

Welsh Parliament

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,  
and International Relations Committee**

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# Cymraeg for all?

February 2026



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and International Relations Committee**

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# Cymraeg for all?

February 2026



# About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:  
[www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture](http://www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture)

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Current Committee membership:



**Committee Chair:  
Delyth Jewell MS**  
Plaid Cymru



**Mick Antoniw MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Alun Davies MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Gareth Davies MS**  
Welsh Conservatives



**Heledd Fychan MS**  
Plaid Cymru



**Lee Waters MS**  
Welsh Labour

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The following Members attended as substitutes during this inquiry.



**Mike Hedges MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Julie Morgan MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Sioned Williams MS**  
Plaid Cymru

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## Chair's foreword

Cymraeg is a language which belongs to everyone in Wales, regardless of whether they speak it. As a committee, we were keen to find out where the opportunities and challenges lie in those areas where Cymraeg is not the predominant language spoken: from confidence gaps to classes, and from festivals to funding, we have spent time exploring what needs to change so that more people are empowered to see themselves as siaradwyr Cymraeg.

If the Welsh Government's target to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is to be realised, we must look beyond teaching the language in our schools. Understanding the distinct barriers that prevent people from using Welsh, and how confidence can be nurtured so the language becomes a natural choice in everyday life, is key to the language's long-term viability in all communities.

The Committee recognises that the Welsh Government has laid firm foundations for supporting and promoting the Welsh language. Its Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050, marked an important and welcome shift in both mindset and approach to language planning, while the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 has the potential to be transformative for language learning.

Wales has also been ahead of the curve in preparing for advances in technology and ensuring the Welsh language has a meaningful and enduring place within them. The next phase, however, must respond to the rapidly changing world - one in which young peoples' creativity, interests, and sense of identity increasingly take shape within digital spaces. Future strategies must therefore focus on emerging technologies and on the interest and lived experience of our young people, ensuring Welsh is not perceived as a language of the past, but as a vibrant, everyday companion in the worlds where they work, live, and imagine their futures.

At the same time, we must be cautious. We cannot assume that artificial intelligence is a benign panacea for the challenges facing the language. Whilst there might be benefits if technology is harnessed appropriately, we must acknowledge that the widespread use of English inherent within artificial intelligence could pose a threat to Cymraeg if left unaddressed.

Our inquiry has also shown that changing language confidence and behaviour does not happen by chance. It requires intentional planning and progressive policies that are alive to community need. It also requires investment in the

physical, social, cultural and digital spaces where the Welsh language can become a natural part of the everyday. This report sets out some specific practical steps to help realise that vision, ensuring that the Welsh language is not only learned, but lived.

We are deeply grateful to every individual, organisation, and community who contributed to this inquiry. Their insights, stories, and experiences have helped shape our understanding of what works, and what needs to change, if the Welsh language is to flourish. Their voices remind us that language policy is never abstract; it is about people, identity, connection, and belonging. This report reflects that reality and calls for action that ensures Cymraeg is a living, breathing language for generations to come.



**Delyth Jewell MS**

Committee Chair

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## Recommendations and conclusions

**Recommendation 1. Develop a strategic legacy framework and dedicated legacy funding:** The Welsh Government, in partnership with local authorities and key stakeholders, should develop a clear framework to guide post-festival legacy planning. This would ensure that momentum generated by key national and regional Welsh language festivals translates into sustained activity in subsequent years..... Page 29

**Recommendation 2. Establish a dedicated fund for legacy work:** The Welsh Government should establish a small, dedicated fund to support the mentrau iaith and key partners with activities and legacy initiatives for the first year after a national eisteddfod has visited. The fund should focus on areas with a lower-density of Welsh speakers, or areas that require intensive interventions. This would enable the mentrau iaith and partner bodies to access specific targeted funding to build on the success of major festivals. .... Page 29

**Recommendation 3. Ensure free or low-cost access:** The Welsh Government should continually monitor the sufficiency of funding provided to the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod to enable free or low-cost entry for low-income households to key national Welsh language festivals. .... Page 29

**Recommendation 4. Monitor and evaluate impact:** The Welsh Government should, with the support of partners, commission research and evaluation of the impact of local and national Welsh language festivals and events on language use and confidence in our communities and schools. This is particularly important in areas with a lower density of Welsh-speakers. Findings should inform future policy and investment decisions..... Page 29

**Recommendation 5. Strengthen open data initiatives and remove barriers to sharing:** The Welsh Government must ensure it strengthens public sector open-data initiatives, and addresses GDPR-related barriers to responsible data sharing to support the development of Welsh language technology. .... Page 40

**Recommendation 6. Introduce multi-year funding models and increase core investment:** The Welsh Government should move from annual funding cycles to multi-year models to aid the development of Welsh language technology. Longer-term funding models would support key institutions such as Canolfan Bedwyr to plan projects that span multiple financial years..... Page 40

**Recommendation 7. Support community-led initiatives:** The Welsh Government should provide targeted funding, similar to its Perthyn scheme, to enable community organisations and grass-roots clubs to develop innovative ways to introduce Welsh language opportunities. The main focus of any such funding should be on supporting grass-roots clubs in areas with a lower-density of Welsh speakers.....Page 46

**Conclusion 1.** Increasing Welsh language use requires a holistic approach that combines cultural, social, and policy interventions. Whilst individual motivation to learn and use the language is personal, evidence shows that creating accessible, inclusive opportunities through events and local networks, can significantly influence behaviour and confidence to use the language. Cultural events and festivals where people are immersed in the language are vital, but there is also a need to enable more bilingual spaces, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers. Supporting event and festival organisers to adopt a bilingual ethos will help to normalise the Welsh language, ensuring that it is both heard and seen wherever you are in Wales. .... Page 21

**Conclusion 2.** Welsh language festivals and events are vital enablers for promoting and normalising Welsh, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers. They generate powerful, positive experiences that raise confidence, visibility, and willingness to use the language. To maximise their impact, however, these events must be embedded within a wider strategic framework, properly resourced and with engagement that reaches the whole community, not simply the engaged few.....Page 28

**Conclusion 3.** The Committee believes that stronger partnership working between national bodies (including the National Eisteddfod, the Urdd, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and the Arts Council of Wales), local authorities, mentrau iaith, community organisations, and anchor institutions such as sports bodies, should be underpinned by dedicated legacy funding and clearly defined roles. This approach will protect against resource strain at local level, enable the scaling-up of successful initiatives, and ensure that the momentum generated by festivals translates into lasting increases in Welsh language use in our communities and schools. ....Page 29

**Conclusion 4.** The early work undertaken to prepare the foundations for Welsh language technology means that Wales is well-positioned to maximise on the opportunities in advancements in technology, in particular, AI. Converting this strategic position to increase everyday use of Welsh language technology is key. The Welsh Government should prioritise:

- 
- an agile and responsive policy framework;
  - refined Welsh language standards placed on public bodies to reflect the new technology context (where necessary, through legislation);
  - a multi-year funding model that matches digital delivery programmes;
  - strengthened open-data pathways;
  - investment in the Welsh language developer workforce;
  - expanded research and measurement of Welsh language technology use); and
  - targeted actions to improve discoverability and content plurality in Welsh. .... Page 40

**Conclusion 5.** Welsh language apps and content struggle against algorithms which give the most popular, invariably English language, apps prominence. Seeking new and innovative ways to promote Welsh language and bilingual apps and content, particularly for young people, is essential. Whilst much of this may be outside the scope of what the Welsh Government can do, it can support partner organisations to work with developers and content creators to improve discoverability and content plurality..... Page 40

**Conclusion 6.** There is a need for public policy to focus on increasing workplace Welsh, supporting private sector bodies in addition to the public sector. The Act provides an opportunity to engage positively with organisations and businesses as the CEFR is introduced. A package of support, which includes providing businesses and employees with access to resources and training via the National Centre for Learning Welsh should be combined with opportunities to share good practice..... Page 45

**Conclusion 7.** The Committee also wishes to see far more emphasis placed on supporting grass-roots clubs to use more Welsh and create a stronger Welsh language ethos. Working with governing bodies, the Welsh Government should provide support where needed to enable the sharing of good practice. The focus of the governing bodies should also be to:

- Recruit and train more coaches through the medium of Welsh, and provide support to coaches lacking confidence in their Welsh skills.

- Embed Welsh language use in club operations and community sports programmes.<sup>46</sup>

**Conclusion 8.** There is clearly good intention to develop a stronger evidence base in relation to Welsh language use in Wales, and the Welsh Government has sought, through its Research and Evaluation Framework, to provide some guidance. However, a far more systematic and coordinated approach to research needs is required to inform Welsh language policy design and delivery. That leadership ought to come from the Welsh Government. .... Page 52

**Conclusion 9.** There is a specific need to measure the effectiveness of workplace and sports-based interventions on Welsh language use, including longitudinal studies to track behaviour change over time. This should align with the introduction of the CEFR and wider changes brought about by the Act. .... Page 53

**Conclusion 10.** The Committee believes that that the Welsh Government should routinely consider the role of the diaspora in its language strategy and ensures that policies reflect the reality that “our linguistic community does extend beyond the borders of Wales.” Engagement should be proportionate and focused on strengthening cultural identity and language use through technology. .... Page 53

# 1. Introduction

**1.** Informed by the first phase of work undertaken by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities (“the Commission”),<sup>1</sup> the Committee decided to conduct an inquiry into the challenges and opportunities of increasing the use of the Welsh language across Wales. Particular attention was given to those areas where there is a lower density of Welsh speakers and fewer opportunities to use it, in order to understand the barriers to Welsh language use and identify practical measures to support its growth.

