

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant AS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

SeneddPlant@senedd.cymru

26 January 2024

Dear Jayne

Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2023 regarding the Welsh Language Commissioner's report on post compulsory Education and the Welsh Language: the learner's voice. The Welsh Government welcomes this research by the Welsh Language Commissioner which offers valuable information on the views and experiences of learners in the post-16 sector.

It is good to see that the vast majority of learners identify their experience of Welsh medium or bilingual education as good or very good. It is also pleasing to note that the vast majority of learners who are able to speak Welsh are proud that they can speak the language, and see it as an advantage for their career prospects.

We accept the need to improve our understanding of learners' reasons for not choosing to study through the medium of Welsh. We also note the Commissioner's concerns about the disparity between course availability in our colleges compared to our schools and the need for the post-16 sector to address the shortage of Welsh-medium provision in more vocational areas.

It is true to say that there are differences between schools and colleges in the nature of provision and the categories used to record the medium of provision. Colleges also face significant challenges in catering for learners with different levels of ability and fluency across a very wide range of subjects.

We have invested significantly in Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to increase capacity and 18% of learning activities in colleges now involve a component of Welsh, with the bulk of the provision being bilingual activities. We are working with the Coleg and hope to see this figure continuing to increase.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

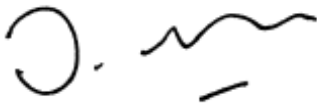
Despite the challenges noted above, we are disappointed that there has not been a greater increase in the numbers of students studying through the medium of Welsh in our colleges. We understand that we need to create more opportunities for young people to learn through Welsh and improve their Welsh language skills and we will continue to invest in the work of the Coleg Cymraeg.

The results of the research are timely as we establish the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research. The Commission will need to work effectively with the Coleg Cymraeg, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, post-16 providers, and others to ensure adequate provision is available and increase the number of post-16 learners studying through the medium of Welsh.

In establishing the Commission, we bring together responsibility for the strategy, planning and oversight of tertiary education within a single body. This will strengthen the framework for planning and funding the post-16 provision, ensuring a more coherent approach for developing and maintaining Welsh-medium provision.

The aim is that the Commission will do more than just meet the current demand for Welsh-medium provision; it will also build the demand for Welsh tertiary education and encourage individuals to participate in Welsh language education.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
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Minister for Education and Welsh Language