and revitalise the terms of reference of a number of these forums. A more detailed discussion on the promotion strategies can be found in Part 3, and the Commissioner has also published an advice note which gives more detailed consideration to the contribution of these strategies in achieving the *Cymraeg 2050* vision.¹⁸² What many of the promotion strategies reveal – on paper at least – is local ownership of the Government's national strategy and an effort to combine local targets with the *Cymraeg 2050* targets.

¹⁷⁷ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Work programme 2017–21*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Advice document: Considering the Welsh Language in the Local Well-being Plans* (2018).

¹⁷⁹ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Annual report 2019–20*, p. 56.

¹⁸⁰ In 2019, Mentrau Iaith Cymru undertook a survey to summarise the current position of the Forums across the country and summarise examples of good practice, and the report will be presented to the Government in March 2021.

¹⁸¹ Census Working Group at Carmarthenshire County Council, *The Welsh Language in Carmarthenshire* (March 2014), p. 3.

¹⁸² Welsh Language Commissioner, *Standards relating to promoting the Welsh language* (2018).

6.23

The first promotion strategies are due to end during 2021–22. It is too soon, therefore, to evaluate their success or influence. However, the Commissioner has concerns regarding the extent to which the success of existing promotion strategies can be measured in a meaningful way. After all, measuring the immediate and long-term impact of specific efforts is quite a challenge, and tracking an increase in individuals' confidence to use Welsh or changed attitudes very difficult to quantify.

6.24

It may be tempting to measure quantitative targets that are easy to monitor in order to create neat statistics, but we must guard against creating meaningless indicators: holding more Welsh-medium activities does not necessarily equate to increasing the use of the Welsh language. Setting consistent, meaningful and reliable indicators is essential if these strategies are to achieve their full potential. To support this, the Commissioner issued a tender for the production of an advice document on assessing the achievement of the promotion strategies at the end of the reporting period.

Prosiect 2050

6.25

The reporting period was characterised by discussions about who should bear responsibility for efforts to promote the Welsh language. The culmination of these discussions was Eluned Morgan AM's announcement at the Conwy National Eisteddfod in 2019 of the intention to establish a 'new multi-disciplinary unit', Prosiect 2050, which would co-ordinate planning the route towards a million Welsh speakers; doubling the use of Welsh by creating new initiatives and evaluating existing ones, and supporting other policy efforts across the Welsh Government to sustain Welsh-speaking communities and increase the use of the Welsh language.

6.26

Nevertheless, the terms of reference for Prosiect 2050 appear very similar to the three main activities described above in reality.¹⁸³ The main difference may be the intention to provide additional funding to employ experts to lead and advise Prosiect 2050 – an announcement that in itself suggests that not all the solutions are to be found within Government and that external expertise must be drawn upon. The Head of Prosiect 2050 was appointed during the summer of 2020 but there has not yet been an announcement on the engagement of external advisers. It remains to be seen what changes will be made to the implementation of the strategy work programmes presented to a new Government following this appointment, and in a post COVID-19 era.

¹⁸³ [Minister unveils new measures to deliver 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 | GOV.WALES.](#)



The Commissioner's conclusions

As the patterns that define our daily lives continue to change and evolve – and be revolutionised in the wake of COVID-19 – the development of language planning science in Wales and securing appropriate expertise in the field appears more pressing than ever. The theoretic foundations must be sound as the whole strategy is ultimately built on these foundations. *Cymraeg 2050* itself recognises that the whole success of the strategy depends on this and, if it is to succeed, responsibility for language planning must be shared across a wider range of organisations, thereby developing the capacity and expertise in the field and improving the understanding of bilingualism. **To this end, there is a need to foster a new generation of language planners in Wales who will have a thorough understanding of the Welsh context as well as an overview of the latest international developments.**

