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Aled Roberts
Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner

01/03



**Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner**

Jane Bryant MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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19 July 2021

Dear Ms Bryant

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 Welsh Language 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)

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

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. Many of these are very relevant to education. With regard to the committee's remit, the document makes many recommendations in relation to childcare and education, from the early years onwards to the pos-16 sector:

- Give support to settings currently offering provision mainly through the medium of English to offer provision in Welsh; and introduce incentives for childcare settings that offer a Welsh-medium or significantly bilingual provision.
- In order to facilitate recommendation 5, develop a specific and ambitious strategy for developing the Welsh language skills of the childcare and early years education workforce which builds on the current Camau programme and provide funding to deliver the strategy.
- Develop a strategy to ensure that initial teacher education training courses develop Welsh language skills for all prospective teachers. As well as improving and sustaining the skills of those who already speak Welsh, teacher training courses need to improve the skills and increase the confidence of those with some Welsh, and to provide basic skills to those who have little or no Welsh at the start of the training process.
- Create a specific funding programme for realising the objectives of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.
- Review and revise travel regulations and guidance to facilitate access to Welsh-medium childcare, statutory education and post-16 education, ensuring equity for learners and families who wish to receive Welsh-medium education across Wales.
- Give guidance and funding towards moving schools along the language continuum, ensuring an increase in the proportion of the curriculum taught through the medium of Welsh.
- A policy commitment to fully support and fund the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan'.
- Building on the current Work Welsh scheme, develop a comprehensive long-term programme to improve the Welsh language skills of the further education and work-based learning workforce so that a significant percentage of students in key areas learn through the medium of Welsh. The programme should include methods for teaching bilingually and should enable the release of staff for extended periods to

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

master the Welsh language as well as recruiting more Welsh speaking staff to the sector.

The challenge for the new Government will be to act radically to ensure that we are on the right track to meet the 2050 targets and I believe that the committee has a vital role to play in the effort of ensuring that it does so.

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