

*This document provides a translation of correspondence received from The National Centre Learning Welsh*

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Llwybrau at addysg a hyfforddiant ôl-16](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Routes into post-16 education and training](#)

RET 39

Ymateb gan: Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol  
Response from: The National Centre Learning Welsh

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## **The National Centre for Learning Welsh response to the consultation on pathways to post-16 education and training**

### **1. Background**

1.1 The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established in 2016 by the Welsh Government to lead the Welsh learning for adults sector.

1.2 The Centre's aim is to create Welsh speakers that enjoy using the language, by providing a national Learn Welsh strategy and services. Since its establishment, the Centre has transformed the Learn Welsh sector. The numbers learning Welsh have increased by **33%**, and in 2022-2023 **16,905** learners completed 29,485 Welsh learning activities. Both face-to-face and virtual tutored courses are available, as well as online self-study courses. The Learn Welsh sector employs around 700 people, with the majority of these being tutors.

1.3 Since its establishment, the Centre has developed a number of specific plans and has extended its audience, which includes families, workplaces and young people. We also work with a number of specific sectors and have developed tailored Learn Welsh programmes, for example for early years education and care, health and care, further education/higher education, local authorities and sport. Recently, the Centre has been given responsibilities for providing a national programme for the education workforce. The Centre also has a programme for confidence building and use courses to help speakers that lack confidence or are reluctant to use their Welsh.

1.4 One of the Centre's first duties was to develop a Learn Welsh curriculum. The curriculum is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR forms the basis of the Centre's curriculum and is therefore used across its various plans and courses. The curriculum includes overviews that show progress in the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) across the levels from A1 to C1. They can be used in conjunction with the functional overviews and grammatical syntaxes. As learners make progress, they will learn to use the language (speaking and writing) in an increasing number of contexts, moving from the familiar (A1) to a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar situations (B2), being able to undertake listening and reading tasks of increasing complexity, moving from simple language in familiar contexts (A1) to much more complex and abstract language in a wide range of styles and contexts (B2). They will also be able to benefit from a growing pool of vocabulary, styles and registers (formal and informal); grammar and syntax and pronunciation features. They will also start using the language with more confidence and depth.



1.5 The Centre has selected 10 core providers, through a tendering process, in order to provide various courses to the audiences mentioned above, together with the relevant work of teaching Welsh to adults both in the community and virtually. The sector employs a workforce of 700 tutors, managers and support staff.

1.6 In August 2021, the Welsh Government carried out a rapid review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The report stated that the Centre is:

*'...recognised as a body that coordinates, plans, delivers and develops Learn Welsh provision at a national level... In the second phase of its existence, this role as a key and strategic institution central to the acquisition of the Welsh language needs to be developed and strengthened.*

1.7 The Learn Welsh sector is inspected by Estyn, which follows a specific framework for the Learn Welsh provision. The Centre itself is also inspected by Estyn.

1.8 The Centre's definition of learning Welsh is that it is a broad activity, and a continuum of language learning and acquisition. That includes the following activities:

- Awareness of why the Welsh language is important, an explanation about Welsh culture etc, and includes providing very simple Welsh vocabulary.
- A more formal learning structure, in the classroom or virtually, which follows the CEFR levels from A1 to C1.
- Confidence–building activities, working with speakers who do not have specialist vocabulary to use at work or do not have enough confidence to use the Welsh that they have.
- Opportunities for speakers to continue learning, through refresher and improvement provision.
- Opportunities to use and practice Welsh in the community, at work or with peers.

1.9 The Centre's Strategic Plan has three main areas, namely **attract** people to the Welsh language, **teach** them to speak Welsh, and then **use** it in various contexts such as in the community, at home and at work. The Centre works regularly with a range of partners to deliver its work, such as:

- BBC Wales
- S4C
- Mentrau Iaith Cymru
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Employers
- Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
- Priority sectors such as health and care
- Medr
- Education Workforce Council
- Local authorities

2.0 In 2023, the Centre was given additional responsibility by the Welsh Government to provide specifically for learners aged 16-25 that want to learn and develop their skills in the Welsh language, namely the Ymlaen gyda'r Dysgu scheme. This is free provision for young people, and includes a range of opportunities to learn Welsh. The learning is



tailored for young people in terms of content and pedagogy, and is offered to young people aged 16-25:

- in school
- in Further Education
- in apprenticeships
- in Higher Education
- that are unemployed

2.1 During 2022-23 (published data) over 2,100 young people took up this offer, which is an increase of 9% compared to 2021-22.