But as the Welsh Government is ultimately responsible for *Cymraeg 2050*, it is easy to understand the impetus to develop a language planning powerhouse within the Government itself. It is fair to note, however, that this arrangement is not considered ideal by all. There have been discussions throughout the reporting period and calls from Plaid Cymru and Dyfodol i'r laith, among others, for the creation of a body at arm's length from the Government to lead on the promotion of the Welsh language and meet the need that Dyfodol sees for an 'independent and radical voice' to be responsible for language planning in Wales. The Commissioner's statutory aim is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, and there are examples of the work that is taking place to meet this aim throughout this report. But, as things stand, only the Government, through Prosiect 2050, has the necessary resources to plan fully holistic interventions. And there is no doubt that we need holistic planning: after all, the conditions that influence the use of the Welsh language are complex and intertwined.

Cymraeg 2050 emphasises the Miquel Strubell Catherine Wheel model which is effective in demonstrating the essential relationship between language learning; the demand for and supply of goods and services in the language; the consumption of those goods and services; people's perception of the usefulness of the language and the subsequent motivation to learn or use a language. The basic principle depicted by the Catherine Wheel is that the vitality of a language hinges on the interaction between a number of interdependent elements. The circle must be complete, and each spoke in place, for the wheel to turn.

7 Evaluation and research

Evaluation framework

7.1

The above discussion about language planning reveals the real desire and need in Wales to ensure that all efforts and interventions in relation to the Welsh language are based on sound research. *Cymraeg 2050* recognises the need to develop a research and evaluation programme for the Welsh language to ensure sufficient evidence to measure the effectiveness of policy interventions and to support future policy development.¹⁸⁴

7.2

The Government published the *Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework* in 2013 as the basis for a programme of research to assess the impact of *A living language: a language for living* and to plan further interventions.¹⁸⁵ This detailed framework continues to set the intellectual basis for the Government's research programme in the context of *Cymraeg 2050*.¹⁸⁶ The *Action Plan 2018–19* included the commitment that the Government would develop a new evaluation framework to support its necessary planning work,¹⁸⁷ but this framework had yet to be published at the end of this reporting period.

7.3

In the meantime, the current *Evaluation Framework* envisages that three main methods of research will be required to measure the impact of current and future interventions: combining secondary data (data that is already available; mainly surveys), evaluation of specific projects, and thematic studies.¹⁸⁸ This chapter will provide an overview of the main efforts in relation to these approaches during the reporting period with a focus on the Welsh Government's efforts.

¹⁸⁴ *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, p. 59.

¹⁸⁵ Welsh Government, *Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework* (Government Social Research, 2013).

¹⁸⁶ The conceptual basis and principles of the strategy are further outlined in *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, pp. 14–19.

¹⁸⁷ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Action plan 2018–19* (2018), p. 27.

¹⁸⁸ *Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework*, p. 14.

Survey data

7.4

Measuring people's use of language is a challenging task and the main method used to do this in Wales is language use surveys. The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner published the results of the Language Use Survey 2013–15 at the end of the previous reporting period.¹⁸⁹ The Government has made it clear that language use surveys will be its method of monitoring progress against the second target of *Cymraeg 2050*, and during this reporting period there has been considerable planning for the next survey.

7.5

The Language Use Survey 2019–21 began in July 2019 following the same methodology as the previous surveys. It was originally intended that the survey would run until the end of March 2021, but the survey had to be suspended early due to COVID-19. As a result, it may not be possible to analyse the data at a local authority level as intended.

7.6

In the absence of the results of a language use survey or census during this reporting period, other surveys providing statistics on the Welsh language and its use – the Annual Population Survey and the National Population Survey for Wales – have received considerable attention.¹⁹⁰ This attention is largely due to the fact that the results of these surveys have appeared favourable. The analysis carried out by Government statisticians during the reporting period on the relationship between these surveys and the census is discussed in the introduction to this report. It is also worth noting that a series of valuable statistical bulletins were published during the reporting period analysing the results of the surveys, such as the bulletin on the use of Welsh in the workplace.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh Government (2013), *Welsh Language Use in Wales, 2013–15*.