## Our approach

**2.** On 7 August 2024, the Committee hosted a drop-in session at the Societies Pavillion during the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd. Members also engaged with Eisteddfod visitors across the festival site to gather views on their everyday use of the Welsh language.<sup>2</sup>

**3.** On 18 December 2024, we published the terms of reference for the inquiry. Through these, we sought to:

- Examine the key barriers and opportunities to the use of the Welsh language across Wales, but with a focus on areas with fewer Welsh speakers;
- Explore approaches, techniques and interventions, including technology, that may encourage behaviour change and develop confidence so that more people use some Welsh every day;
- Consider the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at creating the conditions and spaces to encourage more Welsh language use, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers;
- Understand the extent to which cultural events, such as the Eisteddfodau and Welsh language festivals, impact on language use in areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> [Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities: Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language: The report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities on communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers - 8 August 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: National Eisteddfod Engagement Note - 7 August 2024](#)

- 4.** On 24 January 2025, we issued general call for written evidence with a deadline of 27 April 2025. We received 26 responses.<sup>3</sup>
- 5.** Between 5 March and 16 July 2025, we held oral evidence sessions with key stakeholders and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Mark Drakeford MS.<sup>4</sup> A list of witnesses can be found at **Annex 1**, and a list of consultation responses and written evidence can be found at **Annex 2**.
- 6.** The Senedd's Citizen Engagement Team facilitated focus groups with Welsh learners and individuals with varying abilities in the language. The aim was to understand why people in areas with fewer Welsh speakers choose to learn Welsh and to explore whether events like the National Eisteddfod influence their motivation.<sup>5</sup>
- 7.** We have engaged in correspondence and received supplementary written evidence from a range of relevant stakeholders.<sup>6</sup>
- 8.** We extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed their experiences, evidence, and expertise.

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<sup>3</sup> The written responses we received may be read in full on the [consultation webpage](#).

<sup>4</sup> Details of the oral evidence sessions, including links to the transcripts and Senedd.tv broadcasts, are available on the [inquiry webpage](#).

<sup>5</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#)

<sup>6</sup> All of the correspondence is available on the [inquiry webpage](#).

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## 2. Background

**9.** This section provides an overview of the relevant legislative framework, policy developments, and key issues that have shaped the current position. It draws on evidence submitted to the Committee, previous reports, and publicly available information to provide the context in which the inquiry has taken place.

### The national strategy: Cymraeg 2050

**10.** The Welsh Government’s Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050, seeks to increase the number of Welsh speakers across Wales to a million, and double daily usage to 20 per cent by 2050. Cymraeg 2050 states:

*“As well as achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050, we are clear that the success of this strategy must also be judged in terms of levels of Welsh language use. The overarching targets for this strategy are as follows:*

- *The number of Welsh speakers to reach 1 million by 2050*
- *The percentage of the population that speak Welsh daily, and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh, to increase from 10 per cent (in 2013–15) to 20 per cent by 2050.”<sup>7</sup>*

**11.** Cymraeg 2050 sets out a vision for the whole of Wales, recognising the “potential for growth in the number of Welsh speakers, particularly in areas of Wales that have high population density but lower percentages of Welsh speakers”. To realise this, the strategy aims to create “favourable circumstances throughout the country that support language acquisition and use of Welsh language skills”<sup>8</sup>.

### The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities

**12.** The Commission was established by the Welsh Government to make “policy recommendations with the aim of strengthening Welsh-speaking communities”. On 8 August 2024, the Commission published its phase one report at the National

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government: Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers – 10 July 2017, page 11

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government: Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers – 10 July 2017, page 7

Eisteddfod.<sup>9</sup> It made 57 recommendations for the Welsh Government. Whilst the focus of the work was on communities with a higher density of Welsh language speakers, there were several recommendations that could also apply to any part of Wales and support Welsh language speakers in all communities.

**13.** The Commission is now undertaking the second phase of its work focussing on areas with medium or lower density of Welsh speakers in Wales, and considering how the Welsh language could be strengthened in these communities.<sup>10</sup> The Committee's inquiry is timely therefore, providing the current and future Welsh Government with insights and recommendations to implement and action.

### **Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025**

**14.** The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025<sup>11</sup> ("the Act"), supports the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 by putting in place measures to ensure that all pupils are independent Welsh language users, at the very least, by the time they leave compulsory education.

**15.** The Act sets out three statutory language categories for schools: "Primarily Welsh language", "Dual Language", and "Primarily English language, partly Welsh." It specifies the minimum Welsh language education provision along with learning goals for each category. In addition, the Act places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh, and requires local authorities and schools to prepare plans for delivering Welsh language education.

**16.** The Act also establishes a National Institute for Learning Welsh which will be responsible for supporting people of all ages to learn Welsh, as well as a new standard approach to describing Welsh language ability based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages.

### **Welsh language by geography**

**17.** It is well known that the Welsh language is strongest in the west and north-west of Wales (see **Figure 1** below), despite well-documented challenges to

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<sup>9</sup> [Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities: Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh Language - 8 August 2024](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities: Terms of reference - second phase](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Senedd Cymru: Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#)

maintaining the language as a living language in those higher density Welsh speaking communities.

**18.** Although the number and density of Welsh speakers declines the closer you get to the border with England, there are communities across Wales with significant numbers of Welsh-speaking residents, even where the overall density of Welsh speakers is low. Cardiff, for example, would not typically be considered a stronghold of the Welsh language, yet it has more Welsh-speaking residents in absolute numbers than both Ceredigion and Anglesey. The Commission identified seven Lower Layer Super Output Areas<sup>12</sup> (“LLSOAs”) in Cardiff where the percentage of Welsh speakers is over 25 per cent.

**19.** The Commission examined available community level data for areas considered to have a higher density of Welsh speakers: Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire. It found that, in all four counties, over half of the LLSOAs had 40 per cent or more Welsh-speaking residents:

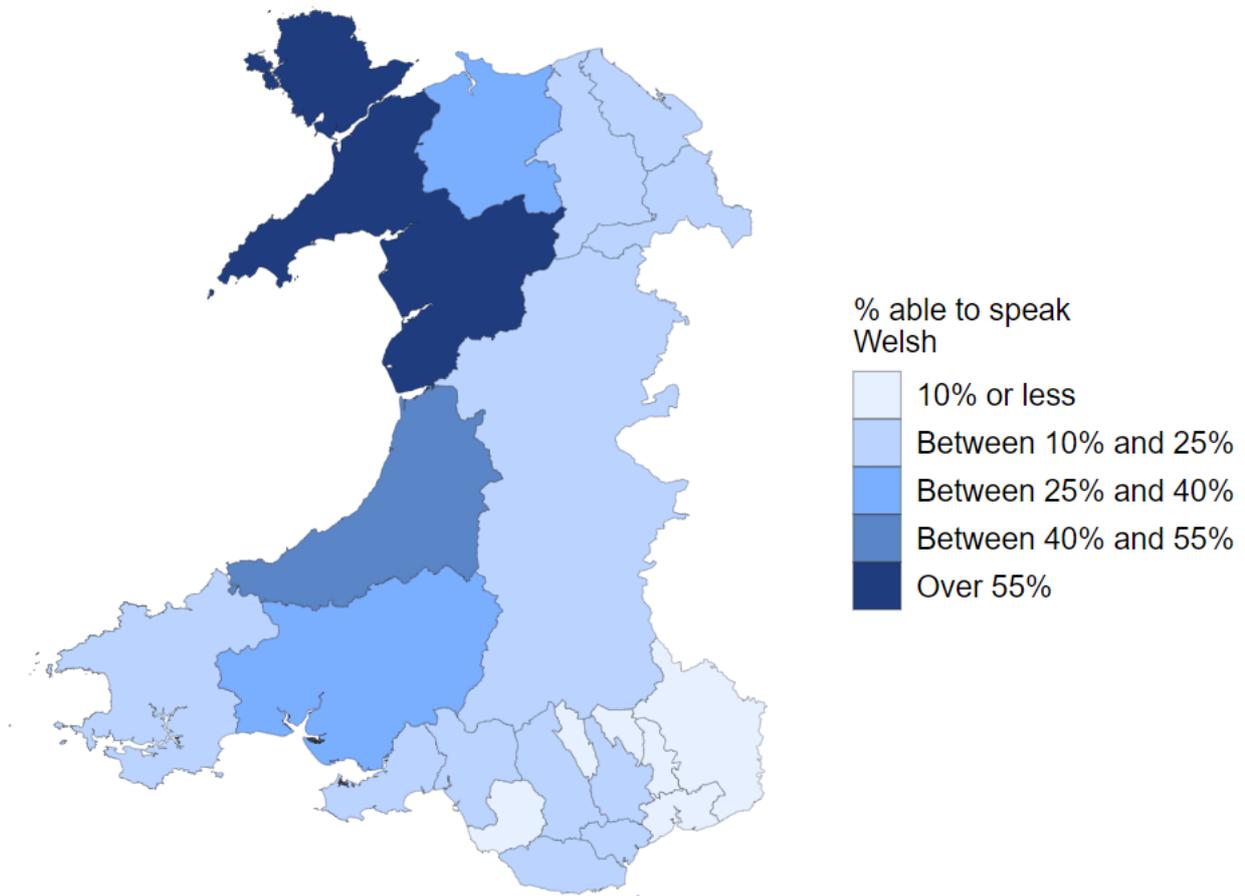
- Anglesey, 34 out of 41 LLSOAs
- Gwynedd, 65 out of 71 LLSOAs
- Ceredigion, 37 out of 45 LLSOAs
- Carmarthenshire, 58 out of 111 LLSOAs

**20.** There are also LLSOAs where over 40 per cent of residents can speak Welsh in Conwy, Pembrokeshire, Denbighshire, Powys, and Neath Port Talbot.

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<sup>12</sup> LLSOAs are a small geographic areas used for statistical purposes.

**Figure 1: Percentage of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh, by local authority, 2021**



Source: Welsh Government<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Welsh Government: Welsh language in Wales \(Census 2021\)](#)

### 3. Personal journeys and motivation

**21.** The Committee heard evidence about the deeply personal nature of an individual’s Welsh language journey. Witnesses described how turning points, moments of activation and motivation, can influence progression along a linguistic continuum.<sup>14</sup> For many, the reasons for starting or re-starting their Welsh language journey are complex, often rooted in emotional and personal experiences.<sup>15</sup> Some individuals begin learning Welsh to feel part of a social group, a network, or their community. A strong sense of ownership over the language can empower people, increasing their confidence and willingness to use Welsh in everyday life.

