



October 2024

Dear Delyth,

We are writing to you to highlight the barriers that remain in terms of accessing services and extracurricular activities for children and young people through the medium of Welsh, and to seek your support and guidance on this issue.

We do so in your capacity as Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language and International Relations Committee. We consider that this is relevant, and relates, to many aspects of your Committee's functions, including:

- oversight of the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner;
- language and education policy, and specifically the link to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill in respect of activities outside the classroom, which support the objectives of the Bill; and
- leisure and sports policy, including your oversight of Sport Wales.

Our understanding is that the Welsh language standards include a standard for education courses. Nevertheless, more than eight years since Cymdeithas yr Iaith conducted research as the first Welsh language standards came into force in 2016, ([Cymdeithas yr Iaith research on swimming lessons](#)), there are barriers that continue to prevent children and young people from having swimming lessons and engaging in other activities through the medium of Welsh.

There are examples where children who receive Welsh medium education in Welsh schools are having swimming lessons and instrumental lessons, and are engaging in other sporting activities, through the medium of English. Not only does this confirm the notion that Welsh serves only as the language of the classroom; it also undermines Welsh education.

We would therefore be grateful if you could advise us on the way forward, and if you could consider undertaking an inquiry in this area, with a view to establishing, among other things:

- The extent to which the Commissioner's work in the area of sports and music activities has been adequate in protecting and enforcing the rights of Welsh

speakers. We note that the Commissioner told you in a pre-appointment hearing that it is important to ensure that children and young people have opportunities to use the Welsh language outside the classroom.

- The extent to which bodies such as Sport Wales, which is responsible for the Welsh Government's Free Swimming programme, are taking proactive steps to ensure that proactive provision is available in Welsh throughout Wales.
- The extent to which music and sporting provision is monitored to ensure that it is provided through the medium of Welsh.
- The extent to which school governing bodies use their influence, especially in Welsh-medium schools, to organise extracurricular activities and demand that they be provided in Welsh; or whether pupils are obliged to receive English provision or go without.

We would be willing to have further discussions on this matter and our request.

Sincerely,

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Welsh Language Rights Group