¹⁹⁰ See, for example: [Cynnydd yn y nifer sy'n gallu siarad Cymraeg yng Nghymru - BBC Cymru Fyw](#).

¹⁹¹ Welsh Government, *Statistical Bulletin: National Survey for Wales 2018–19 Welsh in the Workplace* (5 December 2019).

Project evaluation

7.7

The Government commissioned external providers to conduct several evaluations of its main programmes to promote the Welsh language during the reporting period. A *Process Evaluation of the Cymraeg for Kids Programme* was published in February 2019,¹⁹² an *Evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes* was published in July 2020,¹⁹³ and an evaluation of the Sabbaticals Scheme had been completed but not published at the end of the reporting period. A tender specification for a review of the grants scheme to promote the use of Welsh was prepared, but the tendering process was cancelled at the end of March 2020 due to COVID-19.

7.8

An evaluation of *More than Just Words* was also commissioned to assess how, and to what extent, this framework met its intended aim to promote and support the use of the Welsh language in health and social care. The evaluation's theory of change was published in April 2020 and the evaluation framework and final evaluation are yet to be published.¹⁹⁴ All of these evaluations were aimed at refining programmes already in place, and the Government indicated its intention to feed the findings and recommendations arising from these evaluations into future plans.

7.9

In addition to evaluating specific programmes, the Government identified the need to undertake research that would improve the planning of Welsh-medium education in the context of curriculum development and assessment arrangements in Wales. For example, *An overview of approaches to second language acquisition and instructional practices*¹⁹⁵ was published in February 2018, and a rapid assessment of the evidence on effective second language teaching methods was published in June 2018.¹⁹⁶ Meirion Prys Jones was invited in 2019 to lead a research project to review the categorisation of schools in Wales according to their linguistic nature and provision in order to support a formal consultation on school designation.

7.10

The efforts of the Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services to work with research officers across all policy areas to mainstream the Welsh language into the Government's research activities were repeatedly emphasised during the reporting period.¹⁹⁷ An encouraging example of this was seen in the context of research commissioned in 2019–20 to understand the factors affecting parents' decisions not to access Government-funded childcare. This research specifically addressed the factors that influence people's choices about Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare provision, and the potential barriers to accessing such provision.

¹⁹² Welsh Government, *Process Evaluation of the Cymraeg for Kids Programme* (Government Social Research, February 2019).

¹⁹³ Welsh Government, *Evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes* (Government Social Research 2020).

¹⁹⁴ Welsh Government, *Evaluation of More than just words.... the follow-on strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care, 2016–19: A Theory of Change* (Government Social Research, April 2020).

¹⁹⁵ Welsh Government, *An overview of approaches to second language acquisition and instructional practices* (Government Social Research, February 2018).

¹⁹⁶ Welsh Government, *Rapid Evidence Assessment: Effective Second Language Teaching Approaches and Methods* (Government Social Research, June 2018).

¹⁹⁷ The Principal Welsh Language Research Officer for the Government Knowledge and Analytical Services gave a presentation on mainstreaming the Welsh language into research at the WISERD conference in 2019, for example.

7.11

Of course, commissioning evaluations such as this to refine schemes is common practice in the public sector. During the reporting period, the Commissioner undertook a review of its own promotional activities, for example, and the Arts Council commissioned research to map Welsh-language cultural activity to identify opportunities for further collaboration with other bodies in the future. The Books Council of Wales has also undertaken specific research into the Welsh language reading market to identify potential audiences for the industry in Wales.

Thematic studies

7.12

In addition to the above evaluations, the Government commissioned two major thematic studies during the reporting period. In May 2017, the Government published *Welsh Language Transmission and Use in Families*¹⁹⁸ which examined the conditions that facilitate the transmission of the Welsh language and influence patterns of use of the Welsh language within families. This research directly influenced the content of national policy on Welsh language transmission and its use in families on which a consultation was held in autumn 2020.