**22.** Whilst it is almost impossible to engineer the precise moment when an individual decides to begin that journey, government (national and local), networks and organisations that promote and support the language, and communities themselves can create access points that make engagement easier. These access points can provide people with the confidence to use whatever limited Welsh language ability they have, starting that journey to increased use and learning.

**23.** The Committee heard from international experts in minority language planning about people’s reluctance or hesitancy to use a language deemed to be their “weaker language”, one that they are learning or less comfortable to use for “fear of making mistakes” or being “judged”.<sup>16</sup> Supporting learners, new speakers or those who lack confidence to take that “risk” and use the language in an everyday situation, such as at a local shop or pub, can have long-term positive effects.<sup>17</sup>

**24.** Barriers to learning and using Welsh were consistently highlighted by focus group participants.<sup>18</sup> A lack of confidence emerged as the most significant challenge, with many learners feeling anxious about making mistakes or being judged by fluent speakers.<sup>19</sup> Time constraints and limited opportunities to practice further hindered progress, particularly for those in employment or living in areas

<sup>14</sup> [Culture Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraph 167

<sup>15</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraph 35

<sup>16</sup> [Culture Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraphs 297-299

<sup>17</sup> [Culture Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraphs 297-299

<sup>18</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraphs 48-54

<sup>19</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraph 49

with fewer Welsh language events. Negative attitudes among young people towards the language and insufficient promotion of opportunities also restricted engagement. Participants emphasised the need for better information-sharing, suggesting a centralised platform to make Welsh Language events and resources easier to find.<sup>20</sup>

**25.** Providing opportunities that align with people’s underlying motivations for learning the Welsh language is critical according to Dr Ruth Kircher, who notes that people “don’t learn a language just for the sake of having a minority language”<sup>21</sup>. Making the language “fun” and relevant is equally important. However, as Dr Robert Talbot observes, “you can’t really manufacture fun, it has to sort of happen spontaneously”<sup>22</sup>.

**26.** Creating those opportunities where the language can be used in informal settings is a key part of the work of the mentrau iaith, the Urdd Gobaith Cymru (“the Urdd”) and other national organisations, whilst not forgetting the critical role of local community groups and events that enable and increase interaction with the language.

## **Access points and bilingualism**

**27.** A recurring theme in the evidence was the need to move beyond creating isolated Welsh language spaces, such as Parti Ponty or Tafwyl, while many local events remain predominantly English-language based.<sup>23</sup> Witnesses suggested that adopting a more bilingual ethos across a wider range of events could normalise the Welsh language further, and create additional access points for engagement.<sup>24</sup> This approach could be prioritised within local authorities’ five-year Welsh language strategies, delivered in partnership with mentrau iaith and other organisations.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraphs 48-70

<sup>21</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraph 303

<sup>22</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraph 315

<sup>23</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraph 97

<sup>24</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 182

<sup>25</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 463

## Our view

**28.** We received evidence that increasing Welsh language use is not solely a matter of policy or provision, it is a social and cultural process that depends on creating meaningful opportunities for engagement. Individual journeys are shaped by emotional and community factors, and whilst these cannot be engineered, they can be supported through accessible events, networks, and interventions. Cultural festivals and bilingual spaces play a critical role in normalising Welsh and providing entry points for new speakers. However, the Committee heard that more needs to be done to embed bilingualism across mainstream events and ensure affordability, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

**Conclusion 1.** Increasing Welsh language use requires a holistic approach that combines cultural, social, and policy interventions. Whilst individual motivation to learn and use the language is personal, evidence shows that creating accessible, inclusive opportunities through events and local networks, can significantly influence behaviour and confidence to use the language. Cultural events and festivals where people are immersed in the language are vital, but there is also a need to enable more bilingual spaces, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers. Supporting event and festival organisers to adopt a bilingual ethos will help to normalise the Welsh language, ensuring that it is both heard and seen wherever you are in Wales.

## 4. Welsh language festivals and events

**29.** The Committee heard extensive evidence that Welsh language festivals and events, whether large national gatherings or smaller, community-based events, play a significant role in promoting and normalising the Welsh language. Witnesses described these occasions as providing a visible platform for the language, temporarily increasing “language density” in an area, and offering powerful experiences that can shift perceptions, build confidence, and catalyse behaviour change.<sup>26</sup>

### Role and impact of festivals and events

**30.** The Committee received evidence on the vital role of cultural events in supporting Welsh language use. The Urdd shared data from visitors to the Eisteddfod yr Urdd, showing that 90 per cent of participants felt their involvement made them “more confident” to use their Welsh language. Over 80 per cent of learners and new speakers reported that it encouraged them to continue learning.<sup>27</sup>

**31.** Evidence from Amgueddfa Cymru emphasised that festivals offer experiences of Welsh “beyond the day-to-day in low-density areas,” and are important for “increasing confidence, use of the Welsh language, and inspiring people in terms of the possibilities of the Welsh language in their own area”<sup>28</sup>. Witnesses highlighted the potential for longer-term impacts, including encouraging individuals to begin or re-start their Welsh language journey or provide the encouragement needed for new parents to choose Welsh-medium education for their children.<sup>29</sup> The mentrau iaith also stressed the empowering effect of these events on communities, enabling them to take responsibility and ownership, becoming key partners in organising activities.<sup>30</sup>

**32.** Menter Iaith Merthyr Tydfil highlighted that Welsh language events, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers, often provide the first opportunity for individuals to change their behaviour in relation to language use.

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<sup>26</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 15

<sup>27</sup> [CFA 26 – Urdd Gobaith Cymru: Consultation response](#), page 6

<sup>28</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 11

<sup>29</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 461

<sup>30</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 252

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Ensuring free or low-cost entry to Welsh language festivals and events was identified as a key factor in enabling people to experience the Welsh language.<sup>31</sup>

**33.** Welsh cultural events, including the Eisteddfodau and local festivals such as Tafwyl and Ffiliffest, were widely recognised by the focus group participants as valuable opportunities for immersion in the language and culture. Participants described these events as welcoming and confidence-building, with many noting that staff and attendees adapted their language use to support learners. Festivals were praised for fostering a sense of belonging and pride, inspiring some individuals to continue their learning journey or even begin learning Welsh. Events held in local communities, such as the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd, were seen to have a lasting impact, increasing the visibility of Welsh and encouraging greater participation in local language activities. Free or accessible events were particularly appreciated for their inclusivity and ability to attract diverse audiences.<sup>32</sup>

**34.** Despite these benefits, several challenges were identified. Some participants reported feeling intimidated or excluded at larger events, particularly when surrounded by fluent speakers, which discouraged attendance. A few learners experienced impatience or a lack of support from others, undermining their confidence. Concerns were also raised about the physical separation of learner spaces at major festivals, which created a sense of isolation rather than integration. Practical barriers such as cost, travel distance, and limited promotion to non-Welsh-speaking communities further restricted participation.<sup>33</sup>

## Planning and preparation before the festival

**35.** The Committee heard evidence of substantial work undertaken in the lead-up to major Welsh language festivals and events. Planning typically involves community groups, local businesses, local authorities, and a range of partners. The Welsh Language Commissioner emphasised that organising, fundraising, and preparatory work help create a sense of community and provide opportunities to use the Welsh language.<sup>34</sup> The importance of planning activity was echoed by Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam, who noted that preparations and engagement across schools, businesses, and the wider community can generate opportunities

<sup>31</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 484

<sup>32</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraphs 71-91

<sup>33</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Cymraeg for all?: Engagement findings – June 2025](#), paragraphs 23-27

<sup>34</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 23

to see and use the Welsh language that extend well beyond a single festival day, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers.<sup>35</sup>

**36.** The Committee also heard about the benefits and challenges of partnership working. Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf noted its “very positive experience collaborating” with the National Eisteddfod when planning for the festival in Pontypridd. It explained how it supported the National Eisteddfod in engaging with the local community and how the National Eisteddfod’s presence “could hit walls down and open doors” that it could not as a smaller organisation. However, once the National Eisteddfod had finished and moved on to the next area, the expectation was that any legacy work fell on Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf’s shoulders.<sup>36</sup>

## **Post-festival planning and legacy**

**37.** Whilst pre-festival planning is a clear priority for those involved, evidence suggested that post-festival planning is not afforded the same focus. The National Eisteddfod told the Committee it lacks capacity to maintain grassroots presence after the event and recognised that this places pressure on local organisations.<sup>37</sup> The Welsh Language Commissioner agreed that there is insufficient intentional planning for what happens around and after festivals.<sup>38</sup>

**38.** Despite limited resources, Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf reported delivering, in partnership, successful post-Eisteddfod events, including business awards and a Welsh language fair. It noted, however, that this legacy work was carried out within existing budgets, without additional resource before or after the National Eisteddfod, placing considerable strain on local capacity and resources.<sup>39</sup> Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf further reported that financial constraints had led it to scale back its annual Parti Ponty event and hold a smaller Parti Bach Ponty, at precisely the time when momentum suggested expansion would be appropriate.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 268

<sup>36</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 289-290

<sup>37</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 413

<sup>38</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 22

<sup>39</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 290

<sup>40</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 340

**39.** Witnesses highlighted emerging approaches aimed at sustaining the impact of major festivals and strengthening their legacy. The Arts Council of Wales is considering funding events that occur after major festivals to contribute to legacy work. The Football Association of Wales (FAW) acknowledged it needs to think more proactively about post-festival activity and suggested involvement in a “legacy committee.”<sup>41</sup> The National Centre for Learning Welsh has established an Eisteddfod legacy scheme, prompted by the festival’s visit to Pontypridd, to welcome and support new speakers in host areas, with provision available both before and after future eisteddfodau.<sup>42</sup>

**40.** The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the importance of building on the legacy of major festivals, noting that the Welsh Government has asked the National Eisteddfod to “do more to think about the legacy and what they can do to help us build on that legacy.”<sup>43</sup> Whilst the National Eisteddfod is not expected to continue delivering local activities once it has moved to a new next location, it is expected to support local communities and partners, such as the mentrau iaith, with evidence gathered before and during the festival.<sup>44</sup>

**41.** Ultimately, the Cabinet Secretary made it clear that any legacy work undertaken by a menter iaith must be delivered within existing resources. He referred to recent increases in core grant allocations and stated the mentrau iaith will “have to do what every agency does, which is to prioritise the things that they want to do”<sup>45</sup>.

