



# **Welsh Government response to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee's report: Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26**

## **Chapter 3: Welsh Language**

### **Summary**

This report sets out the Welsh Government response to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee's Report on the Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26.

It provides responses to recommendations 6-11 which fall under Chapter 3 – Welsh Language section of the report.

A further two separate reports will be provided in relation to Chapter 2 – Culture, Communications and Sport (recommendations 1-5) and Chapter 4 – International Relations (recommendations 12-20).



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# 1. Introduction

The Welsh Government Draft Budget for 2025-26 was published on 10 December 2024. It set out revenue and capital spending plans for the period April 2025 to March 2026.

As part of the budgetary process written evidence was provided by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to inform scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26. This paper provided information to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee on budget allocations relevant to the Welsh language.

An oral evidence session was held on the 16 January where the CCWLSIR Committee took evidence from the Prif Weinidog, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language and Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership

The Committee published its report on [Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26](#) on 3 February. We thank the Committee for the report.

The Welsh Government has considered the Committee's report and responds to recommendations 6-11 in relation to the Welsh Language below. For each recommendation we have provided a written response and either decided to 'accept', 'accept in principle' or 'reject' each recommendation.

## 2. Recommendation 6

The Welsh Government should outline what assessment it has undertaken to understand how the changes to employer national insurance contributions will affect each third sector partner organisation that supports and promotes the Welsh language, and the proportion of the additional allocated funding in the Draft Budget for 2025-26 that will be absorbed by the increase.

Response: Accept

National Insurance is a reserved matter for the UK Government. We recognise third sector organisations are concerned about increases to employers' NICs, however, it is not possible to estimate the additional direct costs to the voluntary sector in Wales. The reason for this includes the complex inter-relationship between changes to National Insurance rate, Minimum Wage and Employer Allowance. In addition, there is also limited data as to the size and employment makeup of the sector. That data is owned by the individual organisations within the sector, not by the Welsh Government. We continue to work with Third Sector Support Wales to collect data from organisations and understand the impact. The proportion of the additional funding allocated that will be absorbed by each organisation by these changes to NICs will therefore be dependent on the individual circumstances of each organisation.

Third sector partners are instrumental to the delivery of *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. We work closely with all our partners to agree priority areas to support our work to reach a million Welsh speakers and to double daily language use by 2050.

Each organisation is different in terms of structures and funding models, therefore we need to be considerate and flexible in our approach as to how the additional funding allocated during 2025-26 will be spent. We will discuss work plans with the organisations ahead of the financial year, but it is ultimately up to every organisation, and its board of directors or trustees, to consider how to make the most effective use of the funding.

It is important to note that many of our grant partners secure funding from other sources and that not all our funding contributes towards staff costs.

Financial implications: None

### 3. Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government should outline how the capital funding allocations in the 2025-26 Draft Budget will help support the use of the Welsh language beyond the classroom. This should include information about the level of capital funding that is available, how partner organisations can apply for funding, how applications will be assessed and prioritised, and how the impact of any funding provided will be monitored and evaluated against the aims in *Cymraeg 2050*.

Response: Accept

The Welsh-medium capital grant is aimed specifically at projects that will contribute to the delivery of *Cymraeg 2050* – to increase the number of children, young people and adults who speak Welsh and who use the language daily. This includes projects which:

- provide additional Welsh-medium provision;
- move schools along the linguistic continuum;
- help to attract pupils to the Welsh-medium sector e.g. Welsh-medium childcare or nursery provision;
- improve transition rates within Welsh-medium sector e.g. between pre-school facilities and Foundation Phase provision, also between primary and secondary provision;
- support retention or sustainability of Welsh-medium provision e.g. latecomer centres/Welsh language immersion; and
- provide infrastructure support such as videoconferencing facilities or other technologies.

