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12/02/2021

Dear Clerk,

### **Briefing Note on the Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales**

In recent letters to the Education Minister and the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language, the committee asked for further information about efforts to increase the number of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh. The letter to the Education Minister made specific references to discussions between the Minister and myself on these issues. To provide the context in which such discussions took place, I attach a copy of a briefing note I published in August. The briefing note includes a detailed analysis of the current Welsh language capacity of the statutory education workforce and outlines a series of recommendations to the Welsh Government and other relevant organisations. I hope there will be opportunities to discuss this report in more detail soon, and that we can work with the Government and key stakeholders on these crucial issues.

Yours sincerely,

**Aled Roberts**  
Welsh Language Commissioner

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# Briefing Note

## The Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales

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Date: 6 August 2020

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# The Commissioner's Foreword

The challenge of ensuring sufficient numbers of Welsh-medium teachers is an enormous one. There is a real danger that a shortage of Welsh-medium teachers will undermine two of the cornerstones of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, namely to increase the proportion of learners in Welsh-medium education, and to transform the way Welsh is taught in bilingual and English-medium schools.

We need significant intervention and a total change of mindset. Unless the Government's strategy and actions reflect the scale of the challenge facing us in this context, the objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy will not be achieved. It is also clear that urgent action is required. Not only will the necessary changes take time to implement, but interventions in teacher training will also take some time to impact on the education workforce at grassroots level.

Of all the commitments and targets in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, the creation of an increasingly bilingual education workforce is absolutely key to its success. The teacher-training sector is an area where strong and bold leadership by the Welsh Government can lead to far-reaching changes to the future number of Welsh speakers. It is time to ensure a teacher training strategy that reflects the Government's vision for the Welsh language.



Aled Roberts

Welsh Language Commissioner



# Introduction and Summary of recommendations

To realise the Welsh Government's ambitious vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, a significant increase will be required in the number of individuals leaving school as confident Welsh speakers. For this growth to take place, it is imperative to ensure a sufficient number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh.

The purpose of this briefing note is to emphasise the importance of developing a bilingual education workforce, to highlight the scale of the challenge facing us in Wales in this context, and to outline the nature and scope of the strategies and policies required in the future. Here is a summary of the main recommendations of this briefing note (see the recommendations in full in section 3):

- 1 All available data sources need to be utilised by the Welsh Government and the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to analyse in detail the future need for Welsh-medium teachers. This ought to include the teachers that will be required for Welsh-medium, bilingual, and English-medium schools, and should be based on a more sophisticated method of defining and recording the Welsh language skills of teachers.
- 2 The Welsh Government should set targets for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers in Wales relating to the training of teachers with skills in the Welsh language, based on Cymraeg 2050 national targets. Working towards achieving these targets should be a condition of accrediting ITE provision in Wales.
- 3 The Welsh Government should require that ITE providers publish a Welsh-medium trainee marketing and recruitment scheme.
- 4 Financial incentives should continue to be provided for students wishing to train to teach through the medium of Welsh, and more should be done to promote these grants as a means of motivating students lacking in confidence in their Welsh-language skills to study through the medium of Welsh.
- 5 The Welsh Government should ensure that the target setting process for Welsh-medium trainees, and any financial incentives for such trainees, shall include those who commit to learning Welsh during their teacher training period.
- 6 The Welsh Government should instruct the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board to lead an evaluation of the existing incentive framework and provide recommendations for a new long-term framework.
- 7 The Welsh Government should lead on producing a national and long-term strategy for transforming Welsh-language provision in ITE courses in Wales. ITE provision nurturing the Welsh language skills of all trainee teachers should be developed. A clear and detailed framework with robust accountability measures should be established for using the accreditation of ITE courses to incrementally improve standards and raise expectations in terms of the Welsh language.

- 8 The Welsh Language Competency Framework for Teachers should be used as a basis for the planning and implementation of a coherent and multi-layered ITE provision.
- 9 The Government should consider the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh in any strategy for improving the Welsh-language skills of ITE trainees, including intensive Welsh language courses for any trainee teacher wishing to be able to teach through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.
- 10 The Welsh Government should work with regional consortia and local authorities to provide a clearer and more transparent framework for training provided to improve practitioners' Welsh language skills. This should include clarity about the allocation of funding to various organisations for this purpose.
- 11 The Welsh Government will need to consider fully the proposed evaluation of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme, and, in particular, any recommendations made.
- 12 In line with recommendation 6, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board should look specifically at ways of motivating all teachers to develop their Welsh language skills incrementally, and to use Welsh increasingly as their medium of instruction.
- 13 The Welsh Government should provide clarity on the roles of the respective organisations involved in implementing the recommendations of this paper.

# 1. Policy context

The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy sets out a vision to increase the number of Welsh speakers from 562,000 (2011 census) to 1 million by 2050, and to increase the daily use of the language from 10% (2013-15) to 20% by 2050.

The education sector in Wales has a key role to play in achieving these targets, and the sector's contribution is based on three main growth goals:

- **Expansion of Welsh-medium education:** To increase the number receiving Welsh-medium education, from 22% in 2017, to 30% in 2031, and to 40% in 2050.
- **Increase the number of those leaving the English-medium/bilingual education sector speaking Welsh:** The trajectory to the million is based on the assumption that in 2031, 35% (8,500 pupils) of pupils leaving the English-medium/bilingual education sector will indicate that they speak Welsh. In 2050, the target is 50% (10,500).
- **Increase the number of Welsh-medium teachers:** To increase the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh and able to teach Welsh as a subject.

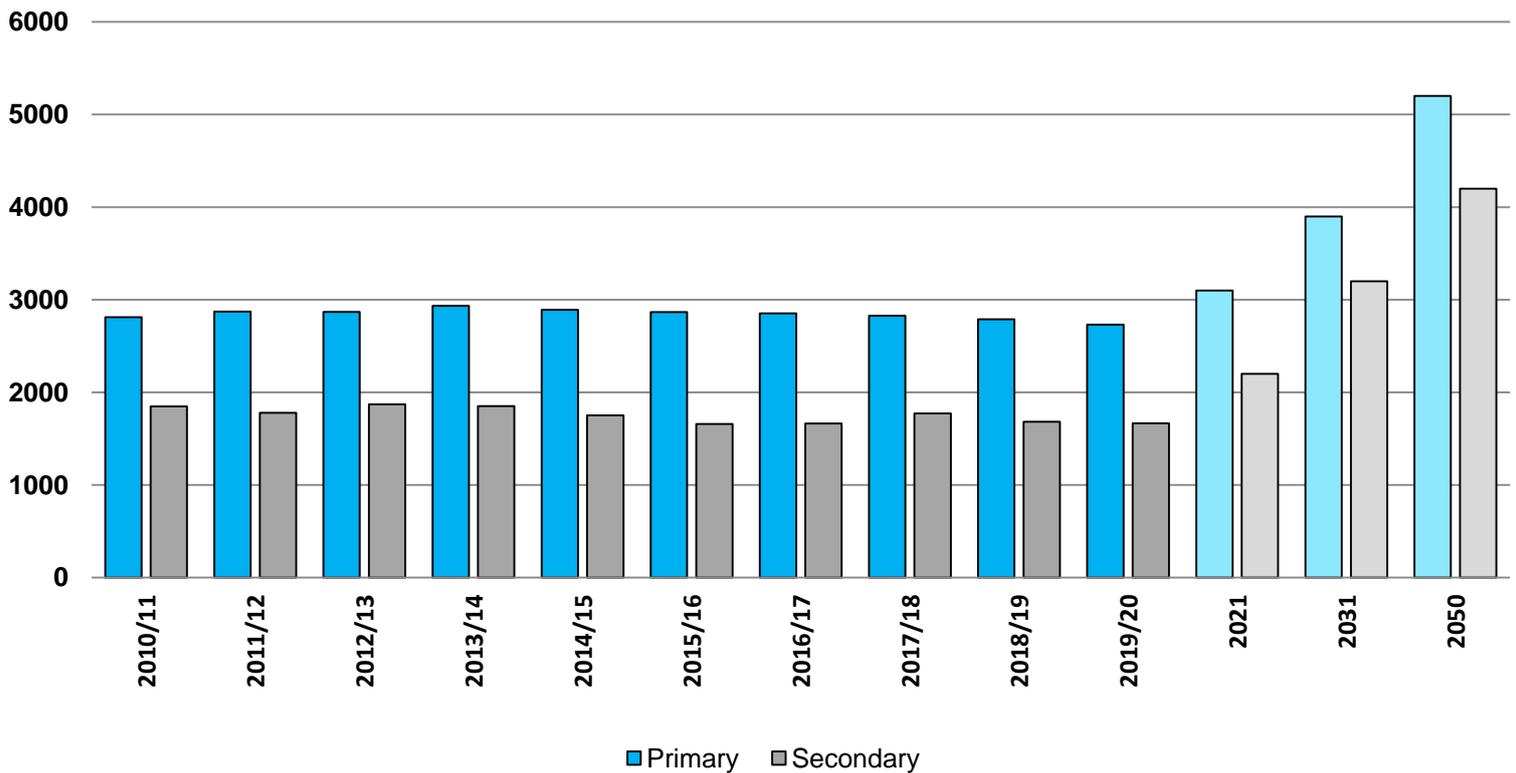
Achieving the first two objectives is conditional upon achieving the third, namely, that sufficient numbers of teachers are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The Government has set targets for the number of teachers required so that the above objectives can be realised (see Figure 1 below). The methodological basis for these targets is unclear, as is whether this targeting is based on the number of teachers required for all schools in Wales, or solely aimed at the growth of Welsh-medium schools. What is clear, however, is that these targets are challenging and require significant intervention in order to radically increase the number of teachers in Wales able to teach through the medium of Welsh.

