



Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and  
International Relations Committee

8 December 2025

Dear Delyth

Thank you for the discussion at the 2026-27 draft budget evidence session on 27 November. Please find enclosed further information on the two areas requested by the Committee at last week's meeting.

#### Technical note on transfer of funding from the Welsh in Education BEL

There has been a decrease of £2.426m to the Welsh in Education BEL (Education MEG) for 2026-27, with the budget decreasing from £6.417m to £3.991m in 2026-27. This decrease does not represent a cut in funding for Welsh in education - it is a purely administrative transfer of Adnodd's funding within this BEL to the Curriculum and Assessment BEL, following a change in the sponsorship management role for Adnodd from 1 April 2025. The same transfer was actioned in the First Supplementary Budget 2025-26 for this financial year.

With Adnodd now fully operational and relationships across the Education Directorate embedded, the Cabinet Secretary for Education has agreed the transfer of this budget to reflect the ongoing relationship with Adnodd.

Along with other funding within the Curriculum and Assessment BEL for Adnodd (Education MEG), it takes the total funding for Adnodd to over £4m in 2026-27 to continue its work in commissioning high quality bilingual resources in support of the Curriculum for Wales. In its short time of operation, Adnodd has expanded access to bilingual educational resources, supporting the curriculum and Made-for-Wales qualifications.

#### Findings of work to increase Welsh medium education and how this work influences the budget going forward

Over the last two years, we've been conducting research into and trials applying behavioural science (BeSci) principles to the increase of Welsh medium education. The

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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.

work we detail below is part of a wider portfolio of behavioural scientific interventions we are using in Cymraeg 2050 (others include the 'Cymraeg, mae'n Perthyn i ni i gyd' narrative; the intergenerational transmission of Welsh; and aspects of our Leading in a Bilingual Country work). The work detailed in **Annex A** is a result of externally-commissioned research from behavioural psychologists and behavioural science communications specialists.

I would be happy for officials to offer you a detailed technical briefing on the behavioural research outlined in the enclosed paper if required. We will continue to consider how the results of this research will influence future budget allocations.

I look forward to receiving the Committee's report ahead of Final Budget 2026-27.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

**Mark Drakeford AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

## **Annex A - Research into and trials applying behavioural science (BeSci) principles to the increase of Welsh medium education**

### **1. Top level insight in terms of parental choice & Welsh-medium education**

The core challenge is that parental decision-making around school choice is complex. Language medium and school choice is a relatively unexplored area of research.

In this document, we've concentrated on results and practical next steps. The primary goal of the research project was to identify the drivers and barriers influencing parents in terms of Welsh-medium education for their children, especially those who do not speak Welsh themselves.

### **2. Core Parental Insights (The Results)**

Parents make decisions about schools not in isolation, but as part of the wider choices they make for their child, revolving around their well-being and current needs.

#### ***A. What Motivates Parents?***

Parents prioritise factors that concern their child's immediate happiness and social success. The Welsh language is, generally, not a top priority for parents:

- **Well-being and Social Life:** The most appealing messages relate to educational, cultural, and 'well-being' arguments—telling parents their child will be happy, incorporated, cared for, and have a well-functioning social life in a Welsh medium school.
- **Cultural Connection:** Parents are significantly more motivated by the cultural benefits of learning Welsh (e.g. feeling proud to be Welsh or integrated into Welsh culture) than the traditional arguments about the long-term benefits of bilingualism.
- **Present Bias:** As in the previous point, parents focus heavily on the 'here and now'. As a result, arguments focusing on distant future benefits (e.g. employment opportunities, alleged higher earnings, or reduced dementia risk) are less appealing and contribute less towards decision-making.
- **Social Proof:** Parents highly value feedback and stories from local friends, family, and neighbours. This lived experience often trumps information provided by formal sources.
- **Key factors in school choice:** Location, word of mouth recommendations, school resources, and interactions with staff remain paramount.