**42.** Nevertheless, the Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that, in areas where the National Eisteddfod has been hosted, there is “more work to do to build on the positives that emerge from that experience”<sup>46</sup>. He confirmed plans to meet with Mentrau Iaith Cymru to explore what additional support could be provided in the “year or two after the Eisteddfod is held in that area”<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 215

<sup>42</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 301

<sup>43</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 28

<sup>44</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 31

<sup>45</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 31

<sup>46</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 32

<sup>47</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 32

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## Funding for mentrau iaith events and festivals

**43.** Calls were made for dedicated resources for the mentrau iaith to develop and deliver their own events. Suggestions included co-ordinating co-purchasing of infrastructure, shared marketing resources, support for sponsorship, and region-wide promotional activity.<sup>48</sup> Witnesses proposed that Mentrau Iaith Cymru administer a grant budget, potentially through a rolling programme, to help establish new festivals and to build a network of events regionally.<sup>49</sup> The Committee also heard that the cost of staging festivals has risen significantly, particularly for the infrastructure required to deliver events safely, while core funding for mentrau iaith has not kept pace.<sup>50</sup> This mismatch limits the ability of local organisations to capitalise on momentum generated by major festivals and constrains the scale and sustainability of legacy activities.

## Free and low-cost entry

**44.** There was broad agreement that free or low-cost entry for low-income households is critical to promoting and sustaining Welsh language use. Amgueddfa Cymru said:

*“If we’re saying that the Welsh language belongs to everybody in Wales, then this is an important step that we need to retain.”<sup>51</sup>*

**45.** Menter Iaith Caerffili agreed, noting:

*“We need to find a way of continuing to fund these events effectively [...] there’s a need to keep these events to be free so that they are accessible and inclusive.”<sup>52</sup>*

**46.** Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf stressed that the aim of the mentrau iaith is to be “accessible” and to “give people the opportunity to engage with the

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<sup>48</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 257

<sup>49</sup> For example Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 257

<sup>50</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 351

<sup>51</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 129

<sup>52</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 256

language for free in their areas,” particularly disadvantaged communities. It warned that charging people for entry would “be a barrier” to participation.<sup>53</sup>

**47.** Attendance figures support this view: festivals offering free entry have attracted significantly higher numbers, as demonstrated by the Cardiff National Eisteddfod in 2018, which drew over half a million visitors. The Welsh Language Commissioner’s office asserted:

*“Evidence that those eisteddfodau where entry has been free [...] have attracted more people and are likely to have attracted a broader audience.”<sup>54</sup>*

**48.** The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that additional funding had been provided to the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod to enable low-income families to attend national eisteddfodau. This funding, he noted, has been baselined into the core grant which will “be there now for the future.”<sup>55</sup>

## **Our view**

**49.** Welsh language festivals and events have a distinctive catalytic effect: they increase visibility, create concentrated opportunities to use the language, and nurture confidence and pride. They could also prompt new or additional investment into Welsh-medium education provision in an area where traditionally, provision has been limited or non-existent. For areas with a lower-density of Welsh speakers in particular, these events can be the first contact point for many with the Welsh language outside formal education, offering a practical route into everyday use and a tangible sense of belonging.

**50.** We applaud and recognise all those who organise and deliver Welsh language events and festivals, whether large or small in size, for their valuable work sustaining and increasing the use of the Welsh language. However, a festival or event in isolation cannot deliver sustained change without deliberate pre- and post-event planning strategies. The Committee is persuaded by evidence that strong preparation builds local capacity, fosters partnerships, and opens doors that smaller organisations cannot always unlock. Just as importantly, the period

<sup>53</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraphs 372-373

<sup>54</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025](#), paragraph 121

<sup>55</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025](#), paragraph 52

after a festival or event is crucial to convert short-term momentum into sustained language learning and use. The absence of dedicated legacy planning and additional resourcing risks wasting opportunities gained, and placing unsustainable strain on the mentrau iaith and community partners.

**51.** Post-festival planning appears ad-hoc, with little or no intentional planning for the coming years. There also appears to be an expectation that the mentrau iaith will pick up when others have moved on, but with little or no additional resource to plan that work. The lack of a strategic plan for legacy work has consequences too. We heard that Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf had to scale back Parti Ponty the year after the National Eisteddfod due to a lack of resources. This seems illogical at a time when such organisations should be capitalising and scaling-up activities in the area.

**52.** The Committee considers affordability and inclusivity to be fundamental. We support retaining free access to Welsh language festivals wherever possible. Evidence from Amgueddfa Cymru, the mentrau iaith, and the Welsh Language Commissioner demonstrates that free or low-cost entry widens participation, addresses socio-economic barriers, and reinforces the principle that Welsh belongs to everyone. Attendance data from free-entry national eisteddfodau confirms that they attract larger and more diverse audiences. In the Committee's view, maintaining free or low-cost access requires future investment and resource from the Welsh Government and local authorities, alongside innovative funding models to support the mentrau iaith and community organisers.

**53.** Finally, the Committee notes that rising event infrastructure costs are limiting the ability of organisations such as the mentrau iaith to plan for scale, quality, and longevity. We recognise that the mentrau iaith have recently received an uplift in their annual core grant after a decade without additional investment, but believe that a targeted, flexible fund, particularly for legacy activity after a large festival, would help ensure that gains are not lost and that communities can build on the momentum to establish sustainable, locally led Welsh and bilingual activities.

**Conclusion 2.** Welsh language festivals and events are vital enablers for promoting and normalising Welsh, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers. They generate powerful, positive experiences that raise confidence, visibility, and willingness to use the language. To maximise their impact, however, these events must be embedded within a wider strategic framework, properly resourced and with engagement that reaches the whole community, not simply the engaged few.

**Conclusion 3.** The Committee believes that stronger partnership working between national bodies (including the National Eisteddfod, the Urdd, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and the Arts Council of Wales), local authorities, mentrau iaith, community organisations, and anchor institutions such as sports bodies, should be underpinned by dedicated legacy funding and clearly defined roles. This approach will protect against resource strain at local level, enable the scaling-up of successful initiatives, and ensure that the momentum generated by festivals translates into lasting increases in Welsh language use in our communities and schools.

**Recommendation 1. Develop a strategic legacy framework and dedicated legacy funding:** The Welsh Government, in partnership with local authorities and key stakeholders, should develop a clear framework to guide post-festival legacy planning. This would ensure that momentum generated by key national and regional Welsh language festivals translates into sustained activity in subsequent years.

**Recommendation 2. Establish a dedicated fund for legacy work:** The Welsh Government should establish a small, dedicated fund to support the mentrau iaith and key partners with activities and legacy initiatives for the first year after a national eisteddfod has visited. The fund should focus on areas with a lower-density of Welsh speakers, or areas that require intensive interventions. This would enable the mentrau iaith and partner bodies to access specific targeted funding to build on the success of major festivals.

**Recommendation 3. Ensure free or low-cost access:** The Welsh Government should continually monitor the sufficiency of funding provided to the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod to enable free or low-cost entry for low-income households to key national Welsh language festivals.

**Recommendation 4. Monitor and evaluate impact:** The Welsh Government should, with the support of partners, commission research and evaluation of the impact of local and national Welsh language festivals and events on language use and confidence in our communities and schools. This is particularly important in areas with a lower density of Welsh-speakers. Findings should inform future policy and investment decisions.

## 5. Welsh language technology and artificial intelligence

**54.** The Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Technology Action Plan, a core component of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, sets out a framework for using technology to advance the use of Welsh in everyday life.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the Welsh Government has set out three strategic priorities for Welsh language technology: developing technology as a way to help increase the daily use of our language, especially in workplaces; making sure Welsh language technology reaches developers and end users; and, to improve Welsh language artificial intelligence (AI).<sup>57</sup>

**55.** Witnesses agreed that Wales has been ahead of the curve in the development of Welsh language technology and AI, outperforming many European minority languages. Dr Cynog Prys described Wales as being “in the upper half of the table compared to other languages,” while noting that Wales trails Catalan (more speakers) and Basque (more resources), and stressing the need to maintain “momentum” in this sphere.<sup>58</sup>

**56.** There was broad acknowledgement that the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Technology Action Plan has been successful overall, and that newer priorities, particularly data and open model packages, are helpful in enabling private companies to use data without any statutory requirement.<sup>59</sup>

**57.** Canolfan Bedwyr also felt that Wales is “in a really good position in terms of the size of our population, the number of speakers that we have, and the fact that Welsh is part of this AI revolution from the outset”<sup>60</sup>. However, it emphasised that developments must “put people at the centre” and focus on technology that will “enable use of the Welsh language”<sup>61</sup>. Whilst many “building blocks” exist, more

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<sup>56</sup> [Welsh Government: Welsh language technology action plan 2018 to 2024 – 23 January 2018](#)

<sup>57</sup> [Welsh Government: Written Statement: Welsh language technology – 7 January 2025](#)

<sup>58</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraph 220

<sup>59</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraphs 16, 134 and 233

<sup>60</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraph 10

<sup>61</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraph 13

work is needed to ensure they impact users' daily experience of using technology in Welsh.<sup>62</sup>