**Figure 1:** The contribution of the education sector to the trajectory towards a million speakers, based on the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy targets

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

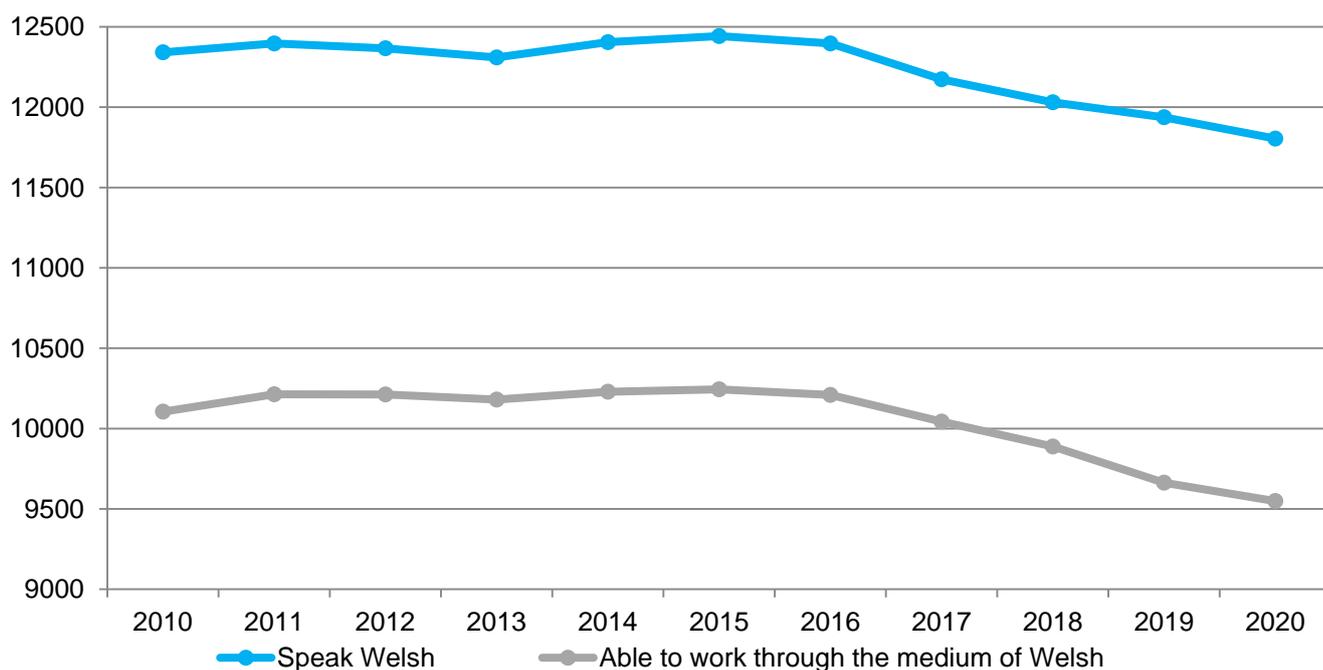
## 2. A statistical Analysis

**Figure 2:** Numbers teaching through the medium of Welsh in primary and secondary schools, based on Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data, and Cymraeg 2050 strategy targets.



	2010 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2021	2031	2050
Primary	2812	2872	2869	2934	2891	2867	2853	2827	2789	2731	3100	3900	5200
Secondary	1848	1779	1870	1851	1751	1659	1664	1772	1683	1666	2200	3200	4200

**Figure 3:** Number of school teachers registered with the EWC by Welsh language skills<sup>1</sup>.

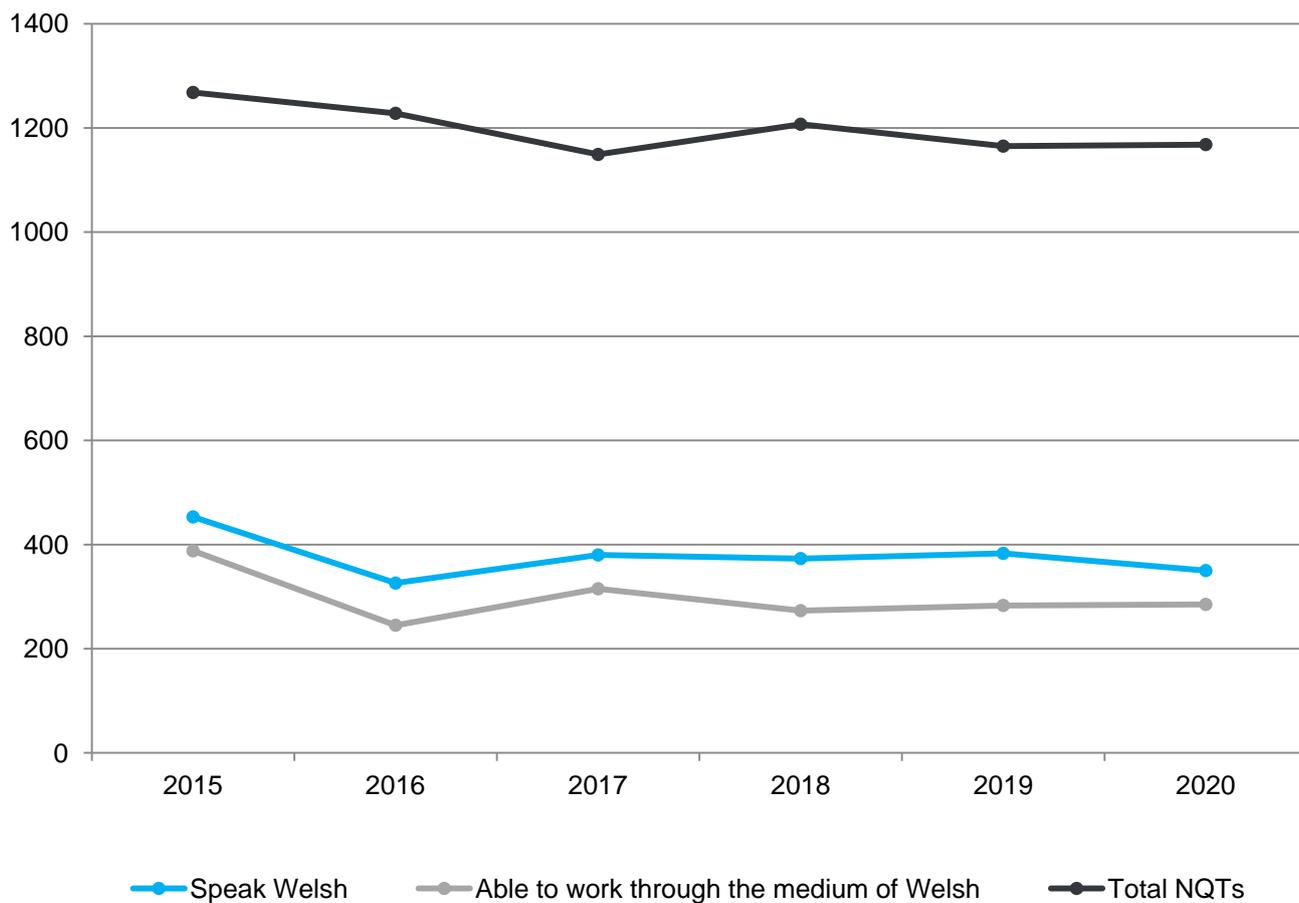


	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Speak Welsh</b>	12,341 31.7%	12,396 32%	12,366 32.3%	12,309 32.5%	12,404 32.9%	12,442 33.3%	12,396 33.5%	12,173 33.4%	12,030 33.5%	11,937 33.6%	11,804 33.6%
<b>Able to work through the medium of Welsh</b>	10,105 25%	10,213 26.3%	10,212 26.7%	10,180 26.9%	10,229 27.2%	10,244 27.4%	10,209 27.6%	10,043 27.6%	9,888 27.5%	9,663 27.2%	9,549 27.2%
<b>Total registered teachers</b>	38,896	38,770	38,290	37,862	37,673	37,355	36,951	36,436	35,929	35,545	35,171
<b>School learning support workers</b>	Data unavailable <sup>2</sup>							33,424	36,103	37,325	-

<sup>1</sup> The 'Welsh speaking' category is based on those registrants who have stated whether they are fluent, or fairly fluent, in the Welsh language. The category 'Able to work through the medium of Welsh' is based on those registrants who have stated that they have been trained to work through the medium of Welsh, that they are currently working through the medium of Welsh or have done so in the past, or feel confident to do so.

