

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc  
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

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Mark Drakeford MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

20 September 2024

## **Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill**

Dear Mark,

Thank you to you and your officials for your time on 19 September. As you will recall, time was quite tight, and we had some questions we did not have time to ask. We would therefore appreciate it if you could provide written responses to these. The questions are attached in Annex 1.

During the Committee meeting, you also agreed to provide us with further information on:

- A timeline for schools, who receive two exemptions from the requirement to provide the minimum amount of Welsh language education in accordance with their category, to reach compliance. You mentioned that the EM contained an indicative timeline for implementation, but committed to share with us, a more detailed timeline that has been developed. On reviewing the EM, we can't seem to find the indicative timeline mentioned during scrutiny of the Bill. Can you provide us with both the indicative and detailed timeline?
- The requirements for consultation within the Bill, and in particular, in relation to consultation and engagement with communities;
- Specific consideration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the development of the Bill and how its Articles have been directly taken into account within the Child Rights Impact Assessment.

It would be helpful if we could have all the information requested by 11 October.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



# Annex 1: Questions

## **Promotion and facilitation of use of the Welsh Language (Part 1)**

1. What testing has the Welsh Government undertaken to ensure that the proposed new framework and process of self-assessment provides an effective and robust method of assessing Welsh language ability?

## **Describing Welsh language ability (Part 2)**

2. Could you define what constitutes a Welsh speaker under the new framework, and the threshold that needs to be met in order to be included in the calculation on the numbers of Welsh speakers?

3. The descriptions don't seem to cater for everyone, for example those with no level of Welsh ability. Has there been consideration for those who aren't on the CEFR scale or could be considered higher than C2 or below A1 of the CEFR?

4. Could you clarify comments made during the session which suggested that you believe almost everyone speaks some Welsh? Were you saying that this therefore means almost everyone would be on at least level A1 on the CEFR?

5. Could you also clarify comments made during the session which suggested that A1 equates to GCSE level?

6. The CEFR has been designed specifically for the learning of foreign/second languages. How appropriate is it to apply this to the context of Welsh language learning, and what consideration was given to developing descriptors specifically for the Welsh language?

7. Have you sought assurances from the Council of Europe that the Framework is not likely to change?

## **Welsh language education (Part 3)**

8. Can you confirm whether the Welsh Ministers have a duty, or rather a power, to make regulations setting a date for the upgrading of the Welsh Language Learning Goals of "Primarily English language, partly Welsh" schools and "Dual language schools"? What factors will the Welsh Ministers consider when doing so and, if it is a power rather than a duty, is there a risk that such goals will never be upgraded and made more ambitious?

9. To what extent is the requirement for schools to have their Welsh language education delivery plan approved by the local authority entirely in line with the ethos and provisions of the Curriculum

and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, which emphasises school autonomy? For example, schools are not required to have their curriculum approved by the local authority or anyone else.

## **Planning Welsh Language Education and Learning (Part 4)**

**10.** In regulations in 2019, following a recommendation by the Rapid Review of WESPs, the Welsh Government extended the timespan of WESPs from 3 years to 10 years in order to facilitate longer term planning. The Bill reduces this back to 5 years, although the plans will need to set out steps to be taken over a 10-year period. How has the government weighed up the need for WESPs to be short enough to ensure sufficient accountability, while giving local authorities flexibility to plan over a long enough period?

## **National Institute for Learning Welsh (Part 5)**

**11.** Does the EM provide sufficient clarity and assurances about the role of the new Institute in both the post-compulsory sector and in particular, within the compulsory education sector?

**12.** The EM states that it isn't possible to identify where the resource will be moved from or an accurate cost for the new Institute until the Review of School Improvement – the roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales has concluded. When will you be able to provide the Committee with an accurate analysis of costs for the Institute in order for the Committee to undertake detailed scrutiny?

**13.** How much influence will the new Institute have over the statutory education sector to ensure the effective implementation of the single Welsh language skills continuum and therefore "improving the linguistic outcomes of learners aged 3-16"?

## **Costs of the legislation**

**14.** The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) sets out three possible scenarios, which will have an impact on costs – scenario 1 that everything is generally already on track for Cymraeg 2050 and the Bill will simply support and ensure that continues; scenario 2 where things are not fully on track and the Bill will correct that and ensure Cymraeg 2050 can be delivered; scenario 3 where things are substantially off track and meeting the requirements of the Bill will require big changes and considerable funding. The RIA says the Welsh Government anticipates scenario 2 and presumably the estimated costs of the Bill - £103 million over the next ten years – reflect scenario 2. The RIA doesn't estimate the costs of the other two scenarios but can you give any indication of just how much the Bill will cost, if indeed scenario 3 materialises?