

# Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4, Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 4 December 2025

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Richard Thomas

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddCulture@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddCulture@senedd.wales)

## Hybrid

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### Private pre-meeting

09:15 – 09:30

### 1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

09:30

### 2 Wales–Ireland relations: Culture, language and heritage – Panel 1

09:30 – 10:45

(Pages 1 – 27)

Dafydd Rhys, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales

Eluned Haf, Head, Wales Arts International

Andy Warnock, Musicians' Union Welsh Branch

Carwyn Donovan, BECTU

Philip King, Other Voices

Attached Documents:

Research brief

Written evidence: Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts International

### Break

10:45 – 10:55

### 3 Wales–Ireland relations: Culture, language and heritage – Panel 2

10:55 – 11:40

Jane Richardson, Chief Executive, Amgueddfa Cymru



## **Break**

11:40 – 11:50

### **4 Wales–Ireland relations: Culture, language and heritage – Panel 3**

11:50 – 12:50

(Pages 28 – 31)

Sian Lewis, Chief Executive, Urdd

Micheál Ó Foighil, Chief Executive Officer, Coláiste Lurgan

Attached Documents:

Written evidence: Urdd

## **Break**

12:50 – 13:30

### **5 Wales–Ireland relations: Culture, language, and heritage – Panel 4**

13:30 – 14:15

Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Chief Executive, National Library of Wales

Dr Maredudd ap Huw, Head of Archives and Manuscripts Section, National Library of Wales

### **6 Papers to note**

14:15

#### **6.1 Scrutiny of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**

(Pages 32 – 37)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales following the annual scrutiny session on 25 September – 5 November 2025

Letter from the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales following the annual scrutiny session on 25 September – 24 November 2025

#### **6.2 British Council**

(Pages 38 – 41)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the financial situation at the British Council – 5 November 2025

Letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the financial situation at the British Council – 24 November 2025

### **6.3 Scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner**

(Pages 42 – 47)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Welsh Language Commissioner following the annual scrutiny session on 12 November 2025 – 20 November 2025

Letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner following the annual scrutiny session on 12 November 2025 – 25 November 2025

### **7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting**

14:15

### **8 Wales–Ireland relations: Consideration of evidence**

14:15 – 14:35

### **9 Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill: Consideration of next steps**

14:35 – 15:00

Document is Restricted

## Headline updates from WAI/ACW

- **Ireland Wales Shared Statement** We welcome the continued inclusion of Culture, Language and heritage in the new Shared Statement 2030, and also the ambition to have a “strong working relationships between the Irish and Welsh Arts Councils, and between Wales Arts International and Culture Ireland.” We will be meeting Culture Ireland in January to develop this.
- We are working with Culture Ireland again on the Celtic Cousins at Celtic Connections in January 2026 with an ambition of developing a collaboration with Ireland and Scotland around language and music in north America also in 2026 building on relations created with the International Indigenous Music Summit and through Music showcase events.
- **NEN -Northern European Network** – Arts Council of Wales is part of this group of Arts Councils of the UK, Ireland, Nordic and Baltic states who convene annually to share policy exchange and practice. The latest meeting was held in Dublin in January 2025
- **NEMO – Northern European Mobility Opportunity** – Arts Council of Wales has partnered with the Nordic Culture Fund and the Arts Councils of the UK and Ireland to run a pilot mobility scheme for emerging artists. [The successful applicants have been announced this month](#)
- CEO Dafydd Rhys and Head of WAI Eluned Haf were last week in Dublin at the meeting of Directors of UK and Irish Cultural Institutions to discuss the recently launched [UK-Ireland 2030 Cultural Co-operation Programme](#), which was announced at the UK-Ireland summit in March 2025.
- It has recently been announced in Ireland that the pilot **Basic Income for the Arts** scheme that runs from 2022-2025 [will be developed in to a permanent successor scheme in 2026](#).