Welsh-medium capital funding is consistent with historic allocations of £15m per annum. An additional £5m is included in the 2025-26 budget to support existing schemes through to completion. A pipeline of projects will be submitted and prioritised in line with delivery partner Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) and awarded in line with affordability and cashflow over a three-year period. This will allow continued support of the new build and refurbishment of Welsh-medium schools at an intervention rate of 100%. Welsh-medium capital projects

are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are robustly reviewed by Business Case Scrutiny Group and Cymraeg 2050 colleagues to ensure they are aligned to WESP priorities. Additionally, the Rolling Programme emphasised the need to align to WESP priorities resulting in a greater uptake in Welsh-medium investment through the core programme funding line.

The following are examples of Welsh-medium capital projects which are due to complete during 2025-26:

Local Authority	Location	Project	Proposed Completion Date
Merthyr Tydfil	Ysgol Rhyd y Grug	Increased capacity	January 2026
Caerphilly	Ysgol Cwm Derwen	Extension	July 2025
Blaenau Gwent	Ysgol Tredegar	New build	April 2025 (although seedling provision already established)
Gwynedd	Tywyn Language Centre	Combination of new build and refurbishment	March 2025
Gwynedd	Ysgol Llanllechid	Increased capacity	September 2025
Gwynedd	Language Centres: Caernarfon Dolgellau Llangybi	Increased capacity and relocation of centres to strategic locations of linguistic significance in Gwynedd	March 2025
Wrexham	Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	Immersion project	September 2025
Conwy	Cylch Meithrin Colwyn	New build on Ysgol Bod Alaw site	March 2025

Progress on delivering Welsh-medium capital grant projects is monitored and evaluated through the WESPs annual review reports. The reports are subject to a rigorous assessment process before being subject to approval by the Cabinet Secretary for Education with feedback provided to all local authorities. Quarterly update meetings regarding all capital projects, including Welsh-medium capital grants, are convened to monitor progress with each local authority.

Other capital grants are available from Welsh Government and can be accessed by organisations who work to deliver *Cymraeg 2050* such as the Community

Facilities Programme. This programme has provided capital grants to a range of facilities which operate through the medium of Welsh and also to many which provide a venue for learning Welsh for example some of the mentrau iaith, Partneriaeth Ogwen and Siop Griffiths. This will continue to be a priority for the programme when it re-opens to new applications later this year. The Urdd has also been awarded capital funding through Sport Wales to develop its sporting facilities at gweryll Llangrannog this year.

We will continue to work closely with colleagues across the Welsh Government in the future to ensure that grant partners are aware of potential capital funds available to them to support the delivery of *Cymraeg 2050*.

Financial implications: None

## 4. Recommendation 8

The Welsh Government should outline how, during the 2025-26 financial year, it will monitor the impact of the increased allocations for the mentrau iaith, and how this aligns with the Cymraeg 2050 strategy and action plan.

Response: Accept

Before the start of the 2025-26 financial year, the mentrau iaith are required to provide details of how they propose to use the additional funding to align with the objectives of Cymraeg 2050. At this point, we will discuss the proposals with individual mentrau as required. When submitting their grant monitoring reports during 2025-26, we will review and analyse their activities to assess their contribution to the delivery of Cymraeg 2050.

Financial implications: None

## 5. Recommendation 9

The Welsh Government should outline how the impact of Welsh-medium education capital grant funding on progress in delivering against the Cabinet Secretary's priority areas of Additional Learning Needs, immersion, temporary expansion and adult education will be monitored, evaluated and reported.

Response: Accept

Progress on delivering Welsh-medium capital grant projects is monitored and evaluated through the WESPs annual review reports. The reports are subject to a rigorous assessment process before approval by the Cabinet Secretary for Education with feedback provided to all local authorities. Quarterly update meetings regarding all capital projects including Welsh-medium capital grants are convened to monitor progress with each local authority.

Since 2018, over £128m has been invested in Welsh-medium capital grants. Its aim has been to increase Welsh-medium education provision across Wales by providing 100% of the capital funding costs. This funding is in addition to any investment through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. These projects are making a significant contribution to Welsh-medium education across Wales.

