



Our ref: MA/EM/0708/21

Bethan Sayed MS
Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

24 February 2021

Dear Bethan,

Thank you for your letter of 29 January following the Draft Budget 2021-22 scrutiny session on 14 January to discuss budget allocations that support and promote the Welsh language. As agreed, please find set out below further details on the issues raised by the Committee.

Targets for increasing the number of Welsh-medium teachers

Increasing the number of Welsh-medium teachers is essential if we are to see more learners in Welsh-medium education. During the first five-year period of implementing *Cymraeg 2050*, the data shows that we haven't made as much progress against the targets as anticipated, particularly in the secondary sector.

Our current interventions that aim to support an increase in the number of Welsh-medium teachers include:

- Iaith Athrawon Yfory (IAY) incentive which has an annual budget of approximately £0.5m. This has been available for Welsh-medium secondary student teachers since 2018. The total incentive is £5,000 and is paid in two instalments equal payments:
 - the first within one year of successfully obtaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); and
 - the second within one year of successfully completing their induction period.To date, 154 teachers have accessed this incentive during the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years. The first claims for the 2020/21 academic year are due over the coming months.
- Reformed Initial Teacher Education programmes now provide Welsh-language support for all student teachers to develop their confidence to teach through the medium of Welsh or to develop their skills to teach Welsh as part of the curriculum in English-medium schools. This is in line with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and based on a common Welsh language skills competency framework for practitioners.

- New alternative routes into teaching have been developed which allow student teachers to study part-time maintaining other commitments alongside their training or via an employment-based route. The hope is that these new programmes will attract a more diverse teaching workforce and those who want to change career. The routes are available through the medium of Welsh.
- Welsh Government funds the national *Teaching Wales* digital media campaign to very specific groups of potential teachers identified by insight, including Welsh-speaking undergraduates. Approximately £0.250m is spent on this campaign annually.
- Working with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and a range of stakeholders to promote Welsh as an A Level subject in order to create an adequate supply of university graduates in Welsh, who can progress into teaching. A total of £0.145m has been invested in this work during 2019-20 and 2020-21, which has been disrupted by COVID-19.
- Conversion programme to provide support for primary teachers to convert to teaching in secondary schools. There is an annual budget of £0.5m for this programme. This is a specific programme for the Welsh-medium sector. During 2020/21 there are 10 participants who are being supported to teach in a range of secondary subjects, including mathematics, science, Welsh and English.
- Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme – the scheme has two aims: to develop the Welsh language skills of practitioners in English-medium schools in order to teach Welsh confidently as part of the curriculum; and to improve the Welsh language skills of practitioners in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools in order to develop the Welsh literacy skills of learners. There is an annual budget of £3.65m which covers the cost of the courses, the supply costs for schools and additional travel costs for participants. The evaluation report will now be published in March following delays due to COVID-19.
- Support provided by regional consortia that includes a range of short language and methodology courses for practitioners, the development of resources to support teaching and learning and support for the Siarter Iaith. A total of £2.7m was allocated to the regions in 2020-21 and we anticipate the same level of funding in 2021-22.
- Collaborative work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to develop online courses for practitioners, leaders and governors to access to learn Welsh or improve their Welsh. The courses have been contextualised for the education sector. This work was undertaken using the National Centre's budget.

During this time reforms have taken place within initial teacher education, the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) has been implemented, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans have been reviewed, and the planning and delivery of post-16 and higher education Welsh-medium provision has continued to be developed.

Moving forward, the Minister for Education and her officials are working with Education Workforce Council, Cydag, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner and other stakeholders to develop a 10-year plan which will take us up to the next *Cymraeg 2050* targets in 2031. This 10-year period will coincide with the 10-year cycle for the new WESPs enabling us to use the intelligence provided by local authorities about where new Welsh-medium schools or streams will be opening alongside data from the SWAC and the pipeline of Welsh-speaking undergraduates to improve the planning for increasing the Welsh-medium teaching workforce. There is no quick solution and we will work with schools, prospective teachers and other stakeholders to co-construct the strategy, and mainstream developments to support the increase in Welsh-medium teachers. Should

the committee have any suggestions on how we could increase the number of Welsh-medium teachers, the Minister for Education and I would be grateful if you could outline these.