# Agenda Item 4

## **Urdd Gobaith Cymru - Evidence Submission**

### **Follow-up to Ireland-Wales Relations and looking to the future, including the 2030 shared statement.**

#### **Introduction**

Urdd Gobaith Cymru welcomes the Committee's continued focus on strengthening Wales-Ireland relations. As the main youth organisation promoting the Welsh language and Welsh culture, we have actively contributed to the initiatives of both countries and see significant potential to deepen the cooperation through the 2030 Shared Statement.

#### **Ireland-Wales shared statement 2030**

We welcome the 2030 Shared Statement and see a great opportunity to strengthen the focus on youth engagement. Involving young people in Wales and Ireland is essential for building cooperative bridges and friendships for future generations. Urdd Gobaith Cymru had no direct input into the formation of the statement. We believe that recognizing the contribution of initiatives such as the partnership between the Urdd and TG Lurgan, which promotes the use of the Welsh and Irish languages and shares good practice, can add value to the statement.

#### **A. Our Current Wales-Ireland Programme**

Our programmes foster pride in linguistic heritage and create meaningful friendships between Welsh and Irish young people (15-25 years old), rooting bilingualism beyond formal education.

Our International Director regularly participates in civil society engagement meetings between Wales and Ireland, contributing views on youth issues, culture and linguistic cooperation. This presence ensures that the voices of the young people of Wales are represented in strategic discussions, and creates opportunities to strengthen partnerships, share good practice, and develop joint projects that promote the Welsh and Irish languages.

#### **1. Partnership with TG Lurgan**

In March 2020, Urdd Gobaith Cymru established an exciting partnership with TG Lurgan, an Irish youth organization that promotes the Irish language through contemporary music. TG Lurgan's YouTube channel is full of impressive productions that have attracted millions of viewers, making the language more attractive to young people.

From the Urdd's experience, this project has:

- Developed national and international pride and raised the status of minority languages among young people.
- Produced bilingual music videos, which attract millions of views on streaming platforms
- Introduced annual exchanges, involving over 1,000 young people across Wales and Ireland.
- Brought minority language speakers together from different communities.
- Established best practice in creating and sharing digital content.
- Normalised bilingualism in social contexts beyond formal education.

### Wales–Ireland trips and exchanges since 2021

- Number of trips: 6, 4 Wales to Ireland and 2 Ireland to Wales
- Total participants: 1023 (163 from Wales, 860 from Ireland)

#### Quotes from participants:

*"Having spent most of my teenage years during the pandemic, this was an incredible experience that means so much more than words can explain."*

*"This trip taught me more about the Irish language and it increased my appreciation of the Welsh language."*

*".We united over music, musicals, and even learned Welsh for a collaboration on Water Under the Bridge - ."*

#### Links to Urdd and TG Lurgan co-productions (2025 production to be released)

[Golau'n Dallu / Dallta ag na Solise](#) (January 2021)

[Gwenwyn / Nimhneach](#) (April 2021)

[Dŵr Dan Bont / Uisce Faoin Droichead](#) (June 2022)

[Gwalia / A Bhanba, O Gymru](#) (Ebrill 2023)

[Human](#) (April 2023)

[Heno'n Ifanc / Muid Fós Óg](#) (August 2023)

[Texas Hold 'Em](#) (August 2024)

[Dog Days](#) (August 2024)

2. **Other Voices Festival – Cardigan 2025**, a cultural project which includes an exchange between two young performers from Wales and two from Ireland, performing in Wales and Ireland.

As part of the project the 4 came together in order to interweave traditional Welsh music with traditional Irish music. During Other Voices Festival Cardigan, the group performed in locations around the town, presenting Welsh and Irish music to a wide audience. The quartet will perform during Dingle Other Voices Festival at the beginning of December, and during St David's Day celebrations in Dublin in March 2026.