**58.** Dr Cynog Prys believes the Welsh Government has invested in the right places, and that lobbying companies such as Microsoft and Google has paid dividends. Nevertheless, Dr Daniel Cunliffe argued the Welsh Government “undersold what had been achieved” via the Welsh Language Technology Action Plan and could have been “more effective” in explaining outcomes.<sup>63</sup>

### **Agile and responsive policy**

**59.** The Committee heard that rapid technological change demands adaptable policy. Dr Daniel Cunliffe told the Committee:

*“There has been so much rapid change. I’ve probably seen more change personally in the last sort of three years than in all the years that came before those three years. And extrapolating forward from that is difficult. So, I think policy needs to be agile and responsive.”<sup>64</sup>*

**60.** Witnesses generally agreed the Welsh Government’s action plan initially prioritised the right areas, particularly digital infrastructure, but that future policies and strategies may need to evolve and change frequently.<sup>65</sup>

### **Artificial intelligence and the Welsh language**

**61.** The evidence indicates that AI is here to stay, weaving into every aspect of life, and providing opportunities as well as risks. Carl Morris highlighted a key opportunity, noting that AI can “help people or groups or any entity who wants to create things in Welsh,” such as social media content.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 242

<sup>63</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 241

<sup>64</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 259

<sup>65</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraphs 134-137

<sup>66</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 153

- 62.** Amgueddfa Cymru shared a pilot at the National Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon, using an AI app to tailor an individual’s Welsh language visit.<sup>67</sup>
- 63.** Canolfan Bedwyr reflected that much of the foundational digital infrastructure for the Welsh language was in place before the recent AI surge, and that the Welsh Government’s action plan had correctly identified the need for data and the building blocks.
- 64.** Dr Cynog Prys stated that the “quality of something like ChatGPT in Welsh speaks volumes about the success of the technological strategy,”<sup>68</sup> and Canolfan Bedwyr argued that AI provides an “opportunity to open up the Welsh world out to everywhere,” with the “informality of the online world and AI” potentially opening doors and raising confidence [...] in less high-risk situations.<sup>69</sup>
- 65.** At the same time, many witnesses cautioned against complacency. Whilst synthetic language technologies have apparent and significant benefits, widening access and reducing costs, their use must be guided by clear principles to prevent unintended consequences for the status and everyday use of the Welsh language.
- 66.** Carl Morris cautioned against the risk of poor-quality Welsh language content being generated by providers who do not share Wales’s objectives for language development. He described as “silly”, the decision of Duolingo to adopt an “AI-first” approach, removing language experts and relying solely on automated systems.<sup>70</sup> Carl Morris warned that such practices could lead to a proliferation of low-quality, machine-generated Welsh language content, which might “drown out the important things that we want to publish as the people of Wales”. This, he argued, underscores the need for robust standards and oversight to ensure that technology supports, rather than dilutes, the integrity of the Welsh language.<sup>71</sup>
- 67.** Canolfan Bedwyr highlighted the need for parity in the use of AI, stressing that Welsh language services should not rely on artificial voices in situations where

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<sup>67</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 65

<sup>68</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 219

<sup>69</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 53

<sup>70</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 163

<sup>71</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 163

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English services do not. They warned against a future where Welsh is treated differently, noting that parity is essential for fairness and credibility.<sup>72</sup>

**68.** They added that over-reliance on synthetic solutions poses a genuine risk of exempting organisations from developing workforces capable of using Welsh naturally. Witnesses emphasised that while technology can support language access, it must not replace human capability or undermine efforts to embed Welsh in everyday professional contexts.<sup>73</sup>

**69.** Canolfan Bedwyr warned:

*“Certainly. It’s exciting, in a way. It has safeguarded an element of the Welsh language already—we can acknowledge that—and it’s important that we then ensure that the Welsh language doesn’t become some sort of an exhibit in a museum, where you have AI that can speak Welsh, and that we have stopped speaking Welsh. That is something that we need to avoid.”<sup>74</sup>*

## Welsh language apps and discoverability

**70.** The Committee heard about an extremely saturated app landscape, with an estimated 8.93 million mobile apps worldwide (3.5 million on Google Play and 1.6 million on the Apple App Store) in which discoverability for Welsh language apps is a significant challenge.<sup>75</sup>

**71.** Dr Daniel Cunliffe noted difficulties in making Welsh language apps and content visible to users, observing that even where content exists, “it can be very difficult to get through all the English language apps.”<sup>76</sup> His research found that forty three per cent of Welsh language apps on the App Store were either teaching Welsh or teaching something through Welsh, with 10 per cent related to travel and nine per cent games.<sup>77</sup> He added that App Store and Google Play

<sup>72</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 68

<sup>73</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 69

<sup>74</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 63

<sup>75</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 330

<sup>76</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 261

<sup>77</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 329

ranking systems “work against Welsh language apps being found,” because popularity algorithms bury Welsh apps beneath English alternatives:

*“So if you’ve got an English language app and a Welsh language app, even if everybody in Wales loved the Welsh language app, the chances are the English one is going to be more popular. So, they tend to get buried, they’re not easy to find, they’re not easy to search for.”<sup>78</sup>*

**72.** Carl Morris argued for “experiences or activities that people can do through the medium of Welsh that have an element of technology related to them” noting a scarcity of fun in Welsh technology.<sup>79</sup>

### **Banking apps and service provision**

**73.** Expert witnesses suggested there is no technical barrier to providing Welsh interfaces on banking apps. Canolfan Bedwyr asserted there are “fewer excuses now for not providing services through the medium of Welsh,” and that software interfaces are simple to translate with appropriate packages.<sup>80</sup> Carl Morris echoed that he does not see “any technical barriers”, noting multilingual banking apps already exist. He asserted that “The lack of provision is because of a lack of will on their part”<sup>81</sup>.

**74.** Canolfan Bedwyr indicated that commercial considerations tend to trump minority language needs and suggested legislation might be required:

*“At the end of the day, it all comes down to standards and whether specific organisations fall under the language standards or not.”<sup>82</sup>*

**75.** Dr Cynog Prys asked:

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<sup>78</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 330

<sup>79</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 140

<sup>80</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 82

<sup>81</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 191

<sup>82</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 82

*“Why not be more ambitious? Why not legislate in this area? Why aren’t we requiring it of these companies, who make a great deal of profit and who serve our Welsh-speaking communities.”<sup>83</sup>*

## Workforce: Welsh language developers

**76.** Canolfan Bedwyr highlighted the importance of a skilled developer workforce in Wales for Welsh language technology and the need to nurture new developers “immersed in this” and to “sustain that workforce” for the future.<sup>84</sup> It notes that it has been fortunate to have “very talented and able developers who are committed to the Welsh language”. Those staff members could have “very prosperous careers” elsewhere, and therefore having a pipeline of developers for the future is critical if Wales is to keep up and stay ahead of the game.<sup>85</sup>

## Open data and open licences

**77.** Open licensing provides freedom to use, reuse, and modify software. WordPress is one example that has supported the creation of Welsh websites. Carl Morris likened open licences to a world where “Coca-Cola had shared the formula for Coca-Cola so that people could make it themselves”. He argued that proprietary models, where a single company controls software, do not make it “easy then for third parties or us here in Wales to create our own adaptations or to create add-ons”<sup>86</sup>.

**78.** Canolfan Bedwyr stressed the critical importance of open data and open licences for the language, in order to:

*“... ensure data for the Welsh language are available to feed in to ensure that the ability of the Welsh language side of these large language models is as good as that of the models in English.”<sup>87</sup>*

<sup>83</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 343

<sup>84</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 21

<sup>85</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 21

<sup>86</sup> Both Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraphs 145-146

<sup>87</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 11

**79.** They also highlighted GDPR-related barriers within the public sector:

*“We often run into issues with data protection and GDPR in all of this. These are issues that could be overcome, but, unfortunately, public organisations have data protection officers, they don’t have data sharing officers.”<sup>88</sup>*

## **Funding models and levels**

**80.** Canolfan Bedwyr identified the annual nature of funding as a particular concern for Welsh language technology development, suggesting a shift to a three-year model would enable long-term planning and better delivery:

*“One of the other things that’s a bit of an issue for us is the annual nature of the funding. I think that more long-term and better planning would be possible if we moved to a three-year model of funding this in the future.”<sup>89</sup>*

**81.** Similar concerns emerged in the Local Government and Housing Committee’s inquiry on Digital Local Government.<sup>90</sup> The Chief Digital Officer for Local Government highlighted the mismatch between cyclical, annual funding and iterative digital delivery, requiring continuous improvement and a shift from capital to revenue models:

*“Digital projects, as we’ve talked about already today, need a different funding model—low levels, iteration, minimum viable product; all the buzz words—then continuous improvement and the move away from capital funding to services being purchased as a revenue stream et cetera [...] Doing that in a cycle of a year is very, very difficult.”<sup>91</sup>*

**82.** Canolfan Bedwyr currently receives £350,000 annually from the Welsh Government for specific projects, a figure based on “the world as it was back at

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<sup>88</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraph 117

<sup>89</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025](#), paragraph 20

<sup>90</sup> [Local Government and Housing Committee: Digital Local Government](#)

<sup>91</sup> [Local Government and Housing Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 February 2025](#), paragraph 404

the start of the plan [in 2018]<sup>92</sup>. It argued for a significant increase given how vital these technologies now are across sectors.

## Data on use of Welsh language technology

**83.** Witnesses called for more data and analysis on how Welsh language technology is used in education and the workplace. Dr Cynog Prys stated there is insufficient research on actual usage, while Canolfan Bedwyr urged analysis of usage data to understand patterns, contexts, and where technology is being used. They noted that current assessments often rely on retrospective or forecasting methods rather than live usage.<sup>93</sup>

**84.** Carl Morris highlighted the need to research content plurality, especially for young people, and said there is not currently enough plurality for Welsh speakers, albeit without supporting statistics. Dr Cynog Prys asked the fundamental question:

*“Do we know what people truly want, or are we just guessing?”<sup>94</sup>*

**85.** The Cabinet Secretary emphasised that technology is an area where the Welsh Government has a “significant role in leading” through its relationships with global corporations. The Cabinet Secretary also saw a role for the Welsh Government to do “more to help the language to be used in all aspects of our lives”<sup>95</sup>. A recent example is the development of bilingual (Welsh and English) transcription on Microsoft Teams, described as the “first example worldwide” which will be “available to everyone”<sup>96</sup>.

