



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee

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19 July 2021

Dear Ms Rathbone

Considering the Welsh language in the Committee's work

I am writing to you at the beginning of the sixth Senedd term to urge you to ensure that the Committee gives full consideration to the Welsh language in all aspects of its work.

In the *Cymraeg 2050 Strategy* the Welsh Government announced the vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers and increasing the percentage who speak Welsh daily to 20%. The strategy includes milestones to measure the success of its achievement, with the first milestone in 2021 and the next in 2026. During the sixth Senedd term it will be necessary to take a serious approach to holding the Government to account for the extent to which the Strategy is being achieved and the milestones reached. In that respect it is vital that the Welsh language is mainstreamed into wider legislation and policy and I am concerned that there is insufficient scrutiny of the impact of wider legislation and policy on the Welsh language in general. Indeed, Eluned Morgan, the previous Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language, stated in a scrutiny session:

... I would suggest that actually, rather than just holding me to account when it comes to the budget, [...] that actually you ask the other Ministers, who've got huge amounts of money, what they're doing within their budgets in relation to the Welsh language.”
(Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee meeting, 25 February 2021)

I emphasise that the Welsh language should not be seen as a cultural issue alone as it is a living language in all communities in Wales and a main language in many of them. Those

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communities face a number of social and economic challenges that in turn challenge the viability of the Welsh language in those communities.

In the context of the committee's remit on fair work, in April this year the Commissioner responded to the Government's consultation on the Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. Among other aspects of the Bill, we discussed the definition of fair work in the Fair Work Wales report (2019), in which the Fair Work Commission describes six main characteristics. Of these, the Commissioner drew particular attention to employee voice; opportunity for growth and progression; inclusive working environment and legal rights respected. Ensuring the opportunity to use Welsh at work, to develop Welsh language skills or to gain new language skills is vital for fair work. Reference was also made to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which is also included in the committee's terms of reference. The Well-being Act includes the goal 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' and I hope that that goal will underpin the committee's work during this Senedd term.

The Commissioner published a manifesto document¹ for the 2021 election stating that a wide range of factors affecting the Welsh language need to be considered. It sets out that it is crucial that the Government commits to providing stability to the structures and rights already in place as a result of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and ensure that the experiences of Welsh speakers are consistent. The way of doing so is through the Welsh language standards. These are the duties placed on public organisations to use and consider the language, ensuring quality and consistency in Welsh language services. To enable the Commissioner to impose standards, the Government must prepare standards and introduce regulations. The last set of regulations came into effect in June 2018. We have introduced a programme for the Government to consider for taking this work forward as soon as possible. It would be appropriate for the Committee also to ensure that this programme is implemented as soon as possible in order to confirm the rights of Welsh speakers.

I hope that you will bear these comments in mind as you consider the committee's future work. I wish you every success in that work and look forward to contributing to it.

Yours sincerely,



Gwenith Price
Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner

¹ [Manifesto \(positif.wales\)](https://positif.wales)