7.13

In February 2020, a research study on the Welsh Language and the Economy¹⁹⁹ was published which reviewed the evidence that exists to date on the relationship between the language and the economy and identified areas that could be explored further.

Promoting research by others

7.14

One of the most prominent projects funded by a body other than the Welsh Government during the reporting period was Revitalise,²⁰⁰ a research network sponsored by the AHRC with the aim of studying the implications of social changes for the planning of language regeneration efforts. There have also been several studies or PhD theses of interest from Welsh universities, and a number of doctoral studies jointly funded by the Welsh Government and the ESRC are currently taking place. These are crucial to building research capacity and expertise for the future.

¹⁹⁸ Cardiff University and Arad Research, *Welsh language transmission and use in families: Research into conditions influencing Welsh language transmission and use in families* (Welsh Government Social Research, 12 June 2017).

¹⁹⁹ *The Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods*.

²⁰⁰ *Language Revitalisation and Social Transformation - Revitalise Project - Revitalise Project (aber.ac.uk)*.



The Commissioner's conclusions

While the evaluations commissioned by the Government and others during the reporting period have been valuable, together with efforts to ensure that research drives and refines the development of future programmes and policy decisions, it must be acknowledged that there are also limits to their value. They are evaluations of specific schemes, commissioned by a particular client, which choose from a fairly limited pool of providers to carry out the work. The subject as well as the research parameters are, of course, determined by the client. They are therefore valuable in evaluating current efforts and refining future arrangements, but do not meet the need in Wales for independent and ambitious research in the field of language planning where the researcher is free to determine their own remit and critically scrutinise efforts and needs. **Suitable and sustainable funding streams must be identified in order to enable research of this kind.**

As a result of funding challenges, our office commissioned very little pure research during the reporting period. Specific pieces of research were commissioned to support the work of influencing policy, and to support our regulatory work, but these reports can hardly be regarded as major thematic studies.

There is also limited co-ordination of the research efforts or commissioning plans of public organisations in Wales. It was suggested at the launch of the previous 5-year report that a mechanism needed to be established to co-ordinate research on the Welsh language, but it soon became apparent that a specific resource would need to be set aside to realise that vision.

There is a significant need to fund more independent research on the Welsh language. As the Government's own Evaluation Framework acknowledges:



The activity of evaluating the Strategy should not be the preserve of the Welsh Government alone but shared with partners to help ensure the best outcomes for the language.²⁰¹

The lack of adequate funding streams during the reporting period has proven to be a significant challenge to realising this vision. However, our hope is that this 5-year report contributes to the efforts to evaluate the implementation of *Cymraeg 2050* to date and that the research and commentary offered is a contribution to a dialogue that will indeed 'ensure the best outcomes for the language'.

²⁰¹ *Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework*, p. 2.



Name: **Geraint Owen Roberts**

Age: **37**

Area: **Llangadfan, Powys**



55.6%

*Speak Welsh
in the community of
Banwy*



Geraint originally comes from this area, and after a period in Cardiff he is now back living in Llangadfan, a small village in the community of Banwy, with his wife and children. Welsh is the language of the home, and Geraint speaks Welsh with his parents and sister.

“My life would be very different without the Welsh language. I think I would be far more narrow minded and less open to different cultures.”

Welsh through Geraint’s eyes

I spoke Welsh to everyone at Ysgol Gynradd Banw. At Llanfair Caereinion High School, I spoke mainly Welsh, although some friends spoke English.

My wife and I lived in Cardiff for a while, returning home to raise children. She is also from the area, although she went to a different secondary school (Llanfyllin High School). It’s strange how many of my friends left the area to go to college but everyone except one has now returned.

I work in the planning field and have the opportunity to speak Welsh when dealing with members of the public. But I don’t have much opportunity at work with Mid Wales Housing because I’m the only Welsh speaker in our office at the moment.

I contact Powys County Council quite often in relation to my planning work. It is possible to speak Welsh but you have to ask because it’s not always obvious. It’s often easier to speak English.