Post-16 Education

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has taken its extended responsibilities seriously and has already made significant progress with projects in all further education colleges in the priority areas. The availability of vocational provision post-16, ensuring that learners continue with their education and training in Welsh or bilingually and maintaining their Welsh language skills is crucially important to our goal of a million Welsh speakers.

Since extending the Coleg's remit, I have supported the Ambassador Scheme in all colleges and the apprenticeship sector to promote and enable learners to speak Welsh and feel confident in their skills for the workplace and in their communities. I have seen first-hand how learners benefit from the Ambassador Scheme and the interventions put in place by the Coleg. Progress is taking place in mainstreaming the Welsh language in post-16 education and training and I will continue to have discussions with the Minister for Education on this matter.

Welsh language support for new parents

The 'Fi a fy mabi' sessions are offered through the 'Cymraeg i Blant' programme to new and prospective parents offering a series of sessions aimed at supporting use of Welsh in the family and supporting the child's journey to Welsh-medium education.

Since late March 2020, the support offered through Cymraeg i Blant has been able to continue, with activities offered moved to an online-only model. The 'Fi a fy mabi' sessions were specifically developed and introduced during the pandemic to offer support via this model. Between June and the end of December 2020, 159 individual 'Fi a fy mabi' sessions were held, attended by a total of 476 parents.

Promotion of these sessions is done via the local 'Cymraeg i Blant' Facebook pages as well as the pages of other social media groups like 'Bumps to Babies'. Information about these groups, as well as the wider support offered through the Cymraeg i Blant programme, is sent to each Health Visitor/ Midwife Manager in addition to Health Board Language Officers.

The promotion of 'Cymraeg i Blant' sessions via Health Visitors has been challenging in some areas during the pandemic due to some of them having to change roles to support the fight against the pandemic. This situation remains to a certain extent with some health visitors involved in the vaccination programme.

The period since March 2020 has been challenging, but it has also provided an opportunity to further develop the support offered to parents. Face to face sessions remain an important element of the support that can be offered through the programme and will resume as soon as regulations and guidance allow this to be done safely. However, the online support developed during the past year will continue to be an integral part of the expanded support offered through Cymraeg i Blant.

Welsh Language Commissioner

A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) was agreed between the Welsh Government and the Commissioner in August 2019 following Aled Roberts' appointment on 1 April 2019. Annex 1 to the Memorandum outlines the division of responsibilities between Welsh Government and the Commissioner. I meet with the Commissioner on a quarterly basis where work programmes and priorities are discussed. My officials also meet regularly with the Commissioner's office to ensure that the division of responsibilities are clear, and that efforts to promote the use of Welsh within specific sectors are not duplicated.

The MOU states that we will review the division of responsibilities annually. The pandemic prevented us from doing this on the MOU's first anniversary. As the lockdown hopefully eases, we will restart the discussions on the MOU. This may include which bodies are best placed to undertake specific types of work, with a special emphasis on implementing the recommendations of our recently published Government Social Research Report *The effects of Covid-19 on Welsh language community groups*.

The budget for the next financial year is challenging for all organisations, including the Welsh Language Commissioner. I am pleased that we have been able to maintain the revenue budget of £3.207m in 2021-22 and remain confident that the Commissioner will continue to fulfil his statutory functions within this budget. I will continue to hold regular discussions with the Commissioner which will include monitoring how the Commissioner continues to fulfil his functions under the Welsh Language Measure.