The following are examples of Welsh-medium capital projects that are delivering against the Cabinet Secretary's priority areas:

Local Authority	Location	Project	Completion Date
Cardiff	Ysgol Bro Edern	Immersion and ALN	September 2022
Cardiff	Ysgol Glantaf	Specialist Resource Base Unit	September 2022
Gwynedd	Bangor Language Centre	Immersion	September 2022
Gwynedd	Secondary Language Centre	Immersion	April 2022
NPT	Ysgol Trebannws	Learning Centre Support	September 2023

The Welsh-medium capital grant supports investment that facilitates growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language in the school sector. More broadly, the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme provides funding for schools and colleges and adult education and is delivered through FE investment.

Financial implications: None

## 6. Recommendation 10

The Welsh Government should outline how it monitors the establishment and sustainability of new *cylchoedd meithrin*. This should include information about how many new *cylchoedd meithrin* have been opened and how many of those have subsequently closed, and details of how the Welsh Government monitors and assesses whether the funding provided is effective in delivering the desired outcomes, and any patterns or learning that have been identified.

Response: Accept

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Mudiad Meithrin has been successful in reinvigorating the early years sector through the medium of Welsh, putting it back on sustainable strong footing. It has done this through responding to local needs especially in the field of childcare and by forging a new partnership with Flying Start. Whilst the offer has been adapted, the focus remains on giving more children and families to more children early years provision and Mudiad will continue to innovate to respond to this challenge.

Mudiad Meithrin provides annual data of *Cylchoedd Meithrin* across Wales including annual comparisons with previous years. This data includes the number of provisions, number of children on the register, number of children transferring to primary education and the number and percentage of those transferring to Welsh-medium education. Data on individual *Cylchoedd Meithrin* on a local authority level is also provided which includes narrative on any significant changes to the provisions.

Mudiad Meithrin is also responsible for delivering the aim set out in *Cymraeg 2050* of expanding provision in the early years as an access point to Welsh-medium education. Over the past seven years, they have been funded by the Welsh Government to deliver this expansion through their *Sefydlu a Symud* (Set up and Succeed/SaS) programme. In addition to data being provided on provisions that have been supported to open or expand, quarterly meetings are held with Mudiad Meithrin to update on the progress of planned projects as well as updates being

made regarding provisions which have already been established. This includes provisions which have had to close either temporarily or permanently.

Mudiad Meithrin commissioned an independent review of the programme which was published in 2021. The programme has evolved since its introduction with one of the main lessons learnt being the importance of supporting existing provisions to expand as well as establishing new provision. As we approach the last three years of the initial SaS programme, we are planning to commission a further review of its development and effectiveness since its establishment. It is hoped the results of the review will guide the planning of any future expansion programme.

Financial implications: None

## 7. Recommendation 11

In its response to our report, the Welsh Government should provide written responses to the questions posed in paragraph 73 (extract below) of this report, covering areas we were unable to explore in detail during the evidence session. This includes matters relating to the allocation of reprioritised funding from the 2024-25 financial year, assessment of the use and impact of additional funding for the National Eisteddfod and the Urdd to widen access to new audiences, and the timescales within which decisions will be taken on the way forward and delivery of Arfor 2.

During the evidence session we were unable to cover in detail all of the issues arising from the 2025-26 Draft Budget. We would therefore welcome further information from the Cabinet Secretary on the following points:

a) How will the £3.5 million 'reprioritised' funding from 2024-25, which was originally allocated to the Coleg Cymraeg and National Centre for Learning Welsh, be allocated in 2025-26? What level of funding will be allocated to each partner organisation?

b) What assessment has been undertaken to measure the use made and impact of additional funding for the National Eisteddfod and the Urdd in 2024-25 to widen access to new audiences to the Welsh language, including low-income families? How has any learning been taken into account when determining the allocations in the 2025-26 Draft Budget?

c) Within what timescales does the Cabinet Secretary anticipate reaching agreement with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning on the way forward for funding and delivery of Arfor 2?