**86.** Whilst major global companies, such as Amazon and Apple, have not sought to develop their Welsh language capability yet, the Welsh Government assured the Committee that it makes the major companies aware of the data available. The Welsh Government’s philosophy is that “if the Government pays for

<sup>92</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 19

<sup>93</sup> For example Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 92

<sup>94</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 239

<sup>95</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 66

<sup>96</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 71

something, then we release it under permissive licence so that anybody and everybody can use it”<sup>97</sup>.

## **Our view**

### **From foundations to everyday use**

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**87.** The Committee recognises that the Welsh Government has built strong foundations for Welsh language technology and AI infrastructure. The next phase must prioritise use, discoverability, and user experience in everyday contexts (education, workplaces, civic services, and leisure). Evidence shows the importance of putting people at the centre of technological design and deployment to enable routine use of Welsh in digital environments.

**88.** Within this context, it is critical to intensify efforts to influence major technology firms to develop and enable Welsh language functionality within their products. Whilst it is undoubtedly challenging, the Welsh Government has demonstrated that progress is possible by building strong relationships and influencing companies such as Microsoft. However, engagement with companies like Apple, Amazon and Google has proved more difficult. Relying on the hope that these companies will eventually enable Welsh language provision on their devices and platforms is not a viable strategy. The Welsh Government therefore needs to adopt a bolder and more proactive approach in making the case for Welsh language provision moving forward.

### **Agility and standards**

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**89.** Given the pace of change, policy agility is essential. Strategies should be iterative, responsive to rapid developments, and underpinned by standards refined for modern digital delivery (including apps, AI-enabled services, and multilingual interfaces). Where commercial platforms resist making provision for the Welsh language (despite minimal technical barriers), statutory routes (e.g., extending language standards coverage) should be considered to guarantee Welsh services in important areas such as banking.

### **Open ecosystem and data sharing**

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**90.** Open data and open licences are critical to ensure Welsh is represented robustly in large language models and emerging AI. The Committee supports

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<sup>97</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025](#), paragraph 73

efforts to remove GDPR-related barriers to responsible data sharing across the public sector. We acknowledge the benefits of encouraging organisations to approach data sharing positively, while recognising the need to protect data privacy.

### **Funding: Multi-year, flexible, and fit for digital**

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**91.** Annual, cyclical funding is poorly aligned with iterative digital delivery. The Committee favours multi-year funding models and flexible revenue approaches that match digital project lifecycles. We note the case for increasing core funding for key institutions such as Canolfan Bedwyr given the centrality of technology to language use across sectors.

### **Workforce and skills**

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**92.** A sustainable developer pipeline, skilled, motivated, and immersed in Welsh language technology, is vital. The Committee supports targeted measures to nurture and retain talent, including partnerships with higher education, apprenticeships, and incentives for public-interest technology careers focused on the Welsh language. Working closely with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, for example, could help create opportunities to develop courses and training that supports the future developer workforce in Wales where the Welsh language is central.

### **Discoverability and content plurality**

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**93.** To increase daily use, Welsh language content must be discoverable and compelling. The Committee notes the challenges of app store algorithms and supports interventions that enhance Welsh language app prominence, promote fun and engaging digital experiences, and encourage plurality, especially for our young people.

**Conclusion 4.** The early work undertaken to prepare the foundations for Welsh language technology means that Wales is well-positioned to maximise on the opportunities in advancements in technology, in particular, AI. Converting this strategic position to increase everyday use of Welsh language technology is key. The Welsh Government should prioritise:

- an agile and responsive policy framework;
- refined Welsh language standards placed on public bodies to reflect the new technology context (where necessary, through legislation);

- a multi-year funding model that matches digital delivery programmes;
- strengthened open-data pathways;
- investment in the Welsh language developer workforce;
- expanded research and measurement of Welsh language technology use); and
- targeted actions to improve discoverability and content plurality in Welsh.

**94.** These steps will ensure that people can live and work through Welsh in modern digital spaces, that Welsh is seamlessly integrated in the AI revolution, and that communities, across all density levels, benefit from technology that puts users at the centre and enables everyday use of the language.

**Conclusion 5.** Welsh language apps and content struggle against algorithms which give the most popular, invariably English language, apps prominence. Seeking new and innovative ways to promote Welsh language and bilingual apps and content, particularly for young people, is essential. Whilst much of this may be outside the scope of what the Welsh Government can do, it can support partner organisations to work with developers and content creators to improve discoverability and content plurality.

**Recommendation 5. Strengthen open data initiatives and remove barriers to sharing:** The Welsh Government must ensure it strengthens public sector open-data initiatives, and addresses GDPR-related barriers to responsible data sharing to support the development of Welsh language technology.

**Recommendation 6. Introduce multi-year funding models and increase core investment:** The Welsh Government should move from annual funding cycles to multi-year models to aid the development of Welsh language technology. Longer-term funding models would support key institutions such as Canolfan Bedwyr to plan projects that span multiple financial years.

## 6. Welsh beyond the classroom

**95.** One of the biggest challenges is increasing Welsh language use outside the classroom, a problem repeated across countries and regions where minority languages are taught as part of a child’s education. The Commission said there was a “need to overturn that language shift”, but that it must be done in a way that is:

*“Sensitive to some of the problems that have arisen in other nations where you can expand the education system but you don’t perhaps cross the bridge successfully in terms of seeing community use.”<sup>98</sup>*

**96.** During the inquiry, two key areas were identified that could help shift language use in the community: the workplace and grass-roots sport.

### Welsh in the workplace: a strategic area for development

**97.** A number of witnesses stressed the need to invest in Welsh in the workplace, noting that, for many who learn Welsh at school, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers, the workplace may be their only ongoing contact with the language. The Commission told the Committee this is:

*“Something that is of interest to us, namely young people who leave school and the link, then, with the workplace—what are the opportunities available”.<sup>99</sup>*

**98.** Dr Rhian Hodges described the workplace as providing a “golden opportunity” to use the Welsh language.<sup>100</sup> The Welsh Language Commissioner said the “workplace is a key strategic area in order to provide more opportunities for young people specifically to use the Welsh language skills that they have”<sup>101</sup>. Dr Elin Royles told the Committee there is “loads” that could be done to increase use

<sup>98</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 41

<sup>99</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 44

<sup>100</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 148

<sup>101</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 85

of Welsh within the workplace, and that “the policies of private businesses are more powerful than government policies”<sup>102</sup>.

**99.** The National Centre for Learning Welsh along with partner organisations are working to make it easier for people to learn and use Welsh in the workplace with specific courses and opportunities targeted at employers and employees. Within this context, the Act made provision which establishes a standard approach to describing Welsh language ability. This will be based on the CEFR, and will provide learners, parents, teachers and employers with a common understanding of the language ability expected at each stage of the Welsh language learning journey.<sup>103</sup>

**100.** This should assist employers to determine what Welsh language skills may be required for a specific post, clarity around the skills of the current workforce, as well as an opportunity to promote language use and learning in the workplace more broadly.

### **Grass-roots sport and leisure: bringing Welsh to life**

**101.** Sport, particularly grass-roots sport, was regularly mentioned as a key area for developing informal Welsh language use. The Welsh Language Commissioner referred to recent research with children and young people, highlighting that “sports and leisure activities are strategically important areas”<sup>104</sup>. Over half of young people who responded said they attend leisure/sports activities regularly—significantly higher than any other activity. It is “during sports activities that children and young people are also most likely to be using Welsh with coaches/leaders and their peers”<sup>105</sup>.

**102.** The Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities noted that community sport is particularly interesting in relation to the Welsh language as it “can be an excellent way of bringing the Welsh language to life”<sup>106</sup>. It observed that community sport tends to attract younger people and that it is a social activity that tends to be open to people of varying social backgrounds.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 111

<sup>103</sup> Senedd Cymru: Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025

<sup>104</sup> Welsh Language Commissioner: correspondence – 9 June 2025

<sup>105</sup> Welsh Language Commissioner: correspondence – 9 June 2025

<sup>106</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 128

<sup>107</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 129

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**103.** Practical examples of making the language relevant through sport were highlighted. The Welsh Rugby Union held a course in Welsh on the menopause, noting “40 women were present in Bala Rugby Club”, and emphasising: “if we want to make the language relevant, we, as a governing body, and the Government, have to be relevant in people’s daily lives”<sup>108</sup>. The FAW acknowledged a need to recruit more coaches through the medium of Welsh, “at all levels to make children and young people feel comfortable” and provide opportunities to use the language.<sup>109</sup>

**104.** Dr Rhian Hodges noted that sport and music through the medium of Welsh are key to providing fun activities for young people, and said that we need to understand what young people want to do, and provide those opportunities for them locally.<sup>110</sup>

**105.** The Cabinet Secretary stated that workplaces present “natural opportunities” to use the Welsh language, highlighting the increase in the number of Welsh Government staff learning and using Welsh day-to-day. The National Centre for Learning Welsh (from 2027, the “Athrofa” – National Institute for Learning Welsh) is key to delivering and facilitating courses to strengthen Welsh language skills in the workplace across Wales. He noted that:

*“We depend on the National Centre for Learning Welsh also to do important work in this field. ‘Cymraeg Gwaith’, the programme that they run, more than 30,000 people now have participated in that scheme, and they’ve just created a new programme for people who work in the field of health and social care.”<sup>111</sup>*

**106.** Reflecting on the future, the Cabinet Secretary referred to the CEFR introduced by the 2025 Act which “could change how people think about the Welsh language in the workplace,” as well as at school and beyond.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 167

<sup>109</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 188

<sup>110</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraphs 151-152

<sup>111</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 138

<sup>112</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 139

**107.** The Cabinet Secretary was also keen to stress the role of sport as a natural context for young people in particular to socialise and use the language. Despite some good work done by the FAW, WRU, Sport Wales and the governing bodies, he stated that “there’s more that we can do here to provide greater assistance”<sup>113</sup>.