2.2 The programme for 16-24 learners includes:

- classes at various CEFR levels that offer 60 or 120 hours of learning
- classes that offer lessons tailored to specific vocational areas in FE colleges, eg childcare, health and care, hospitality, and hairdressing and beauty
- classes that offer lessons so that learners can continue with their Welsh skills after they have finished their GCSE courses
- classes that offer lessons tailored to specific HE subjects, eg undertaking a degree in education, childhood studies and medicine
- classes that are part of an Apprenticeships scheme and the Skills Growth Wales programme
- short courses that are an opportunity to learn in an informal context eg through Urdd open air activities and through Duke of Edinburgh courses
- self-study courses for understanding and learning more about Wales
- tutor-assisted self-study

2.3 Regarding this consultation in particular, the Centre sees an opportunity to ensure that the opportunity to learn, develop and use Welsh is mainstreamed and that post-16 learners understand and value the Welsh language in terms of their:

- personal and cultural development
- social inclusion
- employability

2.4 The Centre is of the opinion that the nature of the information given to learners in schools and tertiary education should include clear information about the personal benefits of speaking Welsh, as well as the benefits in terms of employability.

2.5 It is vitally important to consider the impact of the Welsh Language and Education Bill on post-16 education and training pathways, if the new legislation is agreed upon, as the Bill will have an impact on the linguistic profile of the young people moving from statutory education to tertiary education. We need to plan for that now, so that the sector is ready to offer a clear and meaningful linguistic development continuum.

2.6 Ensuring a language learning continuum following a consistent framework such as CEFR from statutory education to post-16 education and training will facilitate the pathway for young people to continue studying and deepening their Welsh skills. In due course, ensuring that employers also use the same framework to identify essential skills for jobs, as suggested in the Welsh Language and Education Bill, will facilitate young people's pathway to access jobs and make full use of the Welsh skills that they have. The Centre has expertise in using CEFR, as it forms the basis of a Welsh learning curriculum for



adults. The Centre has experience of adapting CEFR to the Welsh context and also of tailoring it for specific audiences, including young people. We believe that this expertise is unique to the Centre.

2.7 The Centre has worked with the post-16 course providers to install Learn Welsh lessons in tertiary education courses, doing so in priority areas such as early years education and care, health and care etc. However, this still requires persuasion and promotion, and being able to install these elements as a formal part of course accreditation would be a means of increasing the growing demand for Welsh speakers in key areas. The Centre has experience of ensuring that lessons like this are completely contextualised to the specific workplace, doing so on the basis of CEFR, and experience of providing for such units. Expanding the Centre's work and using our expertise to provide language learning and acquisition courses based on the CEFR framework would allow a clear continuum for young people. As a result, there would be a future pathway for staff with qualified bilingual skills in these areas.

2.8 The Centre is also of the opinion that post-16 pupils' Welsh skills should be developed as a compulsory part of the Welsh Baccalaureate. Welsh language skills at all levels could be enriched by integrating Welsh into this qualification. At its most elementary level, the offer could build on the Welsh skills of learners that have gained a GCSE Second Language qualification, focusing on the application and use of Welsh socially. For learners in Welsh medium schools the offer could be about ensuring confidence and ability to continue with education and work pathways through the medium of Welsh.

2.9 The Centre believes that ensuring a pathway towards continuing learning, developing skills and using the Welsh language is a key part of the post-16 offer in Wales, in order to ensure bilingual communities, households and workplaces for the future.

3.0 The impact of the Welsh Language and Education Bill must be considered if the new legislation is agreed upon, as the Bill will have an impact on the linguistic profile of the young people moving from statutory education to tertiary education. We need to plan for that now, so that the sector is ready to offer a clear and meaningful linguistic development continuum.

3.1 The Centre is proud of the early discussions that have been held with Medr to identify areas of collaboration and areas where clarity on duties and responsibilities is needed. The Centre is keen to ensure that it shares expertise on language acquisition and learning to facilitate young people's post-16 pathways.

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**The National Centre for Learning Welsh**

[Estyn inspection of The National Centre for Learning Welsh April 2024](#)  
[Annual Report 2023-24 The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)