In Welshpool, which is our nearest town, there are some independent shops where Welsh speakers work (I can think of three), and some businesses (solicitors, accountant) where Welsh speakers offer a service. But I can’t think of a pub or a restaurant where you could speak Welsh there.

The children will go to Ysgol Cwm Banwy when they start school, which is two nearby primary schools that have recently merged. Welsh is the natural language of children in this area, and we’re fortunate that the rural area in which we live remains very Welsh.



Name: **Steffan John Phillips**

Age: **55**

Area: **Morrison, Swansea**



11.8%
*Speak Welsh
in Morrison*



Steffan speaks Welsh with his wife and two children. His mother's family comes from Devon originally and he speaks English to his mother. Although his father can speak Welsh, they too speak English with each other.

He used to coach rugby in his spare time with Bôn-y-maen Club where he often noticed that a generation of parents had lost the Welsh language, although the grandparents spoke Welsh.

"Life would be very odd with the family if we didn't speak Welsh. Welsh is a natural part of life. It's like saying, how would you cope without an arm? I could, but it would be odd. Life would be less rich without the Welsh language."

Welsh through Steffan's eyes

My grandmother spoke Welsh, but she didn't speak Welsh with me. She spoke Welsh with my cousin. But I think it was because Mum didn't speak Welsh that she spoke English with me.

We only spoke Welsh at Ysgol Cwmbwrla. Cwmbwrla was the only Welsh-medium school in east Swansea at the time, and I used to travel

over an hour to go to school on the bus – even though it was only 10 minutes from the house.

But in Ystalyfera, the majority spoke English. I remember the shock of speaking English with friends at first. I was 11 years old and I remember that the majority on the bus were speaking English, so we all changed.

I've never left Swansea. I remember walking to Three Cliffs with the wife, and deciding never to leave. We got married young, aged 22. With work, I was in the car, and in planes all the time travelling through Europe, working for a health company. But I didn't want to leave. The children were young, and I wanted the children to go to a Welsh-medium school.

It's all English down the high street but I'm sure people in the shops speak Welsh, and no one knows. The accents aren't as they were, you can't tell the difference now between someone who speaks Welsh, and someone who speaks English.

In the last five years I believe that there is a little more Welsh in Morriston. I often see someone with a child speaking Welsh. But although there have been changes, speaking Welsh... it's still a stigma in Swansea. You don't want to be rude and speak Welsh with someone if there's an English speaker in the conversation too.

Children are the answer for the Welsh language. I'm an example of what went wrong. I would like to see schools where children speak Welsh with each other. That's what has to happen.

1 IN A
MILLION



Name: **Tim Hartley**

Age: **60**

Area: **Llandaf, Cardiff**



15.3%
*Speak Welsh
in Llandaf*



Tim speaks Welsh with his wife and son, but English with his parents and sisters. His grandparents were from north Wales and fluent in Welsh. He was previously Head of News at the Welsh Government and before that was S4C's Corporate Director.

“As always, the greatest threat to the Welsh language is Welsh people themselves. A significant number still refuse to transfer the language to their children and remain reluctant to use it publicly.”

Welsh through Tim's eyes

I spoke a little bit of Welsh with Mam-gu who came from Blaenau Ffestiniog but she thought of it as a folk language, of no value. My sisters and brother and I attended a Welsh school in Barry and then Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfeilen. Some of our neighbours were very sceptical about what they considered in the 1960s to be a linguistic experiment. There was little Welsh on the school yard. Cardiff's middle class children were the only ones to speak the language naturally at secondary school. The Welsh language was synonymous with school and therefore boring.

I worked as a journalist and broadcaster for many years. I used Welsh as needed at work, but of course when I worked in London and the English regions there was no need. The Welsh language certainly helped to get some jobs and was essential for others.

Welsh is our home language, although my wife is from Port Talbot. She learnt it at school before doing a degree in Welsh. Our son lives in Serbia and Radio Cymru, S4C online and Cymru Fyw are important for him to maintain contact with the language.