*"Had a special experience getting to know a new culture and learning about a different culture"*

*"Amazing opportunities to see Welsh music and the stage. Seeing the similarities between the Welsh language and the Irish language. And the similarities in music."*

*"A way of building and creating bridges between the musicians of Wales and Ireland."*

*"Welsh musicians and Irish musicians can come together and listen to different music"*

*"A way for people from Ireland and Wales to share music"*

3. **Collaboration between the Urdd National Youth Theater and Crooked House Theater Company / Kildare Youth Theater Cymru. April and August 2025.** In April 2025, 5 young people from Wales, together with peers from Ireland, attended a residential workshop to discuss themes of identity to celebrate minority languages in a creative way. In August, 10 young people from Wales performed at a festival

celebrating minority languages, sharing work created in collaboration with a group from Ireland. Discussions are underway to invite the group from Ireland to the Urdd Eisteddfod in May 2026 and to the National Eisteddfod in August 2026 to perform together.

- 4. Sharing practice – Chwarae yn Gymraeg.** On St David's Day 2023, during a visit to Galescoil Thaobh na Coille Irish-medium primary school in South Dublin in the company of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, the Urdd's support package was presented, which is available to use in schools to encourage the use of minority languages among learners, children and young people. This initiative started in Dublin and is now an integral part of our international engagement with young people that we use in all of our international projects.

## **B. Impact to date**

### **1. International Recognition and Respect**

The partnership between the Urdd and TG Lurgan is an example of how youth led projects can flourish, evolve and contribute directly to cultural diplomacy. Over the past five years, this initiative has created unique opportunities for young people from Wales and Ireland to work together, engaging directly with over 1000 Welsh- and Irish-speaking participants. Through creative projects, cultural exchanges and digital productions, the partnership has promoted the status of minority languages, strengthened international relations, and earned millions of views on streaming platforms globally. This shows how youth projects can be a catalyst for international cooperation and promote linguistic diversity."

### **2. Benefits for young people**

These projects have provided opportunities that contribute directly to the personal, linguistic and creative development of young people. In particular, they have:

- **Strengthened confidence in languages through practical experiences:** "The trip boosted my confidence to speak Welsh and make friends with new people."
- **Broadened cultural horizons:** "I learned a lot about the Welsh and Irish languages - it was eye-opening to see how passionate both countries are about their languages."
- **Developed creative and performing skills:** "The final concert was a highlight - performing on stage with an international group was an unforgettable experience."
- **Fostered international relations:** "Meeting other people who share the same passion for their minority language was surreal and comforting."]

More broadly, the project has:

- **Increased the status of minority languages** among young people through digital projects and musical co-productions.
- **Established collaborative networks** which strengthen cultural links in young people between Wales and Ireland.
- **Provided a platform for youth leadership** in an international context, contributing to the goals of the 2030 shared statement

3. **Digital reach.** The Urdd and TG Lurgan co-productions have attracted millions of views on YouTube and global streaming platforms. This success not only celebrates the links between young people in Wales and Ireland, but also highlights the importance of minority languages to an international audience.
4. **Press reach.** There has been considerable media coverage in Wales and Ireland on these projects. In Wales, coverage was broadcast on BBC Radio Cymru, along with editorial content on BBC Cymru Fyw, and items and interviews on Heno. In Ireland, a variety of press and broadcast media coverage was given, including a TV item on TG4, interviews on Raidió na Gaeltachta, as well as print and online coverage from organizations such as RTÉ and the *Irish Independent*.

### **C. Looking ahead to 2030 - Key Recommendations**

#### **1. Maintaining and Evolving the TG Lurgan Partnership**

Continuing with an annual creative collaboration that promotes the Welsh and Irish languages among young people, building on the success of musical and digital productions that have already attracted millions of online views. In addition, expanding the initiative to include new art forms such as short film, international theater and digital content on global platforms, in order to increase the reach and status of minority languages.