Response: Accept

a) £3.5m

Please see Annex A for information on how the £3.5 million 'reprioritised' funding from 2024-25, which was originally allocated to the Coleg Cymraeg and National Centre for Learning Welsh, will be allocated in 2025-26.

b) Eisteddfodau

Eisteddfodau schemes to widen access to new audiences to the Welsh language, including low-income families, have evolved over the years as the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod review their impact. Local considerations also come into play every year based on the location of the Eisteddfodau.

The Welsh Government is confident that the funding provided to the National Eisteddfod and the Urdd Eisteddfod is utilised appropriately and effectively. Officials are assured that tickets are reaching the right people, as both the Urdd and National Eisteddfod base their plans on evidence and work closely with local authorities. For example, for the Rhondda Cynon Taf National Eisteddfod, the Council was responsible for distributing tickets to eligible individuals based on strict criteria. As a result, 18,400 individuals and families attended through the scheme.

The Urdd's ticket distribution system is also robust, requiring applicants to meet specific criteria before being awarded a ticket. It is important to note that tickets for the Urdd National Eisteddfod are only one element of the broader support package provided to those eligible. This package also includes a reduced membership fee of £1 instead of £10. Last year, nearly 8,000 free tickets were distributed, with over 45% of recipients attending the Urdd Eisteddfod for the first time. The Urdd uses local authority data to inform its planning from year to year. Both the National Eisteddfod and the Urdd Eisteddfod work closely with local organisations to ensure value for money and to maximise the reach of their schemes.

c) Arfor 2

Funding for ARFOR 2 is committed currently until the end of March 2025 and discussions are ongoing with partners regarding the way forward for the future. The independent evaluation of the current programme being undertaken by Wavehill will be key to inform this and shape our future direction. We will provide an update as soon as possible.

Financial implications: None

## Annex A

Organisation/Project	Allocation 2025-26 £000s
Leading in a Bilingual Country	10
National Centre for Learning Welsh	744
Music and Culture – Young People Projects	60
YFC	75
Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	494
Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities – Recommendations Implementation	40
Programme Funded Staff Costs	73
Cwmpas – Prosiect Perthyn	8
Cwmpas – Prosiect Perthyn Community Empowerment Grants	175
Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant Cymru	1
Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru	3
Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru	3
Language Planning Conference	20
Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru	250
Gwallgofiaid	1
Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill Implementation	125
Literature Wales – Bardd Plant Cymru	1
National Library of Wales – WICI	1
Mapio Cymru – Technology	1
Menter Iaith Abertawe	5
Menter Iaith BGTM	42
Menter Iaith Bro Ogwr	40
Menter Iaith Brycheiniog a Maesyfed	40
Menter Iaith Caerdydd a'r Fro	47
Menter Iaith Caerffili	5
Menter Iaith Casnewydd	40
Menter Iaith Castell Nedd Port Talbot	6
Menter Iaith Cered	6
Menter Iaith Conwy	5
Menter Iaith Dinbych	18
Menter Iaith Dinefwr	7
Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam	28
Menter Iaith Gorllewin Sir Gâr	27
Menter Iaith Gwendraeth ac Elli	6
Menter Iaith Gwynedd / Bangor	8
Menter Iaith Maldwyn	27
Menter Iaith Merthyr	40
Menter Iaith Môn	7
Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf	5
Menter Iaith Sir Benfro	10
Mentrau Iaith Cymru	78

Merched y Wawr	40
Mudiad Meithrin	500
Papurau Bro	6
Nat Policy on Welsh Language Transmission	20
Bangor University – Arfer	3
Bangor University – Technology	18
Bangor University – Termiadur Addysg	8
Cardiff University – Technology	1
Siarter Iaith	11
Urdd Gobaith Cymru	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,500</b>