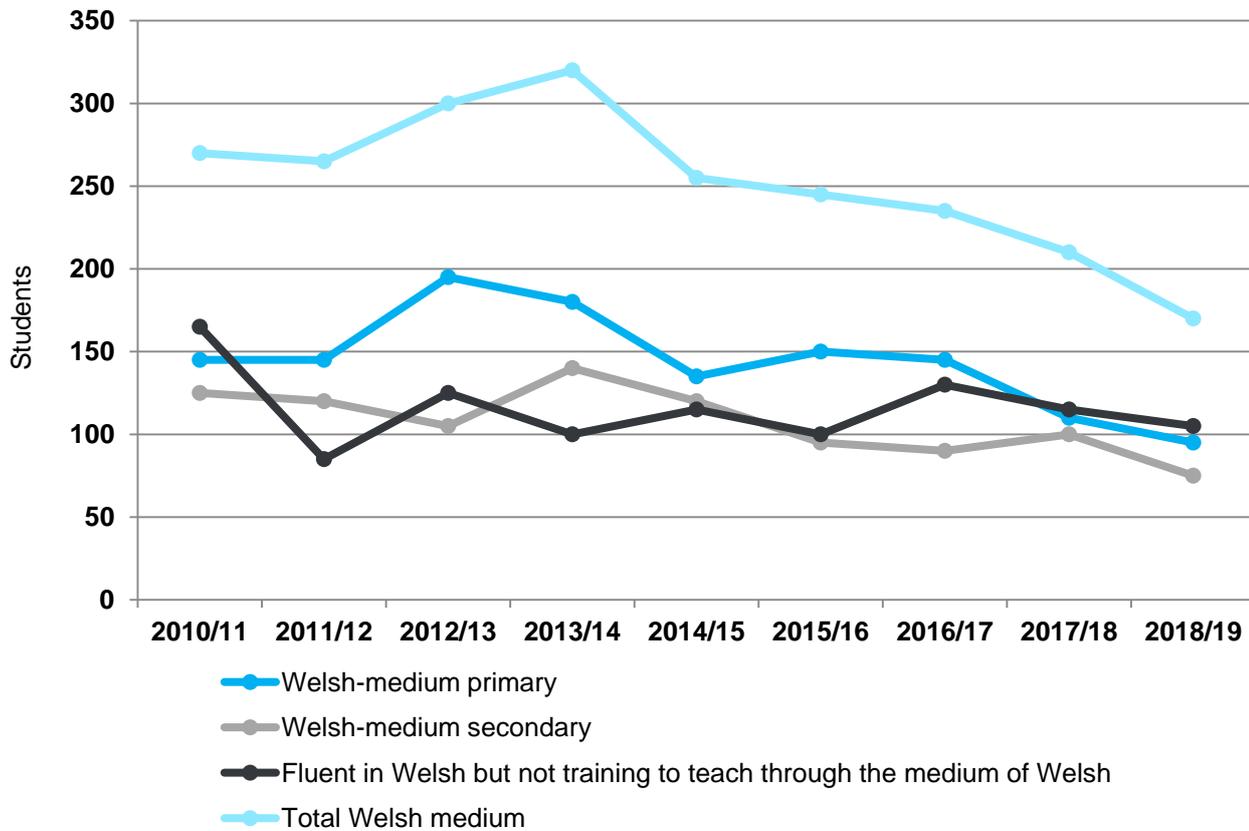
<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2016 it was not required for school learning support workers to register, and this is the reason why no data is available.

**Figure 4:** The number of newly qualified school teachers registered with the EWC with Welsh language skills.



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Speak Welsh	453	326	380	373	383	350
Able to work through the medium of Welsh	388	245	315	273	283	285
Total NQTs	1268	1228	1149	1207	1165	1168

**Figure 5:** The number of first year students (undergraduate and postgraduate) on ITE courses in Wales training to teach through the medium of Welsh, based on Higher Education Student Record data.



	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Primary</b>	145	145	195	180	135	150	145	110	95
<b>Secondary</b>	125	120	105	140	120	95	90	100	75
<b>Total training through the medium of Welsh</b>	270	265	300	320	255	245	235	210	170
<b>Not training to teach through the medium of Welsh</b>	1510	1495	1440	1330	1245	1065	1010	990	890
<b>Not training to teach through the medium of Welsh but fluent in Welsh</b>	165	85	125	100	115	100	130	115	105

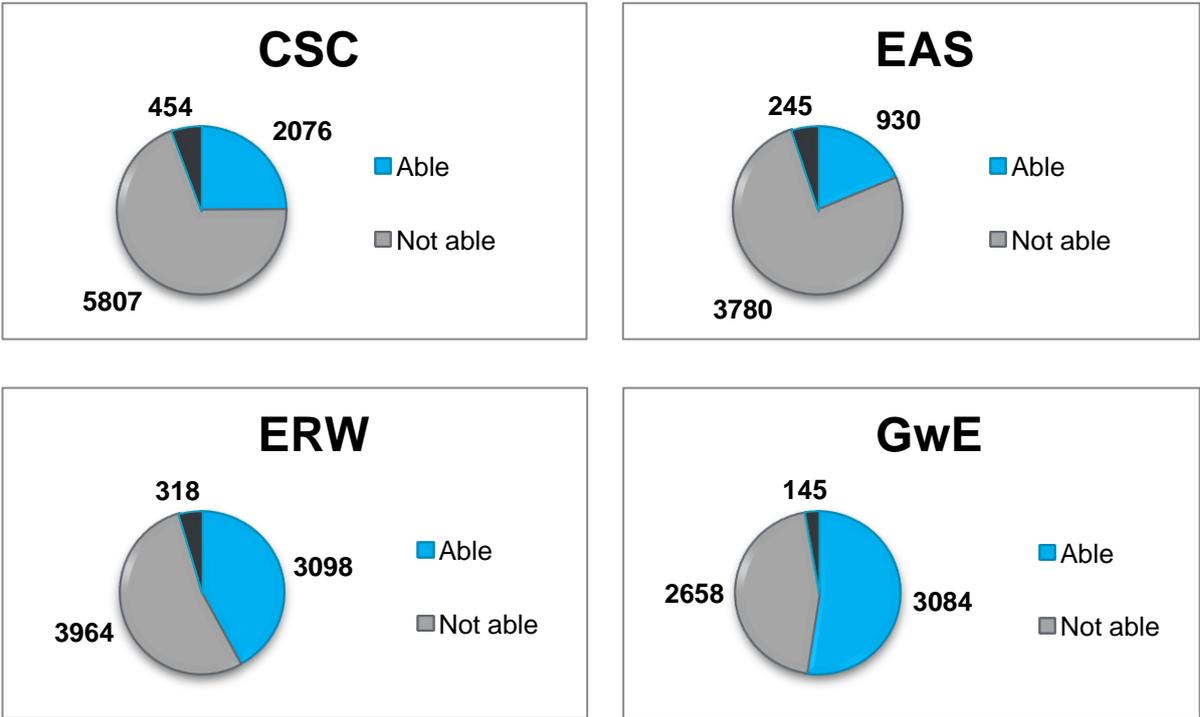
**Figure 6:** First year students from Wales on ITE courses in the UK by country of study and year. Based on Higher Education Student Record data.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>ITE in Wales</b>	1,430	1,400	1,425	1,370	1,250	1,150	1,105	1,025	935
<b>ITE in England</b>	420	395	485	440	465	460	560	530	555
<b>Total of 1st Yr ITE trainees from Wales</b>	1,850	1,795	1,915	1,810	1,715	1,610	1,670	1,555	1,490