## **Our view**

### **Bridging school to community**

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**108.** The Committee considers school-to-community transition to be a critical weak link in the Welsh language journey. Evidence suggests that formal education alone does not reliably produce sustained community use of the language; targeted, real-world opportunities are needed to cross the bridge into everyday life. Workplaces and grass-roots sport are prime environments to normalise the language and to use it in an informal setting.

### **Workplace activation**

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**109.** Workplaces provide structured, routine contexts where people can apply and practice their Welsh language skills. Employers, in all sectors, should be encouraged to offer Welsh-medium pathways and mentoring for their staff, with the support of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Sharing good practice between sectors and strengthening incentives for private businesses to adopt Welsh policies could also extend reach beyond statutory settings.

### **Sport as social facilitator**

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**110.** Grass-roots sport is a social facilitator; often reflecting community diversity, and frequently youth-heavy, it provides a natural setting to interact with coaches/leaders and peers. Coach recruitment and training through Welsh, and embedding Welsh in club operations are immediate, practical steps that will increase usage and confidence. Partnerships with governing bodies can help scale relevant initiatives and ensure consistency across regions.

**111.** It is also important to acknowledge and commend the work of the Urdd in relation to its sports and play provision. The opportunities it provides are unparalleled, enabling children and young people to hear and use the language in a fun and natural environment beyond the classroom. Continued investment in the Urdd, both to develop its provision further, and to sustain its successful Welsh

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<sup>113</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025](#), paragraph 143

Government-funded apprenticeship scheme, will be essential if the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers is to be realised.

### **Design for relevance and fun**

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**112.** The evidence highlights the importance of making Welsh relevant to people's daily lives and importantly, making it fun, especially for young people. The Committee believes policy and programmes should prioritise locally shaped activities (sport, music, leisure) that reflect what young people want to do, ensuring that Welsh is relevant, social, and enjoyable.

**113.** Increasing Welsh language use beyond the classroom depends on deliberately engineering everyday opportunities, particularly in the workplace and through grass-roots sports. These settings can bring the language to life, provide confidence-building interaction with colleagues, and make Welsh relevant to people's daily lives. There are great examples of organisations, like the FAW, embedding a Welsh ethos throughout the organisation, feeding down to grass-root clubs. This work needs to happen across governing bodies and clubs in Wales.

**114.** The Committee would like to see far more deliberate planning to enable use of the language informally in the workplace and in sports clubs up and down the country. We wish to see the Welsh Government take a lead in collaborating with sport governing bodies, Sport Wales and organisations like the Federation of Small Businesses. We acknowledge the work undertaken by the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and others to increase confidence, skills and use of the Welsh in the workplace.

**Conclusion 6.** There is a need for public policy to focus on increasing workplace Welsh, supporting private sector bodies in addition to the public sector. The Act provides an opportunity to engage positively with organisations and businesses as the CEFR is introduced. A package of support, which includes providing businesses and employees with access to resources and training via the National Centre for Learning Welsh should be combined with opportunities to share good practice.

**Conclusion 7.** The Committee also wishes to see far more emphasis placed on supporting grass-roots clubs to use more Welsh and create a stronger Welsh language ethos. Working with governing bodies, the Welsh Government should

provide support where needed to enable the sharing of good practice. The focus of the governing bodies should also be to:

- Recruit and train more coaches through the medium of Welsh, and provide support to coaches lacking confidence in their Welsh skills.
- Embed Welsh language use in club operations and community sports programmes.

**Recommendation 7. Support community-led initiatives:** The Welsh Government should provide targeted funding, similar to its Perthyn scheme, to enable community organisations and grass-roots clubs to develop innovative ways to introduce Welsh language opportunities. The main focus of any such funding should be on supporting grass-roots clubs in areas with a lower-density of Welsh speakers.

## 7. Research and targeted strategies

### Research and data

**115.** We heard evidence that there is a real lack of data on Welsh language use in Wales, and where it has been undertaken, it is far too infrequent. Iaithe told the Committee that research and data on Welsh language use is “patchy”,<sup>114</sup> and that there is not a systematic approach to Welsh language research and data collation in Wales. This is “challenging in terms of planning projects or interventions”.<sup>115</sup>

**116.** Dr Elin Royles highlighted the challenge academics have in accessing funding to undertake research on Welsh language use. She referred to a recent application to the Economic and Social Research Council where the feedback stated that the projects comparing the Welsh language and Gaelic, and placing them in a wider European context, were considered “too local or regional”. She added:

*“We proposed a project on organisations working with young people through the medium of Celtic languages during Covid, and the feedback we got was that the issue didn’t appear ‘urgent’.”<sup>116</sup>*

**117.** Dr Royles also noted that the available data on language use (last undertaken by the Welsh Government in 2019-20) does not “allow us to go beneath the local authority level”, which limits the depth of analysis possible. In comparison, she said the Basque Country and Catalonia “do so much more than we do”<sup>117</sup>.

**118.** Dr Cynog Prys, reflecting on research on the use of Welsh language technology, apps and social media said that, although some evidence exist in this field, “what we don’t know half enough about is how people in the educational sphere use technology, for example, how people in the workplace use technology”<sup>118</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 22

<sup>115</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 22

<sup>116</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 12

<sup>117</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025, paragraph 16

<sup>118</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 238

**119.** There were also calls for more evidence to measure the impact of events and festivals on language use. There have been some sporadic economic impact assessments that show tangible social and economic value of Welsh language festivals to the local area, but less so on the broader long-term impact on language use. The Welsh Language Commissioner observed difficulty in isolating “cause and effect” for a single event on a person’s “feeling of belonging and the decisions they may make years down the line”<sup>119</sup>. Whilst local evaluations by the mentrau iaith suggest events “changed behaviours” and “started journeys,” witnesses identified an “opportunity to do more evaluation work” to record impact robustly.<sup>120</sup>

**120.** Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful told us that, whilst its own assessment of the impact of Canolfan a Theatr Soar contributed £1.3 million to the local economy in one year, it felt that:

*“In the lower density areas, we do need more research. We do need to work on measuring this impact to truly understand where we need to invest.”<sup>121</sup>*

## **Research: Extending ‘Prosiect BRO’ and measuring impact**

**121.** Prosiect BRO is a comprehensive sociolinguistic survey focusing on Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire (areas with a higher-density of Welsh speakers). The Commission indicated it was open to extending the methodology to medium and lower-density areas:

*“Prosiect Bro is focusing at this stage on those areas of higher density, but it would be beneficial to use the same methodologies for areas of medium or lower density too, and that would provide, then, a more comprehensive picture.”<sup>122</sup>*

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<sup>119</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 25

<sup>120</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 271

<sup>121</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 280

<sup>122</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 112

**122.** Amgueddfa Cymru also highlighted the “data gap” in lower-density areas and the value of extending analysis beyond high-density communities.<sup>123</sup> Better data on social use of Welsh in lower-density areas, would help the Amgueddfa plan. The Commission noted uncertainty about community use of Welsh in places such as Cardiff suburbs, Pontypridd or Caerphilly, beyond broad census data, and emphasised the need to measure usage appropriately as lives become more bilingual. It said the introduction of the CEFR framework by the Act may assist with measuring progress in future.<sup>124</sup>

**123.** The Cabinet Secretary stated before the summer that the Welsh Government had provided “additional investment to the project [Prosiect BRO] for it to concentrate on Carmarthenshire and the post-industrial south Wales valleys” reflecting concerns that Welsh was no longer functioning as a community language in those areas.<sup>125</sup>

## Comparative research and international collaboration

**124.** The experiences of the Basque Country and Catalonia are frequently cited for comparison. The Commission intends to draw on international academic research in the second phase of its work focusing on lower-density areas, but noted that comparative research is “something that hasn’t happened in Wales as much as it should have happened”<sup>126</sup>. There are lessons to be learnt from the experiences of other countries and regions, particularly where there has been success in increasing the number of speakers of a minority language, such as in the Basque Country, but usage has “remained static”<sup>127</sup>. The Commission suggested that it is possible that personal usage of minority languages has changed over time, and maintaining usage requires even more people able to use the language, as “our personal usage is declining”<sup>128</sup>.

**125.** Canolfan Bedwyr demonstrated its ARFer app to the Committee, that has been developed to support workplace usage of Welsh, using methodology adapted from a Basque intervention, evidencing how lessons can be learnt from

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<sup>123</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 12 June 2025, paragraph 30

<sup>124</sup> Senedd Cymru: Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025

<sup>125</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 16 July 2025, paragraph 125

<sup>126</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 63

<sup>127</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 88

<sup>128</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 90

international partnerships. Carl Morris told the Committee that there is a “need to look at successes in different languages,” and see whether it is possible to emulate projects here in Wales.<sup>129</sup> He cited an example in the Basque Country where volunteers and members of the Basque Wikimedians User Group had developed Wikipedia for young people (Txikipedia) and had tailored it to curriculum needs.<sup>130</sup>

## Targeted strategies

**126.** The Commission told the Committee that, whilst the language is important in every part of Wales, different parts of Wales need different strategies or a different emphasis to “deliver what we all want to see, namely a bilingual Wales where Welsh is used on a community level”<sup>131</sup>. The Commission noted it was in favour of having a “national framework” for social use of the language which allows “divergence of policy within that framework”<sup>132</sup>.

**127.** It also wanted to see progressive policies in Wales, noting that “where there is intentional language planning and where there are progressive policies, we’re seeing what we’re calling “community turn”, namely that there is a shift happening”<sup>133</sup>. Citing the Basque Country and Catalonia, it said that in “those areas where there are progressive policies, we can see a definite increase in the numbers and percentage of people who can speak those languages”<sup>134</sup>.