#### **2. Empowering Young People to use minority languages**

Providing platforms for youth leadership, ensuring that young people are involved in shaping policies and projects that promote socialising bilingually. This includes opportunities to lead creative projects, contribute to strategic discussions, and create international networks that foster linguistic confidence and leadership skills.

#### **3. Professional Development and Sharing Information**

Facilitating staff exchanges and joint training programs between Welsh and Irish cultural institutions, sharing best practice in language use outside the classroom, managing creative projects, and developing digital strategies. This will strengthen institutional capacity and ensure that both countries benefit from joint expertise.

#### **4. Making the most of UK–EU Youth Cooperation**

Using Erasmus+, TAITH and similar schemes to expand the cultural horizons of young people through international exchanges, joint arts projects, and workshops that promote linguistic diversity. This will create opportunities to connect with wider European networks, strengthening Wales's status as an active partner in youth cooperation

### **In conclusion**

The Urdd remains committed to working together and in partnership with TG Lurgan. Our priority is to ensure that young people continue to be at the heart of cultural and linguistic cooperation, strengthening bridges between the two countries, promoting the status of minority languages, and creating opportunities for youth leadership in an international context. Through creative projects, cultural exchanges and strategic networks, we will build on the current successes to support the Welsh Government to realize the vision set out in the 2030 shared statement.

Christopher Catling, Chief Executive  
Hayley Roberts, Deputy Chair  
Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

5 November 2025

## **Annual Scrutiny of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**

Dear Christopher and Hayley,

Thank you for attending the Committee's meeting on 25 September 2025 as part of our Annual Scrutiny of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. We would like to thank you for your time and the for the evidence that you shared with the Committee. As we mentioned during the session, there are one or two further issues we wanted to raise with you, which we didn't have time to raise during the session, and these are dealt with below.

### **Budget considerations**

We are very conscious of the effect of the Welsh Government's historic budget cuts on the Royal Commission.

Once adjusted for inflation, Welsh Government revenue grant-in-aid funding of the Royal Commission has reduced by about 40 per cent between 2015 and 2025. You explained that the Welsh Government does not fund the Royal Commission adequately for the work it is expected to undertake on the Welsh Government's behalf:

*"We have a set of key performance indicators that we report on every quarter and we're scrutinised by our sponsor division in Welsh Government on our performance in relation to those. And increasingly we're having to say in relation to some of the KPIs, 'We cannot deliver this because we don't have the capacity to do anything.'"*

You explained that, as a result of these cuts, the structure of the Royal Commission is "cut to the bone at the moment" with no spare capacity. We heard that you have seen a reduction from 54 members of staff ten years ago, to just 21. You explained that:

*"What has helped us, however, to continue operating effectively is that we're not creating substantive jobs, permanent jobs, any longer, but we are taking on people on a short-term contract of nine months or a year in order to do specific tasks."*

You told us that particular activities are the preserve of individual posts within the Commission, and that if that member of staff leaves, the activity ceases. We are concerned that these cuts have left the Royal Commission unacceptably fragile. The Royal Commission carries out valuable work for the historic environment, including a number of statutory functions. We are concerned that this long-term reduction in the Commission's funding places the historic environment, and our understanding of it, at risk.

We will raise these matters as part of our scrutiny of the Welsh Government draft budget in the coming weeks.

### **Ongoing review**

You also updated us about the status of the Welsh Government's review of the relationship between Cadw and the Royal Commission. You said that after nine months of monthly meetings a decision is yet to be made:

*"The position is that we haven't made a decision yet. That's what the report that we've sent to the Minister says. It's finely balanced. He is now seeking advice from his officials."*

In 2014 a previous Welsh Government abandoned plans to merge the Royal Commission with Cadw. You described the combined effects of the reduction in the Royal Commission's funding and the continual uncertainty about the organisation's future, saying that:

*"We've learnt to live with uncertainty. It's a fact of life for the royal commission, and it's partly where this discussion began. The gradual erosion of our income year on year means that we're constantly having to flex. It is disturbing for staff."*

We are concerned about the effect of the continued uncertainty about the Commission's future on the Commission's staff and its ability to plan strategically. It is our belief that the government needs to consider the evidence provided to them and act decisively, providing a long-term vision for the historic environment, in whatever structure they decide upon. The current position of deferring decisions whilst reducing the Commission's real-terms funding is not sustainable.

