

P-04-655 Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector. Correspondence – Petitioner to the Chair 17.12.15

Dear Chairman of the Petitions Committee, William Powell AM

I write to you following Welsh Language Commissioner's announcement on 2 December this year outlining the timetable for setting Welsh-language Standards for certain categories of private company. The announcement is available here:

<http://www.comisiynyddygydraeg.cymru/english/news/Pages/Commissioner-presents-further-standards-reports-and-announces-the-next-steps-in-introducing-Welsh-language-standards.aspx>

We would stress that the Commissioner's announcement does not meet the requirements of our petition, which refers specifically to a timetable for including the telecommunications sector in the Standards regime. Indeed, the announcement contradicts what the Welsh Language Commissioner told us at a meeting on 26 October this year, namely that she would announce a timetable for all private sectors named in the Measure, including telecommunications and telephone operating companies, in her announcement before the end of the year.

We would ask you to call on the Commissioner to appear before the committee to explain why she has not stayed true to her word and to explain the absence of a timetable for applying standards to the telecommunications sector in particular.

Thank you again for your consideration of our correspondence. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is any other matter for which you require further information or clarification.

Yours faithfully,

Manon Elin James

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

2 March 2016

Dear *Chris*

Petition No. P-04-655: Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition from Cymdeithas yr Iaith which has collected 442 signatures:

We call upon the National Assembly to insist that the Welsh Government ensures that all private and voluntary sectors that come within the scope of the Welsh Language Measure 2011 offer enhanced Welsh-language services by collaborating with the Welsh Language Commissioner to introduce regulations to the National Assembly prior to the 2016 Assembly election or at the earliest possible opportunity.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Wales are being deprived of basic Welsh-language services every day by a large number of organisations, such as telephone, broadband, energy and transport companies. This totally unnecessary injustice occurs because the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner have not fully implemented the powers that they have under the Welsh Language Measure, which was unanimously passed by the Assembly almost



five years ago. The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner are, therefore, hampering the democratic will of the people of Wales.

Furthermore, we believe that the Welsh Language Measure should be amended in order to speed up and simplify the process of imposing Welsh-language Standards on organisations and companies, establishing general rights for the Welsh language and extending the scope of the Measure to cover the remainder of the private sector, including supermarkets and banks.

This petition was last considered at our meeting on 2 February. As your Committee has recently taken oral evidence from the Commissioner on this point, Members agreed that I should write to you to ask that you take into account the petitioner's views in following up the evidence session, and to seek further information on the timescale for the completion of your work on this issue.

Please forward your response to the Clerking Team at
SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales.

Yours sincerely



William Powell AC/AM
Cadeirydd/ Chair

Encs: Correspondence from the petitioner dated 17/12/15 and 28/01/16



William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

10 March 2016

Dear Bill

Petition No. P-04-655: Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector

Thank you for your recent letter asking the Committee to take into account the above petition when following-up on the evidence session held with the Welsh Language Commissioner in December 2015.

You will wish to be aware that we discussed the matter of Welsh language standards in the private sector with the First Minister when preparing for our Legacy Report. The [transcript](#) of that meeting is available on the Committee's webpage.

In our Legacy Report we recommend that our successor committee undertakes a review of the next round of Welsh language standards, as well as undertaking post-legislative scrutiny of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011.

Yours sincerely



Christine Chapman AM
Chair

