



**The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee: Call for further evidence on the implications of the Census data for the legislative framework that supports Welsh-Medium Education Provision**

**16 January 2023**

**1. What challenges does the decrease in the number of Welsh speakers pose for local authority delivery of WESPs?**

The Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) was abolished in 2015 by the Welsh Government and a system of funding through the Education Improvement Grant was established. The network of *Athrawon Bro* Welsh Language Advisory Teachers was lost as a result, and consequently schools lost the support of this specialist network. Although a number of schools make good use of their Welsh speaking staff, the specialist methodology and pedagogy have disappeared from the infrastructure. This can result in a fragmented, inconsistent and potentially substandard provision, and hence learner progression. The census result suggests that this provision may once more need to be undertaken by dedicated, specialist providers as it was during the *Athrawon Bro* period.

**2. What challenges lie ahead in the planning and development of Welsh-medium education provision in light of the Census data, and more specifically, the challenge of ensuring pupils in the English-medium sector are fluent as they leave school?**

Our members tell us that there is no evidence (at the moment) that suggests that English-medium education pupils will be fluent speakers, especially since the abolition of assessments and the system of moderating linguistic ability at the end of Key Stage 2 and 3.

Also, the guidance for such a crucial cohort of learners currently resides in non-statutory documents<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps the Welsh Government may need to consider their conversion into statutory documents so as to ensure consistency of application and adoption.

**3. What funding considerations might be needed going forward to support the full development of the WESPs given the decrease in the number of Welsh speakers?**

The considerations needed can be inferred from the comments on the two questions above: The Welsh Government should be considering the rebirth of the Welsh in Education Grant with a specific proviso for the reestablishment of *Athrawon Bro* as specialist, dedicated, centrally-employed teachers to deliver the specifics of that local authority's WESP as well as to ensure that the provisions of the (currently non-statutory) guidance and support material are fully adopted. The Welsh Government could target specific areas of the country that need more intensive support via proportional funding.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/guidance-on-school-categories-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>