The Committee will continue to pursue these points with the Welsh Government.

Thank you once again for your attendance at Committee and for your valuable insights.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership.

Yours sincerely,

*Delyth Jewell*

**Delyth Jewell MS**  
**Committee Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.





**Comiswn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru**  
**Royal Commission on the Ancient and**  
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19 Tachwedd 2025

Delyth Jewell AS  
Cadeirydd, Y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y  
Gymraeg, Chwaraeon a Chysylltiadau  
Rhyngwladol  
Senedd Cymru  
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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg | Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

## **Annual Scrutiny of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**

I am writing to thank you for your letter of 5 November 2025 in which you offered to raise with Welsh Government and with the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership the impacts on the Royal Commission of the yearly reductions in our budget and the continuing uncertainty over our future, either as an independent body or combined with Cadw as part of a new historic environment service.

It is very encouraging to Commissioners and staff to know that our work is so strongly supported by the Committee, and to know that we have such influential advocates for our work within the Senedd.

I think it is also true to say that we have a great deal of support amongst the people of Wales, judging by the popularity of our events and social media posts and the warm feedback that we receive from those who use our online and in-person enquiry services. The fact that our Capeli Cymru project has been awarded such a substantial grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund also points to the esteem in which the Commission is held, and we look forward to being able to deliver another exemplary project that will make a real difference to the fate of places of worship in Wales in the years to come.

That project is just one indication of the ways in which the Commission has evolved over the last decade. Where once we might only have been concerned with creating records of buildings and archaeology, we now strive to relate our work to the issues that people care about.

For example, over the summer, in response to popular demand and with a continued emphasis on mental and physical wellbeing, we delivered 15 talks, 9 guided walks and 5 workshops attracting more than 750 participants, and this events programme involved collaborative working with partners including Cadw, Eryri National Park, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, North Wales Wildlife Trust, the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, and the Operation Nightingale project, which supports injured and recovering service personnel and veterans.

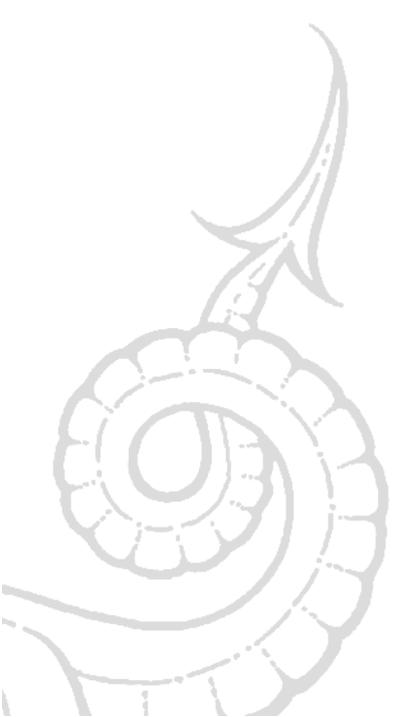
We ask only to be able continue our work and we believe we give good value for money. Colleagues have responded with commendable flexibility and goodwill to the extra demands made upon them by the loss of posts to voluntary severance following the 10.5 per cent cut in our budget that occurred in 2024-25. Our very modest request is to see a return to the levels of funding that we enjoyed before that cut and we are grateful for the Committee's expression of support towards this aim.

Yours sincerely



Christopher Catling

Chief Executive



—  
**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations Committee**

**Senedd Cymru**

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The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and  
Development Affairs

5 November 2025

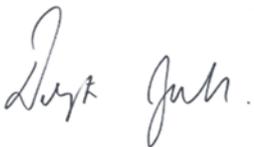
**British Council**

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of the Senedd's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, I am writing to draw your attention to the enclosed letter, originally addressed to your predecessor, Sir David Lammy MP, in January 2025.