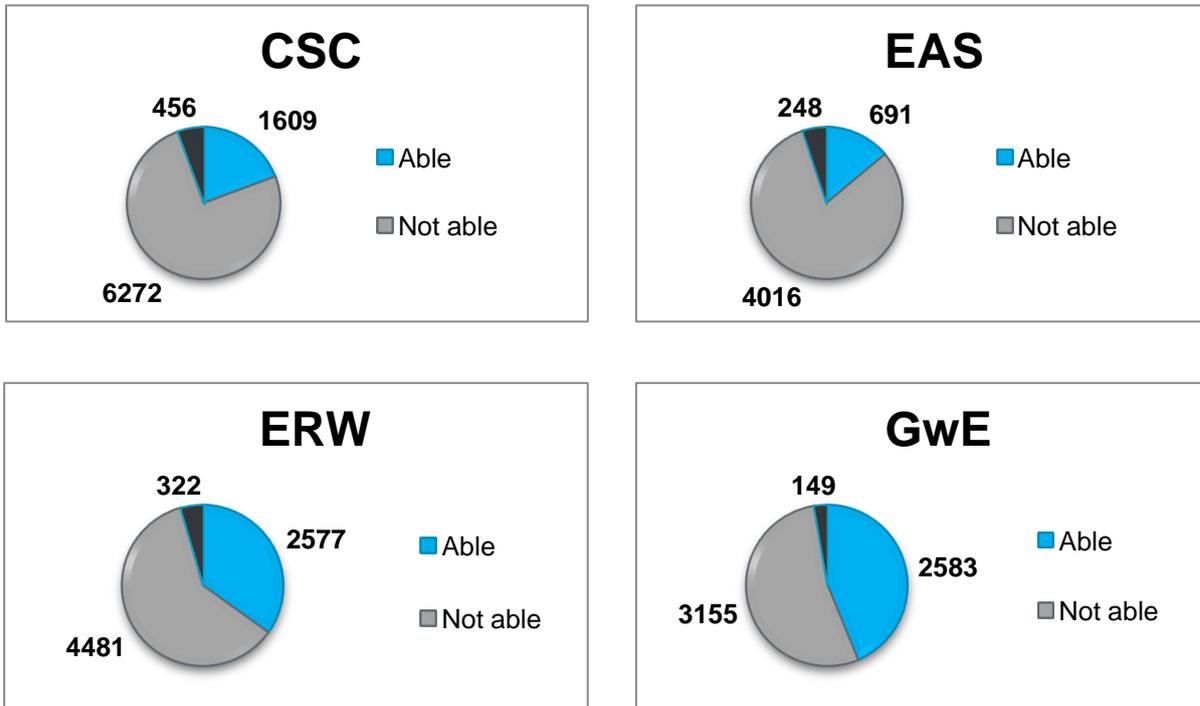
**Figure 7:** First year students on ITE courses in Wales by home country and year. Based on Higher Education Student Record data.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Wales</b>	1,430	1,400	1,425	1,370	1,250	1,150	1,105	1,025	935
<b>England</b>	245	290	250	230	200	110	105	105	85
<b>Scotland</b>	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	20	10	10	10	10	15	5	5	5
<b>Other EU</b>	70	45	35	25	25	15	10	15	-
<b>Non-EU</b>	15	10	15	10	15	20	15	45	35

**Figure 8:** Number of school teachers<sup>3</sup> registered with the EWC on 1 March 2020 according to their ability to speak Welsh and consortium

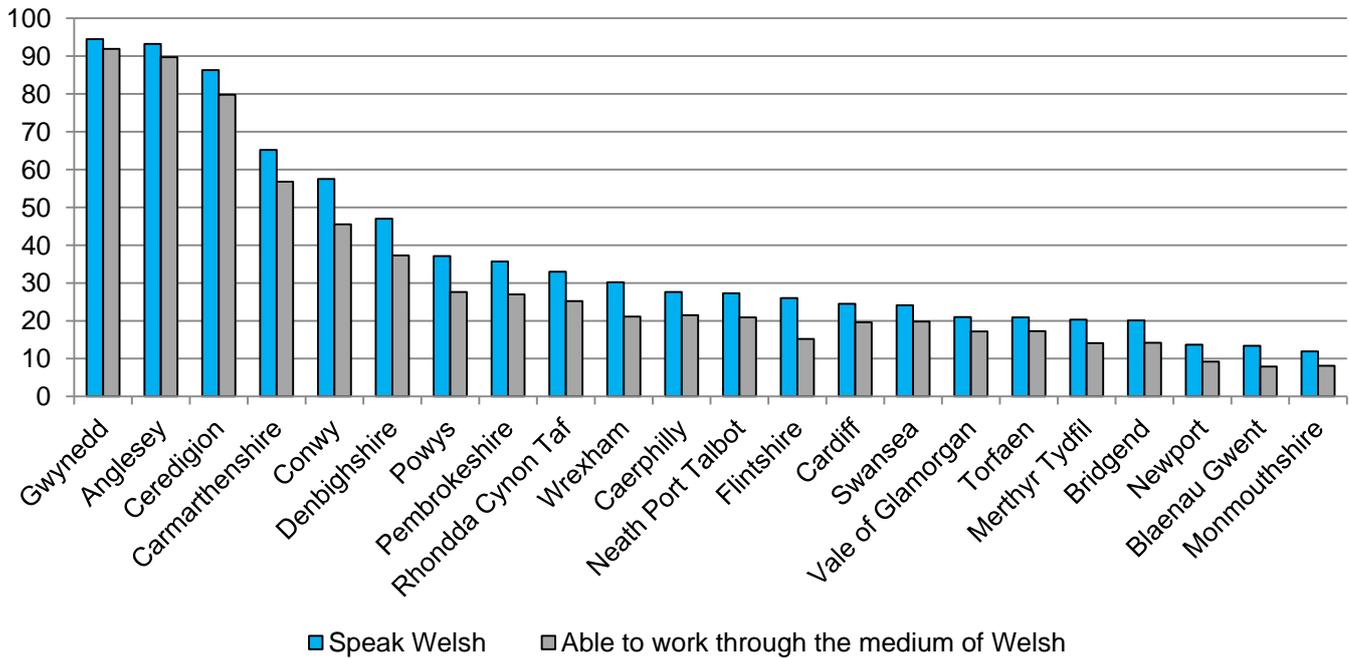


**Figure 9:** Number of school teachers registered with the EWC on 1 March 2020 according to their ability to work through the medium of Welsh and consortium

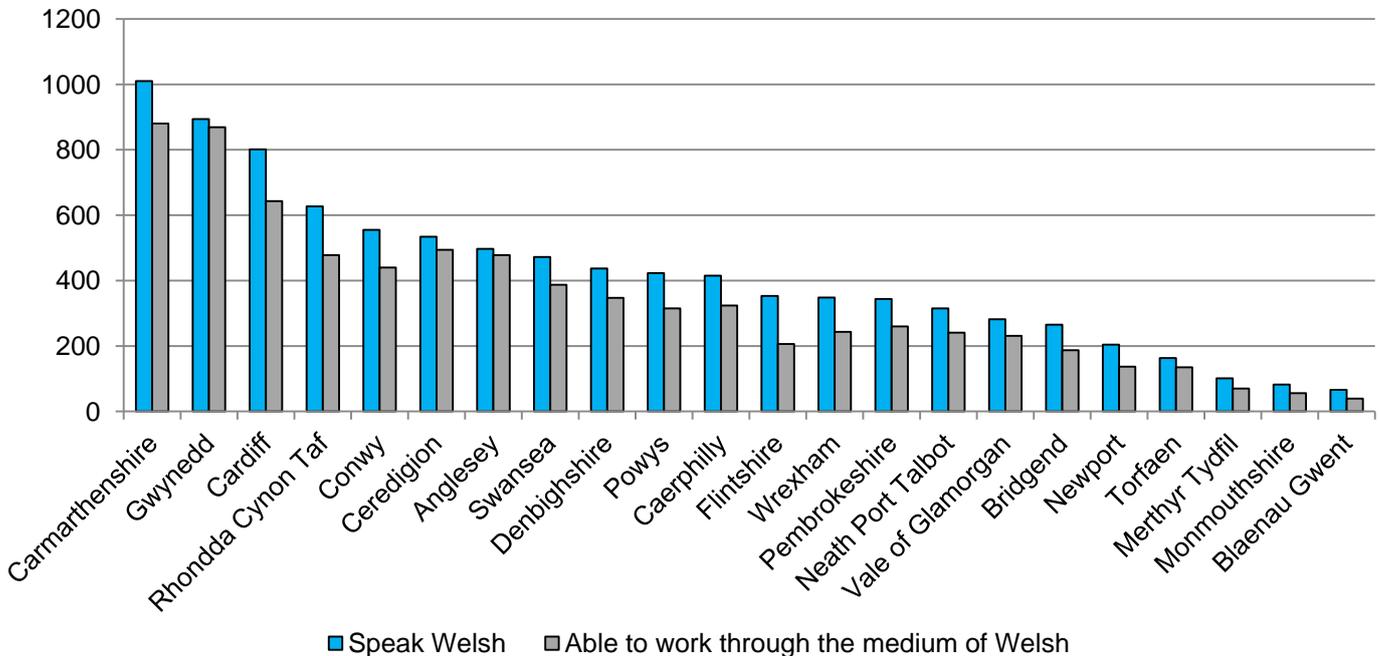


<sup>3</sup> This data on regional consortia does not include supply teachers or 'others in service and others out of service' (for example, registrants who are employed as peripatetic or advisory teachers, registrants who are employed in support or further education roles, retired teachers and those with no employment recorded)

**Figure 10:** The percentage of school teachers<sup>4</sup> registered with the EWC on 1 March 2020 according to their ability to speak Welsh and to work through the medium of Welsh, by local authority.