Attitudes towards the Welsh language have changed in Cardiff since my youth. “Why you speaking that?” was the response on Queen Street the few times we spoke Welsh in the 1970s. Now, on a terrace watching Cardiff City you get, “Oh that's lovely that is. Wish I'd learnt it at school.”

There's a Welsh buzz for younger people in Grangetown and Canton. However, by the time you reach my age the scene slows down. Clwb y Diwc in Canton was a great asset to us, Tafwyl the highlight of the year and there are a few comedy nights and poetry readings.

There's a good crowd of us who have co-located at Cardiff City Stadium watching football matches, so most of my socializing through the medium of Welsh happens because of my own efforts.

Executive summary



Comisiynydd y
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Executive summary

Standards and strategy

The past five years have been a frenzy of significant political developments and debate relating to the Welsh language. However, there is no doubt that the development that grabbed the headlines was the publication of the Welsh Government's ambitious and long-term language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. Another major development was seeing the first organisations starting to implement Welsh language standards. Taken together – and if fully implemented – these two developments have the potential to transform the position of the Welsh language over the next five years and for generations to come. The main aim of the Commissioner's second 5-year report on the position of the Welsh language between 2016 and 2020 is to scrutinise their implementation during their formative years.

There are no census results to be analysed in the report on this occasion, but the results of the 2011 Census have continued to have a major influence on the policy developments of the reporting period. The most obvious example, of course, is the quantitative target set out in the Government's strategy after the last census showed a decline in the number of Welsh speakers. Although the ambition to reach a million Welsh speakers was warmly welcomed at the time of its publication in 2017, there is some doubt as to whether the efforts to date are sufficient to achieve this. It is also likely that significant recovery work and investment will be required as a result of the impact of COVID-19 – something that was not planned for in formulating the strategy, of course.

There may sometimes be a risk of thinking that the strategy alone is sufficient to achieve its objectives. The reality is that its objectives and spirit need to be at the heart of every statement, policy and act if the Government is serious about reaching a million Welsh million speakers and increasing the daily use of the Welsh language.

The development that has had the most far-reaching impact on the position of the Welsh language in the public domain in recent years must be the introduction of the Welsh language standards. To date, 123 public organisations have specific legal duties relating to the Welsh language. These may relate to communicating with or delivering services to the public, formulating policies or using Welsh internally in the workplace.

The general perception among Welsh speakers is that Welsh language services are improving as a result and that they are able to use the Welsh language with public organisations if they wish to do so. However, although Welsh language services are increasingly available and arrangements are in place to facilitate the use of the Welsh language, there is no reliable data to show how much use is being made of the Welsh language when dealing with public organisations. There is also no requirement for those organisations that are subject to standards to monitor the use made of the Welsh language.

The second target of *Cymraeg 2050* is to double the daily use of the language and therefore careful, but urgent, consideration needs to be given as to how to measure that progress in a meaningful way. In order to see real progress, one of our consistent findings is that more needs to be done to promote the Welsh language services available. Even in the absence of robust data, it can be said with certainty that the number of people currently choosing to use Welsh language services does not match the number who can speak the language.

That is equally true of how many people use Welsh when dealing with businesses and charities. Without the Welsh language being prominent and convenient to use and Welsh language services being marketed and promoted, few Welsh speakers are likely to ask or take time to look for the Welsh option each time. And so if they are not aware that the Welsh language is available, they will not use the service and there will be no increase in the use of the language. That in turn can have a negative impact on attitudes to the language, causing organisations and businesses question the value of investing in the Welsh language at all. Ensuring that the Welsh language is available proactively and clearly is therefore essential in order to see an increase in the number of people using it. An overview of the efforts of the Commissioner's Hybu Team, and others, in this area can be found in Part 3.

While praising the change brought about by the standards, some organisations are still not complying with their language duties in full. One the whole, it is easier to receive written Welsh language services than to receive verbal or personal services, and services at the point of contact. This suggests that organisations need to recruit more Welsh speakers, and support less confident Welsh speakers, in order to be able to comply fully with the standards and offer consistent and reliable Welsh language services.