The financial challenges facing the British Council remain pressing, and the Committee continues to be concerned about the organisation's long-term sustainability. We urge you to consider how the British Council can be supported towards a financially secure future.

Yours sincerely,



Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

cc. Chris Elmore MP

The Rt Hon David Lammy MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth  
and Development Affairs

29 January 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of the Senedd's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, I am writing to you regarding the key role the British Council plays for Wales and for the UK.

The work of the British Council has never been more important as we face global challenges and political changes in an ever more uncertain world. The British Council works on behalf of the UK and the four nations and is deeply appreciated by the Committee and those working on Wales's connections overseas.

The organisation champions our world-leading cultural and educational institutions, boosting the UK's international reputation. In these efforts, devolution is a huge asset to the UK and it is invaluable to have an organisation that can represent the diversity of interests and priorities of the four nations effectively.

The British Council's work is essential to the international ambitions of Wales and our sectors here. There has been strong support for Wales's International Strategy, where the British Council has worked in partnership with Welsh Government to raise the profile of Wales on the world stage. This has seen them support the delivery of projects and priorities for Wales in countries such as India, France and Japan. They have supported the internationalisation of key festivals such as Hay, Greenman, Focus Wales and Artes Mundi, contributing their expertise, funding and partnership opportunities.

Members of the Committee also worked with the British Council to welcome international arts delegations to Wales from Ukraine, Hong Kong and Iraq in the last year, enabling politicians, policy makers and practitioners in Wales to learn from global best practice.

In education, Welsh higher and further education organisations use the British Council's global network and expertise in 100 countries, offering a huge advantage and window on the world for

Wales. That brokering and connecting role that the British Council is able to play, and the insight they provide is invaluable for the Welsh tertiary sector.

The British Council's education programmes and policy events supports international research collaborations, transnational education partnerships, market development for Welsh universities and policy exchange around common interests from climate change, leadership and governance to semiconductor research.

The Study UK campaign, run by the British Council on behalf of the UK Government, works closely with Study in Wales to promote international student recruitment to Wales. A recent campaign achieved 11.4 million impressions, demonstrating what can be achieved in partnership. The British Council's work with schools, young people and languages too supports Wales's new curriculum and the international resources, partnership opportunities and policy work help create informed citizens of Wales and the world.

The Committee was therefore concerned to see reports about the financial challenges the organisation faces during the recent appearance of the British Council's Chief Executive in front of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in Westminster, and in the press. Any decision which results in the British Council having to restrict or reduce its operations overseas and the ability it has to serve the priorities of the devolved Governments would not only negatively affect Wales's place in the world, but the soft power of the UK.

I would be grateful for your assurances, therefore, that the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is doing everything in its power to ensure that strategy dictates the future of the British Council and to make sure the organisation is supported towards a financially sustainable future.

Yours sincerely,



**Delyth Jewell MS**  
**Committee Chair**

cc: The Rt Hon Baroness Chapman of Darlington

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**Chris Elmore MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
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SW1A 2AH

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Delyth Jewell  
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Our Ref: MC2025/38412

24 November 2025

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 November, addressed to the Foreign Secretary regarding the British Council. I am replying as the Minister responsible for the British Council.

The Government highly values the British Council as a UK soft power asset through its important work in promoting the English language, UK arts and culture and education.

I recognise the important work the British Council does in Wales, and I was encouraged to hear of the recent launch of a new residency programme in partnership with Arts Council England, Creative Scotland and Arts Council of Wales/Wales Arts International, which supports artists and cultural professionals whose work has been impacted by war and conflict. I look forward to hearing about the results of the programme in due course.