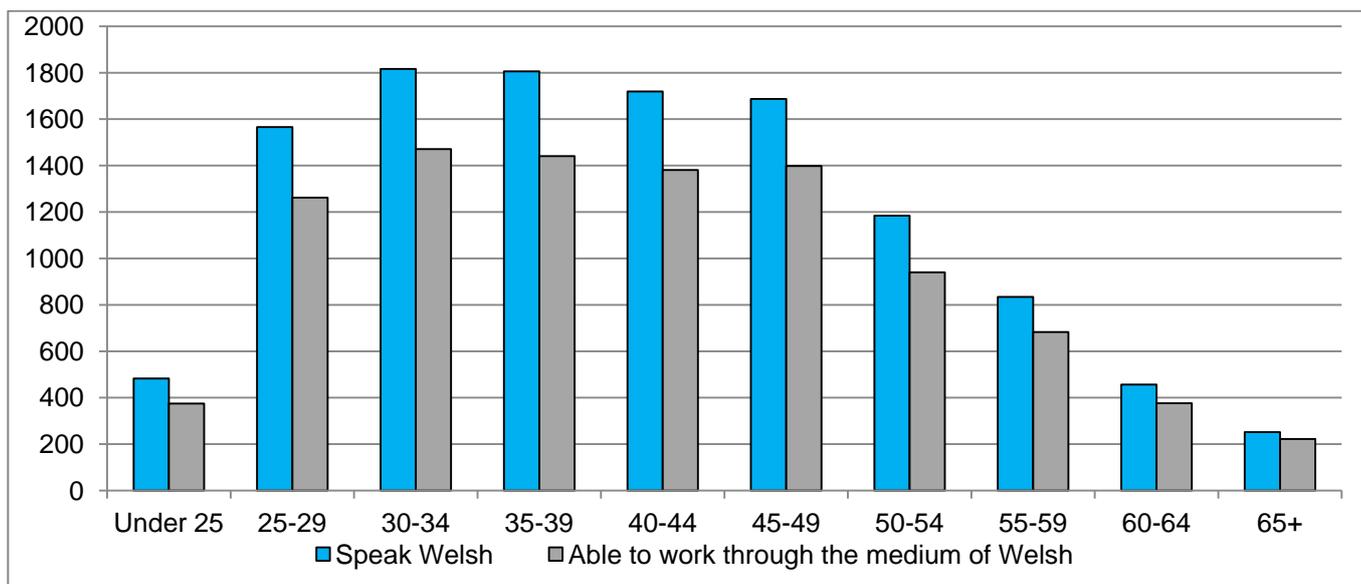


**Figure 11:** The percentage of school teachers registered with the EWC on 1 March 2020 according to their ability to speak Welsh and to work through the medium of Welsh, by local authority.



<sup>4</sup> This data on local authorities does not include supply teachers or 'others in service and others out of service' (for example, registrants who are employed as peripatetic or advisory teachers, registrants who are employed in support or further education roles, retired teachers and those with no employment recorded)

**Figure 12:** The number of school teachers registered with the EWC on 1 March 2020 by age and their ability to speak Welsh, and their ability to work through the medium of Welsh



**Figure 13:** Registered school teachers and retention in Wales – a tracking analysis based on EWC registration data.

	Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in 2013	Registered teachers 2019	Registered teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh 2019	Not registered in 2019, or registered with the EWC in another category 2019	% of those awarded QTS in 2013 who are no longer registered as teachers
<b>Primary</b>	648	453	170	195	30%
<b>Secondary</b>	776	373	118	403	52%
<b>Total</b>	1424	826	288	598	42%
	<b>QTS 2008</b>				
<b>Primary</b>	928	489	160	439	47%
<b>Secondary</b>	935	400	112	535	57%
<b>Total</b>	1863	889	272	974	52%

## 2.1 Main conclusions arising from the statistical picture

1. Cymraeg 2050's teacher targets are challenging and involve reversing the trends of the past decade.
2. The number of Welsh speaking teachers or teachers able to work through the medium of Welsh remained fairly constant between 2009-2015, but has diminished significantly since then. According to EWC data, between 2015 and 2020, the number of teachers able to work through the medium of Welsh decreased by almost 700. It should be noted that there has been a corresponding reduction in the number of teachers more generally and the percentage of teachers who can speak Welsh and can work through the medium Welsh has remained fairly constant since 2015 (see Figure 3).
3. There are now more school learning support workers than teachers in Wales. There was no statutory requirement to register school learning support workers prior to 2016, and it is therefore difficult to determine whether there has been a significant increase over the last decade, or to what extent this equates to a reduction in the number of registered teachers in Wales (see Figure 3, table).
4. A significant number of teachers state that they are fluent or fairly fluent in the Welsh language, but do not teach through the medium of Welsh (see Figure 3).
5. There has been a striking reduction in the last five years in the number of newly qualified school teachers (NQTs) who can speak Welsh or are able to work through the medium of Welsh. The 23% reduction of NQTs able to speak Welsh, and 27% reduction in those able to work through the medium of Welsh, far exceeds the 8% reduction in total NQTs (see Figure 4). It should be noted that this general reduction is partly explained by policy decisions taken in light of a report on initial teacher training in 2006.
6. The number of students on ITE courses in Wales is at its lowest since records began in 2010/11, and the total number of first year ITE students training to teach through the medium of Welsh in 2018-19 (170 students) is almost half the number training in 2013/14 (320 students). This decrease reflects an overall reduction in the number of students studying ITE courses in Wales (see Figure 5).
7. A significant number of ITE trainees who self-report that they are fluent in Welsh at the beginning of their course do not train to teach through the medium of Welsh. In recent years, the number of trainees fluent in Welsh who choose not train to teach through the medium of Welsh represents in

excess of 50% of the total number training to teach through the medium of Welsh.

8. Although the number of first-year Welsh students on ITE courses has reduced significantly over the last ten years, the total number studying in England has increased during the same period. In 2018/19 more than one in three first year students from Wales are studying ITE courses in England. The number of first-year students from Wales studying in Wales has reduced significantly over the last ten years, and the number of students from outside Wales studying in Wales, has also decreased (see Figures 6 and 7).
9. The 30-39 age group contains the highest number of Welsh-medium teachers. The data on numbers of NQTs and ITE students therefore suggests that there will be a further reduction in the total number of Welsh-medium teachers over the next decade (that is, in the absence of any significant interventions to reverse this situation).
10. Figures regarding teacher retention are a clear concern. More than half of the teachers awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in 2008 are not currently registered with the EWC. A note of caution is required when interpreting these figures however. Roughly 25% of students who qualify as teachers do not register with the EWC during the first year following qualification. It is likely that a significant proportion of this 25% go on to teach in other countries, or gain employment in other areas of the education sector or beyond.
11. Variances in government data and EWC data are due to the data collection methodologies used. EWC data cannot be used to discuss and analyse Cymraeg 2050 targets. There are various reasons for these differences. For example, the EWC collects data based on annually updated registrations by individuals and this data includes supply teachers and teachers not currently working. A significant number of individuals are also registered with the EWC under more than one category. This provides another explanation for the higher number of teachers recorded in EWC datasets. The EWC and the Government also interpret Welsh-medium teachers differently. The EWC asks individuals to indicate whether they can speak Welsh, or are fairly fluent in Welsh, and whether they are able to work through the medium of Welsh. Government data is based on the Pupil Level Annual School Census, and collects data on the number of teachers teaching Welsh as a first language, Welsh as a second language, other subjects through the medium of Welsh, those who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh but do not do so, and those who cannot teach through the medium of Welsh. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy targets are based on the number of primary teachers indicating that they are

teaching Welsh as a first language, the number of secondary teachers indicating that they are teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh, and also the number of teachers teaching Welsh as a subject in secondary schools. In summary, there are many different ways of calculating the number of teachers in Wales, and how many of these are Welsh-medium teachers.

12. In addition to problems of consistency between various datasets, there are also gaps in the data available. Although some information is available regarding those teachers who have Welsh language skills but do not currently teach through the medium of Welsh, there is little information regarding their level of fluency and confidence and their eagerness to use Welsh in their teaching. There is currently little information available regarding the language skills of learning support workers in schools.

## 3. Analysis of Government strategies with recommendations for the future

The Welsh Government has made it clear that increasing the numbers of the Welsh-medium education workforce is absolutely key to realising the vision of the *Cymraeg 2050 Strategy*. The *Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan (2019-20)* and the *Welsh in Education Action Plan 2017-2021* include a number of specific actions to increase the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh.

Whilst the Welsh Government already has a significant action plan for growing the Welsh-medium education workforce, it is fair to question the extent to which these plans reflect the scale of the real challenge ahead. With this in mind, this section provides an overview of the significant schemes already in existence, and then considers and proposes specific recommendations regarding how some of these schemes might be extended and consolidated. These recommendations outline the most significant policy issues that will require consideration in formulating an ambitious and long-term strategy for the education workforce in Wales.

In proposing these recommendations, it should be stressed that they often complement and build on those already made in previous reports. This is particularly true regarding the *Evaluation of Welsh-medium provision in Initial Teacher Education* commissioned by the Welsh Government and published in 2018. This is not an attempt to repeat the findings of this report, but rather to point out that the recommendations made have not been fully implemented in all cases, and that further work remains to be done in this regard.

The strategies for increasing the Welsh-medium education workforce can be placed in three broad categories: 1) strategies for encouraging individuals to enter the profession; 2) strategies relating to the teacher training process; and 3) strategies for maintaining and developing the skills of the existing workforce.

### 3.1 Encouraging Welsh speakers to enter the teaching profession in Wales

The simplest and most straightforward way of increasing the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh is to focus on the language skills of trainees at the point of entry to ITE. This requires the adoption of a purposeful strategy to recruit more students already fluent in Welsh to train as teachers.