#### ***B. Key Barriers and Fears***

The work identified significant psychological barriers, often focusing on the parents themselves:

- **Parental Confidence:** Parents' lack of confidence in their own ability to read, write, or speak Welsh directly impacts their decision. They worry they will be unable to support their child's homework or monitor their activities (e.g. social media).
- **The "English Dominance" Fear:** Parents are confused and worried that Welsh medium education means they are not preparing their child for success in a world dominated by the English language. They lack clarity on how much English their child receives or how they will adapt to 'technical' subjects taught in English at later stages (e.g. university).
- **Perception of Welsh medium education:** Welsh medium education schools are sometimes perceived as "insular and unengaged" with the wider local community compared to English-medium schools.
- **Lack of awareness of what actually goes on in a Welsh medium school.**
- **Internal Conflict:** Choosing WME can create tension within families, especially when one parent is English-speaking and worries about being "cut off" from engaging in their child's education.

### **3. Behavioural Communications Audit: Flaws in Current Materials**

A review of existing promotional materials revealed key challenges in communication design that exacerbate parental barriers:

- **Information Overload:** Current brochures and websites prioritise providing all information rather than the relevant information, causing parents to disconnect and struggle to identify key details.
- **Lack of Concretisation:** Information often describes features but fails to clearly articulate the social benefits (“how does this help your child, and you”).
- **Unclear Call-to-Action:** The default next step (e.g. which phone number or link is ‘recommended’ to resolve queries) is often missing, which can cause decision paralysis.
- **Tone and Visuals:** Current materials sometimes use a defensive tone when addressing parental fears, potentially causing psychological reactance. Furthermore, design elements often use overloading colours, fonts and imagery generally aimed at children, making parents feel they are not the target audience.

### **4. Practical Advice for Policymakers and Practitioners**

To effectively use Behavioural Science to influence parental choice, communications must appeal to factors that are most psychologically motivating. The work recommends focusing on the following actions to shift behaviour:

- **Acknowledge and Address Fear:** Explicitly acknowledge that having concerns about language barriers and parental support is normal. This dialogue is essential to making parents feel respected and supported.
- **Show, Don’t Tell:** Build parental confidence by showing them how WME works in practice, particularly for the parent. This includes demonstrating practical aspects like how homework is communicated or how they will be addressed at the school gate.
- **Harness Social Proof:** Create opportunities for parents (who have chosen WME) to share personal stories and act as ambassadors. These parent champions, including those initially sceptical, are powerful influencers.
- **Engage Early and Widely:** Offer early years provision (like playgroups) to help families build confidence and community early on. Host community events to ensure the school is seen as welcoming and embracing everyone from the local area.

### **5. Local Authority Capacity Building (via the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA))**

Following this research, capacity-building work was undertaken with local authorities, funded by a grant to the WLGA aimed at piloting linguistic interventions in Carmarthenshire and the post-industrial Western Valleys (as part of the £1m allocation to this area as part of the Cooperation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru).

This part of the work focused on equipping local authorities in the area with BeSci tools and methodologies to develop effective communication plans to promote Welsh medium education. Initial evaluations showed that participants reported significant increases in their knowledge and confidence regarding the use of BeSci frameworks (like COM-B [Capability, Opportunity, Motivation: Behaviour] and EAST [is a given behaviour Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely]).

The local authorities are already trialling BeSci-informed strategies, such as:

- **Relatable Messengers:** Moving away from Headteachers as spokespeople to use ordinary, relatable people sharing their experiences.
- **Targeted Messaging:** Using short, engaging ‘sound bites’ on social media to promote the positive aspects of WME.

The research work is also feeding into our Cymraeg i Bawb grant, delivered by Mentrau Iaith Cymru, and aimed at strengthening local authority, Welsh language community group and school partnerships in relation to the promotion of Welsh-medium education. A small grants school promotion initiative, developed under the Cymraeg i Bawb banner, with the aim of supporting schools to promote themselves, has used key research findings as the basis of its grant criterion.