I want to assure you that this Government is committed to a successful British Council that is financially sustainable for the long term. Whilst FCDO funding represents a minority of the Council's income and the British Council's Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for its financial sustainability, we continue to work closely with the British Council on the issues you raise in your letter.

Yours ever,

**CHRIS ELMORE MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations Committee**

Efa Gruffudd Jones  
Welsh Language Commissioner

20 November 2025

## **Annual Scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner**

Dear Efa,

Thank you for attending the Committee's meeting on 12 November 2025 as part of our Annual Scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Committee would like to thank you and the Deputy Commissioner, Osian Llywelyn, for your time and for the evidence that you shared with the Committee. As we mentioned during the session, there are one or two further issues we wanted to raise with you, which we didn't have time to raise during the session, and these are dealt with below.

### **Budget considerations**

The Committee is very conscious of the effect of year-on-year real-terms reductions in Welsh Government revenue funding for your office and the limitations it might place on your functions and activities. The Committee noted the implications of this funding squeeze, specifically the 5 per cent cut to your budget in 2024-25.

The Committee noted your assessment of the requirement to restructure and change roles as a direct consequence of budget reductions. We were reassured that your staffing structure enables you to undertake your functions effectively. However, it is concerning that the office, since its establishment in 2012, has seen a 26 per cent reduction in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

Whilst the Committee welcomes moves to bring more sectors within the Welsh language standards regime, this will undoubtedly increase workload for your office and impact on your capacity to do things in the same way. The Committee will pursue this with the Welsh Government.

### **Governance**

The Committee questioned you on the steps taken since your office was a victim of a cyber-attack a few years back. We acknowledge the work you have undertaken since then to ensure that all possible risks are being mitigated and are actively monitored.

We also discussed the timescales and costs involved in the development of the new case management system (CMS) and the need to learn lessons for future projects. We were pleased to hear that additional development requirements for the system would not incur additional costs and that support and advice structures are in place to support future procurement of digital and IT systems. Could you provide us with an update on the timeframe for completion of the new CMS, and outline how the system will facilitate a more effective and efficient process to dealing with complaints?

## HMP Berwyn

The Committee was interested in your update about the recent report from Cardiff University that found that Welsh speaking prisoners are prevented from using the language at HMP Berwyn.

We note that you are due to meet senior officials at HMP Berwyn on 17 November and that you will be able to update the Committee after this point. The Committee is interested to hear if you are able to draw any further conclusions from the meeting and whether you are likely to pursue an investigation into HMP Berwyn. We'd also be interested to know what representations you will make to the Welsh and UK Government about bringing HMPPS within the Welsh language standards regulatory framework.

The Committee also welcomes your efforts to bring other UK Government departments and bodies such as the DVLA, HMRC, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Cabinet Office within the Welsh language standards regime. UK Government bodies that provide key services to people in Wales should be providing them in accordance with Welsh legislation, and should be ensuring that the Welsh language isn't treated less favourably than the English language.

## Regulation and enforcement

It was with interest that we heard about your approach to regulation and enforcement of the standards, and that the shift to co-regulation was a decision based on principle rather than budgetary needs. The Committee also acknowledges your point that the number of complaints the Commissioner receives is not within your control, and that for a proportion of those complaints, there is no evidence of failure, or the matter has been resolved, and therefore no enforcement action is taken.

The Committee sees the value in preventative action to ensure that organisations do not fail in the first instance. We note your report, which states:

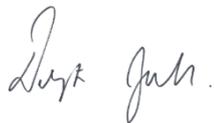
*"We are committed to acting proportionately, targeting our regulatory work and operating according to a number of specific measures, including our assessment of the organisation's likely risk of non-compliance."*

We of course acknowledge that as Commissioner, you must use your limited resources proportionately and we would accept that investigating a complaint that has been corrected would not represent a wise use of resources. Where there is evidence of failure, however, we believe that it is important that the Commissioner does investigate.

Thank you once again for your attendance at Committee and for your valuable insights.