#### 3.1.1 A recruitment strategy based on valid and reliable statistical analysis

In order to implement an effective teacher recruitment and training strategy, it is essential that we have a clear view of the current situation regarding the language skills of teachers. As the previous section demonstrates, a wide range of data is

already available for the statutory education workforce in Wales. The various sets of existing data all provide useful information in terms of the education workforce's language skills. However, it is not always possible to cross-reference and compare the various sets of data in a meaningful way, mainly because the data collection processes vary, as do the means of defining what is meant by Welsh medium teachers (see point 11 in the previous section). Consequently, it is difficult at times to interpret and measure progress against the Welsh Government's Welsh medium teacher targets.

The Welsh Government decided to conduct an School Workforce Annual Census for the first time in November 2019. When the results of this census are published, the data should provide further information about the Welsh language skills level of practitioners in Welsh schools. This will form an essential part in the Welsh medium workforce planning process in general, and in any specific strategies for attracting more Welsh speakers to the profession.

Considering that the School Workforce Annual Census will provide further information about the language skills of teachers in Wales, we believe it is time to analyse all the existing data sets relating to teachers' languages skills in Wales. It is an opportunity to evaluate all the information collected and to consider if necessary whether data collection processes require modification and development in order to enable more effective language planning. For example, there are important considerations regarding how precisely a 'Welsh medium teacher' is to be defined and also how the various levels of competency in the Welsh language are to be measured and recorded amongst the workforce more generally. We believe this to be essential in the context of the Government's objectives for the English medium sector, and the need therefore to increase substantially the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh across all Welsh schools in order to realise the vision of the new curriculum. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the data collected enables the Government and its key partners to model and plan in detail for the needs of the education workforce in Wales during the lifetime of the Cymraeg 2005 Strategy.

## Recommendations

- 1 The Welsh Government and the EWC need to use all available data sources to analyse in detail the future need for Welsh-medium teachers. This should include:
  - a) Updating the analysis of the number of Welsh-medium teachers required at specific points in the future to meet the education targets of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. This should include the number of teachers required in English-medium and bilingual schools as well as in Welsh-medium schools.
  - b) Develop and agree on more objective definitions of 'Welsh medium teacher' and 'teachers who can speak Welsh'. A more sophisticated and nuanced method of describing and recording the Welsh language skills of

teachers is required, and should be developed in light of Cymraeg 2050's targets and objectives for Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools.

- c) Analysing the current situation, including the number of Welsh-medium teachers teaching currently, other teachers able to speak Welsh, and the fluency levels of teachers identifying as Welsh speakers.
- d) Analysing the number of teachers likely to leave the profession at various points in the future, whether due to retirement age or historical retention trends.
- e) Creating a statistical model to calculate the probable gap between the Government's targets (a) and the current position (c and d), thereby providing an estimate of the number of new teachers required over a specified period of time. That is, if 3,200 Welsh-medium secondary teachers are needed in 2031, how many new teachers will need to be trained in the next ten years?

### 3.1.2 Set recruitment targets and marketing strategies

As the statistical picture above shows, recent trends in teacher recruitment are a concern. The number of individuals on ITE courses has been falling steadily over the past decade. There are concerns in terms of securing sufficient numbers of teachers in general, as well as the need to increase the number of those able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The first report of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body in 2019 concluded that there were concerns regarding the *'significant and increasing gap between targets for recruitment into ITE and student numbers recruited'*. This is now true of both primary and secondary sector. The report emphasises that a particular concern regarding *'shortfalls in Welsh-medium provision, especially in the context of the Welsh Government's ambition to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.'*

The Welsh Government has decided to remove the numbers caps for all subjects (except PE) for the 2020/21 academic year. They have also made it a requirement for providers to work towards the target of 30% of ITE trainees being able to speak Welsh. Whilst these are positive steps, it is unclear upon which statistical analysis the figure of 30% was based and a percentage-based target based is unlikely to be effective in an environment where the total number of trainees continues to fall. As Section 3.1.1 notes, a far more detailed statistical analysis of the current situation needs to be developed to enable effective and purposeful planning. Teacher training targets should be based on numerical values, and an overview of how such targets will be increased over time should be provided. Any targets or incentives relating to Welsh-medium teachers should exist alongside a comprehensive programme for learning the Welsh language available to all trainee teachers. Qualifying as a Welsh-medium or bilingual teacher should be open to all those training in Wales, regardless of their linguistic skills at the point of entry to training (see recommendation 9).

In addition to plans aimed at increasing the number of individuals on ITE courses, the Government has recently introduced an 'alternative routes into teaching' scheme. This plan includes part-time training pathways, in-service pathways, and also a pathway enabling primary teachers to work in the secondary sector.

As well as setting targets, the Welsh Government is working with ITE providers, the EWC, and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to promote teaching as a career, and career development opportunities in the Welsh-medium sector. It is unclear to what extent this includes detailed scrutiny of providers' own strategies and recruitment processes. As well as having a national marketing and recruitment plan, there is a need to ensure that the universities' individual marketing and recruitment strategies are designed with a view to ensuring more Welsh-speaking trainees.

## Recommendations

- 2 The Welsh Government should set targets for the number of teachers with Welsh language skills who will need to be trained annually until 2031, based on detailed statistical analysis (see recommendation 1). The national targets should be used to set targets for all ITE providers in Wales, and working towards achieving these targets should be a condition of accreditation of ITE provision in Wales.
- 3 The Welsh Government should require ITE providers to publish a marketing and recruitment plan setting out how they intend to achieve the targets for Welsh-medium trainees.

### 3.1.3 Financial incentives

The Welsh Government has for some years now provided a financial incentive for Welsh-medium ITE students. The Iaith Athrawon Yfory Incentive Scheme includes grants to incentivise eligible individuals completing a secondary postgraduate ITE 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 an eligible secondary postgraduate ITE programme leading to QTS, and £2,500 on successful completion of their induction period at a Welsh-medium or bilingual secondary school or teaching Welsh in any maintained secondary setting in Wales. These grants exist alongside the general grants available to trainees in Wales, and there are a number of different grants available depending on the subject of study and the class of the first degree qualification. Although the grants offered in Wales have increased significantly over the last decade, it is still possible to obtain a higher grant by studying in England.

Whilst offering financial incentives appears to be a simple way of motivating individuals to train as teachers, careful consideration is required as to how this funding may be used to best effect. Figure 11 above shows that more than half of the individuals gaining QTS are not registered with the EWC 10 years later, and as many as 40% are not registered with the EWC 5 years after qualifying as teachers. These

figures alone are a basis for questioning the current incentive framework. Namely, are such incentives an effective use of limited funding, particularly when evidence shows that a significant proportion of recipients do not remain in the profession in the long term?

In relation to the training of Welsh-medium teachers in particular, the *Evaluation of Welsh-medium provision in Initial Teacher Education* recently concluded that '*the additional financial incentive was considered to have been of relatively minor importance in their decision to opt for the Welsh-medium route*' and that most trainees would have decided to follow their secondary Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course through the medium of Welsh in any case. It is interesting, however, that the evaluation also notes that the financial incentive is '*of critical importance to a handful of those interviewed who had been persuaded to change their language of study either during their interview or in the first week or so of their course. These were typically trainees who were less confident in their own Welsh language skills*'. This conclusion is significant in the context of the fact that a significant number of ITE students identify themselves as being fluent in Welsh, but do not train to teach through the medium of Welsh (see Figure 5 above).

We are not suggesting that any hasty decision on incentives should be made, and the grants available to students studying through the medium of Welsh should continue to be promoted in the short term. However, we would suggest that it might be time to revisit the incentives framework, alongside a comprehensive strategy for teacher recruitment and retention. Careful consideration should be given to how incentives might be used as part of a wider strategy to recruit more teachers; ensure that they remain in the profession, and that they develop their linguistic skills throughout their career (see recommendation 12). There may be a more effective means of motivating and supporting teachers, leading in the long term to a more satisfied, higher-quality, and increasingly bilingual education workforce.

These comments reflect one of the conclusions of the first report of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, which noted their concern about the '*planning assumptions underpinning ITE, and the lack of articulation of a strategy to recruit sufficient numbers in the future, including the strategic contribution of pay and incentives.*' Linked to this, the EWC recently commissioned three reports looking at strategies to improve recruitment and retention numbers of teachers in 1) international contexts; b) a range of other professional areas; and c) Wales in comparison to England. These documents and research might be a useful starting point to reconsider the role of incentives in recruiting more teachers in general, and Welsh-medium teachers in particular.

In line with the above comments about the need to ensure an inclusive strategy for increasing Welsh-medium teachers, existing incentives should be extended to any trainees committing to learning Welsh as part of their teacher training process. This would depend on the existence of fully funded provision (see recommendation 9).

## Recommendations

- 4 Financial incentives should continue to be provided for students wishing to train to teach through the medium of Welsh, and more should be done to promote these grants, particularly at ITE provider level, and as a means of motivating students lacking confidence in their Welsh-language skills to study through the medium of Welsh.
- 5 The Welsh Government should ensure that the target setting process for Welsh-medium trainees, and any financial incentives for such trainees, shall include those committing to learning Welsh during their teacher training period.
- 6 The Welsh Government should instruct the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board to lead an evaluation of the current incentive framework and provide recommendations for a new long-term framework. The board should consider specifically the role of financial incentives as a means of recruiting and retaining teachers in the profession, and of encouraging teachers to develop their Welsh language skills as part of their continuing professional development. The board should work with other key stakeholders in achieving this, including the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the EWC and the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body.