Not all public organisations are subject to standards either, and some continue to operate Welsh language schemes under the Welsh Language Act 1993. It has emerged, however, that the services of organisations operating language schemes are not available in Welsh to the same extent as those of organisations operating Welsh language standards. In that respect, it is significant that Ireland is now, in observing the success of the standards, following Wales' example by moving away from the system of language schemes to adopting a similar regime to the standards in Wales.

Despite the lack of quantitative data in terms of increasing the use of the Welsh language, Part 3 of the report addresses the availability of Welsh language services and the experiences of Welsh speakers in their use. Two case studies are also provided that specifically address the weaknesses in the Welsh language services that exist in prisons and within dementia care, emphasising that the Welsh language is not always a convenience or a preferred option – it can be a necessity.

Reaching a million

It is easier to measure the primary aim of *Cymraeg 2050*, which is to increase the number of Welsh speakers, and although encouraging figures are published annually as a result of the Annual Population Survey and the National Survey for Wales, the census is the official source for measuring progress towards the million. The results of the 2021 Census will therefore be crucial in measuring whether we are on track to meet the Government's trajectory targets of achieving 600,000 speakers by 2021.

The education sector has been the focus of the effort to create new speakers for some years, and the trajectory for the one million speakers set by the Government relies heavily on this sector. It is fair to acknowledge that the past five years have been a period of considerable planning in the field, and perhaps that is responsible for the fact that there is still little real progress in the position of the Welsh language within statutory education. One of the most significant developments during the reporting period was the commitment to abolish the Welsh second language qualification and teaching programme and develop a single linguistic continuum for teaching Welsh across schools in Wales. However, it is not always clear that the *Cymraeg 2050* vision and commitments as noted above are fully mainstreamed into key developments in this area as in the case of the new curriculum. It will not be possible to assess the success of all these developments against the targets for *Cymraeg 2050* until they have been implemented, of course.

While the education system is vitally important to the aim of reaching a million speakers, increasing importance is now being placed on language transmission in the home in order to create Welsh speakers and maintain community and social use of the Welsh language. While those who learned Welsh at school are likely to choose Welsh-medium education for their children, they do not tend to transfer Welsh within the family. And when the language has not been transferred within the home, it is often heard that people do not use Welsh after leaving school and that they lack confidence in their Welsh language skills. The Welsh Government has developed a national policy in light of these findings on language transmission within the family which will be implemented during the next reporting period.

Where language transmission does not take place in the home, the best way to develop fluent and confident speakers is to immerse children in the Welsh language from a young age. With the Government's commitment to offer 30 hours a week free childcare to working parents with 3 and 4 year olds, significant investment has been made in childcare during the reporting period. Currently, however, 77% of childcare services in Wales operate mainly through the medium of English. Since the introduction of the free 30 hour Childcare Offer, 25% of all children accessing the scheme received childcare through the medium of Welsh, but that percentage varies widely by local authority. 75% of children benefiting from the scheme received care through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, while as few as 5% were cared for in Welsh or bilingually in many areas of the south east.

Encompassing all communities

The above percentages are, of course, just one example of the variation in the position of the Welsh language in different areas and communities across the country. It is also proof of the need to introduce more interventions in areas where Welsh is not the predominant language as well as protecting those communities that are seen as strongholds of the Welsh language.

In that respect, the link between housing, work and language is one that continues to attract attention as young people leave rural areas, which are often strongholds of the Welsh language, to seek work. The inability of young people to afford to buy houses in rural areas and the increase in second home purchases is also a growing trend that is changing the fabric of communities, and one that will possibly intensify again as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the revolution in terms of remote working patterns. In 2019–20, it was estimated that 38% of houses sold in Gwynedd were purchased as second or holiday homes, and the figures were similar in Anglesey and Ceredigion also.