I am copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language.

Yours sincerely,



**Delyth Jewell MS**  
**Committee Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



**Efa Gruffudd Jones**  
Welsh Language Commissioner  
Comisiynydd y Gymraeg



**Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner**

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair  
The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport  
and International Relations Committee  
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25 November 2025

Dear Delyth Jewell MS

### **Annual scrutiny of the Welsh Language Commissioner's work**

On my behalf and my Deputy, Osian Llywelyn, I would like to thank you very much for the opportunity to come and give evidence to the Committee on 12 November 2025. Here's a response to your comments.

#### Budget considerations

We would welcome more resources. However, even if these were to diminish, we would continue to welcome bringing more bodies under the Welsh language standards. That is because we firmly believe that bringing more bodies and sectors under the Welsh Language Standards is good for the Welsh language. Doing so without an additional resource would put pressure on the office's resources, and mean that we would have to regulate more on the basis of risk.

Our responsibilities increase over time, and we need sufficient resources in order to do our work effectively. We have noted this in our [manifesto proposals](#) where we ask the next Welsh government to publish Welsh language standards regulations for Ministers of the Crown and non-ministerial departments of the United Kingdom Government, and ask for a clear programme for extending Welsh language standards to other sectors and organisations.

To date, as resources have diminished, we have prioritised resources for our regulatory functions, although we are seeing that our activities in other directions, including our work with the private and voluntary sectors, are also bearing fruit in terms of outcomes for the Welsh language and increasing opportunities for its use.

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Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner

## Governance

We have a strong working relationship with the external provider who provides us with the case management system, and we have agreed on a delivery plan with them. This plan states that the development work in its entirety, along with training relevant staff on how to operate the system, will be completed by mid-March 2026. So, we expect that the system will be operational from April 2026, enabling us to take advantage of all its benefits from that date onwards.

The main benefits expected are as follows:

- Some tasks will be automated, saving staff time.
- Reducing the burden of day-to-day repetitive and administrative tasks.
- Ability to maintain more accurate records of our work and the deadlines we must adhere to.
- Ability to measure progress more easily against our performance indicators.
- Ability to more effectively track and document the results of any enforcement actions taken against organisations we regulate.

## HMP Berwyn

I take my role as a champion for Welsh speakers seriously, particularly when it comes to the most vulnerable members of society. Following a visit to Berwyn Prison on 17 November where I had the opportunity to discuss the provision with staff and prisoners, I have decided to conduct a statutory investigation under section 17 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 into a possible failure by HM Prison and Probation Service to fulfill its Welsh language plan.

In addition, during the visit and following conversations with the prisoners, we heard about cases of individuals being prevented from speaking Welsh together. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 establishes freedom to use the Welsh language with others in Wales. I have asked for assurances that prisoners are aware that any individual who feels their liberty has been restricted can contact my office to request an investigation.

As I state above, our [manifesto proposals](#) ask the next Welsh government to bring bodies similar to the Prison and Probation Service under the Welsh language standards regime.

## Regulation and enforcement

I would like to thank the Committee for the constructive comments and recognition of our regulatory approach. We emphasise once again that the change to co-regulation as a method is one based on principles, not on budgetary considerations.



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We have a dual role as a regulator: to educate, support and promote compliance, but also to enforce where necessary. Our desire is to work with organisations through a preventative and collaborative approach, to avoid situations where enforcement action is required. However, when there is no assurance or confidence that organisations are fulfilling their duties, we will act firmly using all our powers to ensure compliance.

I need to draw your attention to one issue relating to National Insurance. Note that the 2025-26 National Insurance increase is a budgetary issue (therefore it isn't included in the 2024-2025 Annual Report). Our expectation is to receive 85% of the increase, not 100% as I stated at the meeting.

Thank you for your interest in our work, and I look forward to further discussions.

Yours sincerely,

**Efa Gruffudd Jones**  
Welsh Language Commissioner

cc: Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language