### 3.1.4 Retention of teachers in the profession

One clear conclusion from existing data is that a significant proportion of teachers leave the profession relatively soon after qualifying. According to EWC data, of the 1,863 teachers who completed an ITE course in 2008, 957 are no longer registered as teachers with the EWC. It is important to note that roughly 25% of those who train as teachers do not register with the EWC within the first year of qualifying. It is likely that a significant proportion of this 25% go on to teach in other countries, or gain employment in other areas of the education sector. Whilst some degree of caution is needed when interpreting the data, it is crucial that any education workforce strategy addresses issues relating to retention of teachers. Any strategy aimed at increasing the numbers training as Welsh-medium teachers must coincide with a more holistic and broad-based strategy for retaining a higher proportion of teachers in the profession.

Offering a detailed analysis of the content of such a strategy is not within the scope of this briefing note, and it should be stressed that such detailed work has already been published, and that the Government has responded to a number of the recommendations. For example:

- In 2018 the Welsh Government commissioned an *Independent review of school teachers' pay and conditions in Wales*.

- The independent review report *Teaching: A valued profession*, which addresses some of the main problems in retaining teachers was subsequently published. These include issues around workload, lack of support for new teachers, lack of an attractive career path, as well as the lack of opportunities for teachers to work more flexibly. The report proposes 37 recommendations, some of which could be achieved in the short term while others are longer term proposals.
- The Government has established the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, responsible for recommending reforms on teachers' pay and conditions in order to facilitate recruitment and retention.
- As part of the introduction of a new curriculum, the Government has launched a National Approach to Professional Learning, and also the concept of Schools as Learning Organisations. The Government is also developing a training plan for newly qualified teachers to include a dedicated professional learning programme for teachers as they embark upon their career. The main purpose of such strategies is to support teachers and make the profession more attractive.

The important point, therefore, is that any strategy to increase the number of Welsh-medium teachers will also depend on the success of wider strategies relating to the conditions and experience of teaching in Wales. It is therefore crucial that the Government should continue to consider existing recommendations and research, whilst collaborating with other relevant organisations to improve the situation.

## 3.2 The teacher training process

ITE in Wales has undergone significant reform over the last decade. The main changes have come about as a result of a series of reviews leading to the appointment of Professor John Furlong as ITE adviser for a period of two years. In 2015 Professor Furlong published his report *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* which set out a series of recommendations for the reform of ITE in Wales. The most significant recommendations related to the review of professional standards for teachers and the reform of the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales.

### 3.2.1 The professional standards for teachers

The professional standards for teachers describe the skills, knowledge and behaviours that characterise excellent teachers, and support professional growth. The standards play a key role in shaping teacher training provision. The new standards for teachers set out expectations regarding teachers having Welsh language skills, using the Welsh language, and developing their Welsh language skills:

- **Sustained highly-effective practice descriptor:** The teacher actively seeks opportunities to apply and extend their understanding and skills in the use of the Welsh language.
- **Induction Descriptor:** There is a personal commitment to incremental development of skills in the use of the Welsh language.
- **QTS Descriptor:** There is a commitment to incremental development of personal skills in the use of the Welsh language.

The new professional standards are a positive step as they set clear expectations on teachers to develop and use their Welsh language skills.

### 3.2.2 Accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales

The new framework for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales includes two main processes for ensuring the quality of provision. Firstly, the Education Workforce Council (Initial Teacher Training Accreditation) (Wales) Regulations 2017 provide Welsh ministers with powers to establish criteria for the accreditation of school teacher training courses or programmes. The regulations also place a duty on the EWC to establish a committee for the accreditation of initial teacher training programmes meeting the Government's criteria.

The criteria for accreditation of ITE programmes set expectations regarding the content of ITE in order to ensure that new teachers meet the professional standards, and meet the Government's education priorities. The criteria set out clear expectations in relation to the Welsh language, including information about the partnership's provision for those wishing to pursue a career in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, and also provision with the aim of improving the Welsh-medium skills of all ITE students. The requirements for improving the Welsh language skills of all ITE students state that:

A curriculum for Wales - a curriculum for life and the Government future strategy for the Welsh language suggest that there will be significant changes in comparison with past practice. The expectations of Curriculum for Wales - a curriculum for life, make it clear that pupils, regardless of their medium of education, should expect to attain a transitional competence level through the medium of Welsh at least by the time they complete their studies at 16 years of age. To achieve this, schools that do not currently use Welsh as a language of instruction will need to use the language progressively when working with learners. To achieve these national aims, ITE partnerships should ensure that they have clear plans for provision to ensure that all trainee teachers have the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills. When applying for accreditation, partnerships will need to set out how they will assess the Welsh language standards of all teachers registering for training, and how they intend to use a variety of methodologies to develop such skills during the student's ITE experience.

The EWC has now accredited ITE courses across four different partnerships:

- CaBan (Chester and North Wales Partnership Bangor)
- Cardiff Partnership
- Aberystwyth ITE Partnership
- Yr Athrofa – Professional Learning Partnership (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)

Another three partnerships will provide training from 2020/21 onwards, namely:

- Swansea University Schools' Partnership
- University of South Wales ITE Partnership
- Open University Partnership

### 3.2.3 Integrating the Welsh language into ITE core provision

The new professional standards and arrangements for the accreditation of ITE programmes are moving towards integrating Welsh-medium provision with core ITE provision. This means that there are no longer supplementary schemes focusing specifically on improving trainees' Welsh language skills. For example, in the past, a number of supplementary schemes existed, including the Welsh-medium Improvement Scheme (linked to the Welsh-medium secondary trainee incentive grants), the Colegau Cymru scheme, and also the Language Competency Certificate. The idea of incorporating these interventions with the core ITE provision was one of the recommendations of the *Evaluation of Welsh-medium provision in Initial Teacher Education*. Whilst we fully agree that such interventions should form part of the core provision of ITE courses, there are risks associated with this direction of travel. Without clear leadership and robust accountability arrangements, the positive facets of previous schemes might be lost, and that integration with core provision will not lead to an improvement in Welsh language provision.

It is important to note that the ITE provision under the new accreditation arrangements has only just begun, and the improvement of Welsh language provision will be a gradual process over a longer period of time. However, it would be useful to have far clearer and more detailed guidance on the expectations regarding ITE providers in terms of the Welsh language, and also how such expectations are to be raised over a 10 to 15 year period, in relation to Cymraeg 2050 targets. In the absence of this kind of detail, accountability and long-term vision, the concern is that the positive policy statements contained in the professional standards and criteria for accrediting ITE programmes are unlikely to lead to real changes in ITE provision in Wales.

The *Evaluation of Welsh-medium provision in Initial Teacher Education* provided a series of important recommendations on the need for Welsh-language skills training to be available to all ITE trainees. Wherever teachers aim to pursue their career - whether in the primary or secondary sector, or in the Welsh or English-medium sector, it is essential that ITE courses provide them with the opportunity to progress along the language continuum. The evaluation suggests that there is a need to move away from the two tier approach (absolute beginner or proficient speaker) in Welsh language skills training on ITE courses. We agree with these recommendations. The

process of integrating Welsh language skills training with ITE core provision is a golden opportunity to develop a multi-layered framework for developing trainees' Welsh language skills. There needs to be a series of various Welsh training pathways tailored for trainees with varying levels of Welsh language proficiency. As well as pathways that maintain and improve the Welsh language skills of fluent Welsh speakers, and pathways for those with limited Welsh language skills, particular attention needs to be paid to the significant number of trainees who are able to speak Welsh, but who lack the confidence to use the language in their training and teaching. It ought to be ensured that there exists consistency between such Welsh language training pathways and any framework to describe, categorise and record the Welsh language competency of teachers (see recommendation 1b)

The development of such a multi-layered framework will necessarily be a gradual process, primarily as the capacity and capability of ITE providers will need to be developed to include such training on ITE courses. This is one obvious reason why the Welsh Government needs to produce a long-term strategy setting out in detail the expectations on ITE providers over the next fifteen years. Careful consideration should also be given as to how the expertise of the National Centre for Learning Welsh might be used as a means of achieving many of the objectives involved.

### 3.2.4 Assessing the linguistic skills of ITE trainees

A positive recent development is the Welsh Language Competency Framework for Teachers, which is a framework for measuring and describing the Welsh skills of all trainee teachers. The Government is working with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and ITE providers to deliver and evaluate this framework. This framework is intended to bring together a number of the various supplementary schemes implemented in the past, providing a framework that will apply to all trainee teachers. The framework has been adapted from the CEFR framework for describing linguistic competence. This framework has obvious potential in terms of being a central point for planning Welsh language provision on ITE courses in general. For example, the framework could be used to measure language skills at the point of entry to ITE, and therefore as a means of identifying the support and type of interventions most relevant to various cohorts of trainees. The framework could be an effective basis for planning multi-layered Welsh provision to enhance the Welsh language skills of all trainee teachers. The framework could also be used to measure trainees' skills at the end of their training period. Not only would this be a way of measuring the success of the ITE provision with regard to the Welsh language, it would also be a way of measuring the attainment and skill level of the trainees, and therefore be relevant as individuals apply for jobs in various schools. The essential point here is that this framework needs to do more than describe the Welsh language skills of ITE trainees. It must form the basis for planning interventions to improve these skills. It is not clear to what extent the Government shares this vision in terms of the framework in question.