## Role of the diaspora

**128.** The Commission highlighted the fact that whilst policy is made to facilitate Welsh language use in Wales, “our linguistic community does extend beyond the borders of Wales”<sup>135</sup>. It said that there could be between 100,000-150,000 Welsh speakers living outside of Wales, with around 15,000 of those second-generation Welsh speakers who have never lived in Wales. The Commission therefore asked the question:

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<sup>129</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 201

<sup>130</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 June 2025, paragraph 201

<sup>131</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 39

<sup>132</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 36

<sup>133</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 12

<sup>134</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraphs 87-89

<sup>135</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 5 March 2025, paragraph 143

*“At a time when we know that technology means that we can actually look beyond the purely physical in terms of geography, is there anything more that these people could be doing to contribute to the language community?”<sup>136</sup>*

**129.** The Commission stressed that it was not suggesting that “large amounts of public expenditure” should be committed to this field, but there could be small changes made that “could be significant”<sup>137</sup>.

## Our view

### Research

**130.** It is clear to us that the evidence base on language use patterns, how people interact with the language in various context, and evaluations around impact of interventions is patchy at best. Research and data on Welsh language use is seemingly sporadic, and data on how people use Welsh language technology, apps and social media is limited.

**131.** We heard of the challenges that academia face in seeking funding to undertake research on the Welsh language as it is not deemed “urgent”<sup>138</sup>.

**132.** Ultimately, there needs to be a far more systematic and coordinated approach to research in relation to the Welsh language. We see pockets of excellent work being undertaken by the Welsh Government, academia and other research partners, but there appears to be a lack of clear direction or structure. Stronger leadership and support from the Welsh Government around the evidence needs might assist academia to access funding and develop research criteria that will deliver better public policy and decisions.

**133.** The Welsh Government published its Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers Research and Evaluation Framework in 2022 (the Research and Evaluation Framework).<sup>139</sup> which provides guidance for the collection of evidence and data. It was designed to be used by the Welsh Government and by other

<sup>136</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 5 March 2025](#), paragraph 144

<sup>137</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 5 March 2025](#), paragraph 146

<sup>138</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 10 July 2025](#), paragraph 12

<sup>139</sup> [Welsh Government: Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers Research and Evaluation Framework - November 2022](#)

organisations with a role in collecting evidence and data in relation to the delivery and outcomes of Cymraeg 2050. However, the reach of the Research and Evaluation Framework beyond the Welsh Government is unclear to us, and we would query its effectiveness and impact on the research outputs by other organisations.

**134.** Learning from other countries and their experiences is also important, particularly where the use of technology by younger people is in question. It was interesting to hear about apps being developed in places like Glasgow to enable people to identify Gaelic-speaking spaces within the city, connecting with other Gaelic speakers.<sup>140</sup> During the Committee's inquiry on Wales-Ireland relations, we heard how links with Ireland can strengthen language policy in Wales and shared learning can mean that mistakes are avoided.<sup>141</sup>

**135.** The Committee sees a clear need to expand Prosiect BRO to medium and lower-density areas, and to invest in robust evaluation of events and festivals to capture linguistic outcomes alongside economic impact.

**136.** The Committee also endorses developing live usage metrics for Welsh language technology, deeper workplace/education studies, and more comparative research with other countries and regions with similar challenges to inform policy design.

### **Harnessing the diaspora through technology**

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**137.** The Committee recognises the untapped potential of the Welsh-speaking diaspora, estimated at up to 150,000 people. Whilst large-scale investment is neither necessary nor proportionate, the Committee believes that small, strategic measures, such as digital engagement platforms, virtual events, and opportunities for remote contribution, could strengthen the global Welsh language community and reinforce cultural identity beyond Wales.

**Conclusion 8.** There is clearly good intention to develop a stronger evidence base in relation to Welsh language use in Wales, and the Welsh Government has sought, through its Research and Evaluation Framework, to provide some guidance. However, a far more systematic and coordinated approach to research

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<sup>140</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 10 July 2025](#), paragraph 21

<sup>141</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Wales-Ireland relations: Exploring an old relationship in a new age – October 2023](#), pages 28-30

needs is required to inform Welsh language policy design and delivery. That leadership ought to come from the Welsh Government.

**Conclusion 9.** There is a specific need to measure the effectiveness of workplace and sports-based interventions on Welsh language use, including longitudinal studies to track behaviour change over time. This should align with the introduction of the CEFR and wider changes brought about by the Act.

**Conclusion 10.** The Committee believes that that the Welsh Government should routinely consider the role of the diaspora in its language strategy and ensures that policies reflect the reality that “our linguistic community does extend beyond the borders of Wales.” Engagement should be proportionate and focused on strengthening cultural identity and language use through technology.

## Annex 1: List of oral evidence sessions.

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

Date	Name and Organisation
5 March 2025	<p><b>Dr Simon Brooks, Chair,</b> Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities</p> <p><b>Professor Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, Vice Chair,</b> Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities</p> <p><b>Dr Gwennan Higham, Commission Member,</b> Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities</p>
5 June 2025	<p><b>Dr Neil Mac Parthalain, Senior Lecturer,</b> Aberystwyth University</p> <p><b>Dr Daniel Cunliffe, Associate Professor</b> University of South Wales</p> <p><b>Dr Cynog Prys, Senior Lecturer,</b> Bangor University</p> <p><b>Dr Llion Jones, Director of Canolfan Bedwyr,</b> Bangor University</p> <p><b>Dr Lowri Hughes, Head of Policy and Development,</b> <b>Canolfan Bedwyr</b> Bangor University</p> <p><b>Gruffydd Prys, Head of Language Technologies, Canolfan Bedwyr,</b> Bangor University</p> <p><b>Carl Morris,</b> Welsh Language Technologist</p>
12 June 2025	<p><b>Hywel Iorwerth, Senior Policy Officer,</b> Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner</p> <p><b>Einir Sion, Welsh Language Enabler,</b> Arts Council of Wales</p> <p><b>Nia Williams, Director of Education and Engagement,</b> Amgueddfa Cymru</p>

Date	Name and Organisation
	<p><b>Ian Gwyn Hughes, Head of Public Relations and Culture</b> Football Association Wales</p> <p><b>Gwyn Derfel, Welsh Language Manager,</b> Welsh Rugby Union</p> <p><b>Lisbeth McLean, Chief Officer,</b> Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful</p> <p><b>Lowri Catrin Jones, Chief Officer,</b> Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili</p> <p><b>Maiwenn Berry, Chief Officer,</b> Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam</p> <p><b>Osian Rowlands, Chief Executive,</b> Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p><b>Catherine Stephens, Head of Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg,</b> University of South Wales</p> <p><b>Betsan Moses, Chief Executive</b> National Eisteddfod</p> <p><b>Llio Maddocks, Director of the Arts</b> Urdd Gobaith Cymru</p>
10 July 2025	<p><b>Dr Osian Elias, Director.</b> Iaith</p> <p><b>Dr Kathryn Jones, Executive Director,</b> Iaith</p> <p><b>Dr Elin Royles, Reader,</b> Aberystwyth University</p> <p><b>Dr Rhian Hodges,</b> Bangor University</p> <p><b>Professor Bernadette O'Rourke,</b> University of Glasgow</p> <p><b>Professor Nikolay Slavkov,</b> University of Ottawa</p> <p><b>Dr Ruth Kircher,</b> European Centre for Minority Issues</p> <p><b>Dr Robert James Talbot,</b> Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada</p> <p><b>Professor Michael Hornsby,</b> Adam Mickiewicz University</p>
16 July 2025	<p><b>Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language,</b> Welsh Government</p>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name and Organisation</b>
	<b>Jeremy Evas, Head of Prosiect 2050,</b> Welsh Government <b>Elin Burns, Director, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Welsh Language,</b> Welsh Government

## Annex 2: List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All Consultation responses and additional written information can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

Reference	Organisation
<b>CFA 01</b>	Bethan Collins, PhD Student
<b>CFA 02</b>	Individual 01
<b>CFA 03</b>	Individual 02
<b>CFA 04</b>	Individual 03
<b>CFA 05</b>	Dr Gregory Davies (Liverpool University) and Dr Robert Jones (Cardiff University)
<b>CFA 06</b>	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
<b>CFA 07</b>	Federation of Small Businesses
<b>CFA 08</b>	Colleges Wales
<b>CFA 09</b>	Monmouthshire County Council
<b>CFA 10</b>	Dr Thora Tenbrink
<b>CFA 11</b>	Mudiad Meithrin
<b>CFA 12</b>	Individual 04
<b>CFA 13</b>	Individual 05
<b>CFA 14</b>	Individual 06
<b>CFA 15</b>	Mentrau Iaith Cymru
<b>CFA 16</b>	Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg
<b>CFA 17</b>	Individual 07
<b>CFA 18</b>	Welsh Language Commissioner
<b>CFA 19</b>	UCAC
<b>CFA 20</b>	Individual 08
<b>CFA 21</b>	Dyfodol i'r Iaith

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>CFA 22</b>	Bilingual Cardiff – Cardiff Council
<b>CFA 23</b>	Iaith
<b>CFA 24</b>	Cwmpas
<b>CFA 25</b>	Estyn
<b>CFA 26</b>	Urdd Gobaith Cymru

### **Additional Information**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Correspondence: Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities	16 April 2025
Written evidence: Arts Council of Wales	6 June 2025
Correspondence: Welsh Language Commissioner	9 June 2025
Correspondence: Urdd Gobaith Cymru	12 June 2025
Correspondence: Urdd Gobaith Cymru	17 June 2025
Written evidence: Welsh Government	July 2025
Written evidence: Sport Wales	4 July 2025
Correspondence: Menter Caerphilly	9 July 2025
Written evidence: Welsh Government	15 August 2025
Written evidence: Aberystwyth Centre for Welsh Politics and Society	25 August 2025
Research Article: Robert Jones and Gregory Davies	8 October 2025