There has been a lack of consistency in the consideration given to the Welsh language in local authority planning policies, and it is not clear how considerations are translated into action locally or how they are monitored and evaluated. A local authority is not required to carry out a Welsh language impact assessment when dealing with individual planning applications, for example, only as part of the preparation of their local development plans covering wider areas than specific communities.

Cymraeg 2050 recognises the importance of economic development allowing Welsh speakers to remain in Welsh-speaking communities or return to those communities. It is difficult to find evidence of the link between language vitality and employment opportunities, however, without experimenting and investing significantly in the economy in the areas considered to be strongholds of the language. The Welsh Government introduced the £2m experimental Arfor fund between 2016–20 to create more and better jobs to support the growth of the language in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. But there is currently little evidence of the success of the project, and a one-off injection of funding without having a very specific purpose may not be sufficient to create an evidence base for the link between work and language.

Related to these communities is Welsh culture and social activity. The Urdd and the mentrau iaith continue to do vital work in maintaining and encouraging leisure activities and social opportunities in Welsh, and their contribution is discussed further in Part 3. S4C also supports the Government's efforts in reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and has developed its dedicated provision to serve new speakers by working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Mudiad Meithrin, for example.

Our use of digital media and technologies continues to increase, and there was a radical change in our use of them during 2020 with the COVID-19 crisis forcing virtually every aspect of our lives to move online. It is a continuous challenge for the Welsh language to try to keep up with developments in this area, and therefore the Government's Welsh language technology action plan was welcomed in 2018. The plan focuses on Welsh language speech technology, translation technology and conversational artificial intelligence and 19 of the 27 work packages have been completed or are in place.

Also during the reporting period, in 2016, the first prototype of a Welsh-language personal assistant system was introduced by Canolfan Bedwyr's Language Technologies Unit. Overall, major developments in Welsh-language technology have been slow and it is difficult to persuade global companies to include the Welsh language as part of their products. Having said that, success does not always require the support of the large companies. The Language Technologies Unit Ap Geiriaduron (Welsh-English dictionary app) is proof of that and was downloaded over 145,000 times between 2015–19. Another example of success in terms of technology is the Welsh language Wikipedia which now contains over 131,000 articles – a threshold that is considered internationally significant in terms of language presence online.

Including the Welsh language in technology developments is vital if it is to remain relevant to our way of life today. And seeing the Welsh language used by high street shops or on the international stage affects people's perception of the language and its relevance to the everyday life and activities of Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers alike.

Ensuring status

The Welsh language has had official status in Wales since 2011, and Part 1 examines how that has been reflected in a variety of ways over the reporting period. The Welsh language was used for the first time in the Supreme Court; it became a core part of the administrative justice system in Wales as individuals were able to complain to the Commissioner about the lack of a Welsh language service; and the equal status of the English and Welsh texts of legislation was endorsed in the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019. However, although the language is given official status in the Welsh Language Measure, it is an omission not to include status planning and language prestige in the Welsh language strategy, particularly when it has lost its 'co-official' status in Europe as a result of Brexit.

The policy making standards place a clear responsibility on Welsh Ministers and other organisations to consider how their intentions may affect the position of the Welsh language as a whole. This ensures, by statute, that the Welsh language has a place at the heart of policy making in Wales, and seeing references to the language in policies and legislation contributes, not only practically, but also symbolically to the status and prestige of the Welsh language. The policy making standards are not simply a mechanism to identify and mitigate risks of discrimination against Welsh speakers. Rather, they are there to ensure that the decisions made by an organisation contribute to the objectives of increasing the use of the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. There is therefore a duty to seek out positive effects as well as to mitigate adverse ones.

There have been several significant policy developments in relation to the Welsh language over the last five years, and the journey of implementing those policies in practice has only just begun. As the standards came into force, we saw how the introduction of this significant change to the system can lead to positive changes in the position of the Welsh language. Without doubt, further radical policies will be needed in many areas in order to see a step change over the next few years and to see the number of Welsh speakers, together with the use of the language, increasing in Wales.



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