The development of a multi-layered framework for developing the Welsh language skills of ITE trainees would mean that all trainee teachers have the opportunity to improve their Welsh language skills. Further to this, it would be useful to offer and fund an intensive pathway to learning Welsh for any trainee teacher wishing to teach

through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. There is a clear precedent for such a scheme in view of the sabbatical scheme available to teachers, and we believe that there are advantages in offering a corresponding scheme as part of the initial teacher training process. This is crucial to ensure that any financial targets or incentives associated with Welsh-medium or bilingual teachers are inclusive regardless of the individuals' linguistic background. There are various options as to how this might be achieved, including extending the length of the ITE course for these trainees, or by offering intensive Welsh-medium courses before, after, or alongside ITE courses. Consideration could also be given as to how Welsh-medium schools and mentors could be used as part of the process of immersing trainees in the Welsh language. Once again, the expertise and frameworks that already exist in the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh would probably be key to any such scheme.

### 3.2.5 A teacher training strategy that reflects the Government's vision

In analysing these developments for ITE arrangements in Wales, the extent of the challenge posed for the education sector arising from the vision expressed in Cymraeg 2050 must again be considered. The projected growth in Welsh-medium education, and also in the number of learners in English-medium schools becoming Welsh speakers, has hugely significant implications for the education workforce. The scale of the challenge requires radical intervention in the way teachers are trained in Wales. Without significant intervention, we could well see an endless cycle where a shortage of teachers armed with Welsh-language skills continuously frustrates efforts to increase the number of individuals leaving school able to speak and use the Welsh language. The teacher training process needs to create more confident Welsh speakers, which in turn will lead to a significant growth in the number of Welsh speaking school leavers. Now is the time to introduce an ambitious and radical intervention to stimulate the growth necessary to realise the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. Whilst strong foundations have been laid in recent years, without further action, we do not foresee the progress required to achieve the education targets set in Cymraeg 2050. The foundations already laid need to be built upon by developing a more comprehensive, bold and detailed strategy to establish a clear pathway for achieving the long-term objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. We believe that such a strategy must be developed on the basis of 3 key principles:

- The need for an **inclusive strategy**. We need a teacher training strategy that improves the Welsh-language skills of all trainee teachers, rather than one confined to a particular cohort of Welsh-medium trainees.
- The need for a **long-term strategy**, which sets out in detail the progression steps towards the goal of an increasingly bilingual education workforce.
- The need for **detail and clarity** in terms of expectations on ITE providers, and **robust accountability arrangements**. There is a need to ensure that high level vision and policy commitments lead to real changes at grassroots level.

## Recommendations

- 7 The Welsh Government should work with key partners to produce a coherent and long-term national strategy for transforming Welsh-language provision in ITE courses in Wales. A clear and detailed framework, for using the accreditation process of ITE courses should be established as a means of incrementally improving standards and raising expectations regarding the Welsh language. Robust accountability structures should also be developed alongside this framework. Such a strategy should be a multi-layered one that develops the Welsh language skills of all trainee teachers by including specific interventions for various cohorts of trainees depending on their linguistic skills at their point of entry to ITE. In line with recommendation 1b, the expected ITE provision needs to be clearly and explicitly defined in terms of:

  - a) Improving and maintaining the skills of those who already speak Welsh, and intend teaching in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools
  - b) Improving the skills and increasing the confidence of those who have a certain amount of Welsh, but are lacking the confidence to use the language in their teaching
  - c) Providing basic skills to those with little or no ability in the Welsh language at the beginning of the training process
- 8 In connection with recommendation 1b and 7, the potential of using the Welsh Language Competency Framework for Teachers as a means of measuring and describing the Welsh language skills of teachers should be considered. This framework could be used to measure trainees' skills at the point of entry to ITE, and as a means of determining the most relevant support and training for specific students. This framework could also be used as a means of measuring progress in the Welsh language skills of teachers (during their training and afterwards)..
- 9 The Government should consider the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh in any strategy for improving the Welsh language skills of ITE trainees. In particular, the Government should work with ITE providers and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide an intensive Welsh course for any trainee teacher wishing to be able to teach through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Any individual pursuing such a course should have access to the incentive grants generally available to Welsh-medium students.

### 3.3 Maintaining and developing the skills of the workforce

The new professional standards for teachers are very clear that teachers need to commit themselves to developing incrementally their ability to use the Welsh language. Clearly, teachers will need specific support and training to this end. 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, which will include the development of practitioners' Welsh language skills. The Government also intends to introduce a new training scheme specifically targeting newly qualified teachers. This programme will support individuals during their early development as teachers, and the development of Welsh language skills will form part of the scheme. There is little information to date as to the precise nature of the Welsh language provision, or regarding the extent to which this will be sufficient to meet the targets and vision of Cymraeg 2050 and the new curriculum. Neither is it clear who precisely will be responsible for co-ordinating such provision. It would be useful to have greater clarity about funding and accountability arrangements in terms of funding allocations to regional consortia, local authorities and schools to develop teachers' Welsh language skills.

The Government is committed to investing more and expanding the Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme, which provides intensive Welsh-medium training for practitioners. The Government has also commissioned an evaluation of the sabbatical scheme, which will be used to guide the future strategic development of the scheme. The sabbatical scheme is particularly important in terms of efforts to improve the Welsh language skills of the current workforce, and the evaluation will provide an opportunity to ensure that the scheme contributes as effectively as possible to the aim of increasing the ability of the education workforce to use the Welsh language. Although we will have to wait for the evaluation to be published before making concrete recommendations in this context, we believe that it is essential for the plan to be designed and implemented more strategically. There is a need to ensure that the scheme results in a real increase in the use of Welsh as a medium of instruction across schools in Wales, and, as a result, contributes directly to the realisation of the education targets of Cymraeg 2050, and the objectives of local authorities' Welsh in Education strategic plans.

In line with recommendation 6, it would be useful to consider various options in terms of motivating individuals to develop their Welsh language skills during their teaching careers. The *Evaluation of Welsh-medium provision in Initial Teacher Education* mentions the idea of establishing a model that would reward teachers as they develop and progress along a linguistic continuum in terms of Welsh language ability. We believe that the Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board should take this into account when looking more holistically at ways of attracting and retaining teachers, and also encouraging them to incrementally develop their Welsh language skills.

## Recommendations

- 10 The Welsh Government should work with regional consortia and local authorities to provide a clearer and more transparent framework regarding the training that will be provided to improve practitioners' Welsh language skills. This should include clarity about the funding allocated to various organisations for this purpose.
- 11 The Welsh Government will need to consider fully the proposed evaluation of the Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme, and in particular any recommendations proposed. We hope that the evaluation and recommendations will cover:
  - a) Means of ensuring that attending the sabbatical course leads to increased use of Welsh as a medium of instruction when individuals return to work.
  - b) The need for the scheme to be implemented in a more strategic and purposeful way. Participants should be recruited on the basis of the objectives of local authorities' Welsh in Education strategic plans, and also schools' objectives in terms of increasing the proportion of teaching through the medium of Welsh.
  - c) The specific role of the sabbatical scheme in increasing the confidence and use of the Welsh language amongst the significant cohort of teachers who already have Welsh language skills, but who do not currently use Welsh in their teaching.
  - d) The possibility of extending the sabbatical scheme for trainee teachers, or creating an equivalent scheme for ITE trainees.
- 12 In line with recommendation 6, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board should look specifically at ways of motivating all teachers to develop their Welsh language skills incrementally, and to use Welsh increasingly as their medium of instruction.

### 3.4 Planning a national strategy

All the recommendations proposed above reflect the need for a national strategy to improve the Welsh language skills of the statutory education workforce in Wales (see recommendation 7). Clearly, the Government has a pivotal role to play in developing and implementing such a strategy. However, it is clear that there will be a need to work with a number of key organisations in the field, including ITE providers, the Education Workforce Council, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Estyn, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board, the Independent Welsh Pay Review

Body and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Clearly, the regional consortia and local authorities will also have a key role to play. Part of the problem at present may be a lack of clarity regarding who is responsible for which elements of developing the Welsh language ITE provision. In considering the remaining recommendations of this paper, we believe that it is therefore essential that the Government should consider the most effective way of formulating and implementing a strategy for increasing the number of Welsh-medium teachers and improving the Welsh language skills of the education workforce in general. In so doing, it should again be emphasised that the Government's vision for the education sector in Wales means that the Welsh language by definition must be viewed as a central issue in the training and development of teachers in Wales. What is needed is not a supplementary strategy for Welsh-medium teachers, but rather a teacher training and development strategy that reflects the vision of a bilingual Wales.

## Recommendations

- 13 The Welsh Government should provide clarity on the roles of the respective organisations involved in implementing the recommendations of this paper.



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