The pressures on budgets as a result of the pandemic has forced us all to work differently and I am grateful to the Commissioner and his staff for adapting to the challenges. As with all bodies, the experience of working through COVID-19 and lockdown periods has led the Commissioner to find alternative ways to work with partners and stakeholders. The Commissioner is satisfied that he can maintain an effective relationship with other bodies through virtual means rather than having face to face meetings every time. The Commissioner notes in his Estimate for 2021-22 that these changes in ways of working will result in savings of approximately £45,000 from the travel budget (55%) from 2021-22 onwards. This does not take into account the fact that virtual meetings also allow staff to make more efficient use of their time, by saving on travel time.

The Commissioner is still scoping the additional IT work caused by the cyber-attack with his external IT contractors. The Commissioner was given £385,000 capital funding in 2020-21 to upgrade his IT infrastructure; that work is going ahead as planned but the programme of improvement work funded by that investment has had to be reprioritised due to the cyber-attack. The Commissioner has also been awarded £30,000 capital funding for 2021-22 to develop a new website on a more modern platform. Until the Commissioner is able to isolate the additional costs caused by the cyber-attack then we are unable to finalise and consider any additional capital funding requirements.

With regards to the timetable for recovery, the Commissioner's external IT contractor has developed a new IT system with support and guidance from Welsh Government officials. The new system has been operational since before Christmas. The Commissioner's social media platforms and phone system were not affected by the cyber-attack and have been operational throughout. The Commissioner's website was completely disabled by the cyber-attack and the Commissioner is currently developing a new website. The work to recover data lost in the cyber-attack is also on-going.

Additional funding for COVID related pressures

Any decision on providing additional funding will be based on the evidence of need. We are in regular discussions with both the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod in review of the continued challenges they are facing with the uncertainty of their provision as a consequence of COVID-19.

The Urdd has provided a proposal for rebuilding their services across the organisation and also shared the challenges they are facing within the current financial year. We have therefore provided additional support of £1.3m for the Urdd to help them with the financial pressures they are facing within the current financial year.

On 26 January the National Eisteddfod announced that the 2021 National Eisteddfod will be postponed until 2022. As a result of this announcement we have been able to provide them with extra funding of £190,000 in this financial year to help with the infrastructure costs in creating a blended festival in 2021, building on the successful AmGen event in 2020.

I trust that you will find these responses helpful to enable the completion of your scrutiny of the 2021-22 Draft Budget.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg
Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language

Eluned Morgan MS
Minister for Mental Health, Well-being and the Welsh Language

29th January 2021

Dear Eluned,

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2021-2022

Thank you for attending the meeting of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee meeting on 14 January 2021 to discuss the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2021-2022.

During the meeting you agreed to provide further details on a number of issues. I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions by 2 March to inform the Plenary debate on the Draft Budget.

Targets for increasing the number of Welsh medium teachers

The Cymraeg 2050 sets ambitious targets for increasing the number of Welsh language teachers. You mentioned that the Sabbatical Scheme aims to improve the skills of practitioners in English-medium and Welsh-medium schools and receives £3.65 million in funding with access to funding for regional consortia to improve standards. You also said you are hoping to publish the evaluation report of the scheme in February.

During the meeting you offered to send us more detail on your strategy to increase the number of teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh. Please can you include the expenditure on the programme and any assessment of why the current interventions have not produced the numbers needed to reach the Cymraeg 2050 targets so far?

Post-16 Education

When we asked you about funding to develop the provision of Welsh-medium education in the post-16 sector, you stated that this does not sit within your portfolio, but that of the Education Minister. That may be true, but you have appeared before this committee on a number of occasions emphasising the importance of *mainstreaming* the Welsh language across all Welsh Government departments and budgets. We were disappointed therefore that you could not give us a more meaningful and substantial reply in relation to this important issue.

We would urge you to continue having robust discussions with the Education Minister about the critical importance of developing Welsh-medium provision in the FE sector. To enable them to make the difference needed in increasing provision, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has suggested an investment of £800,000 from the Government's Further Education budget for 2021-22, increasing each year thereafter (£1.4m 2022-23, £ 2.5m 2023-24 and £ 3.2m in 2024-25). We would also urge you to engage with the sector to ensure urgent progress regarding this aspect of education. Those who do not stay on for 6th form education



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need, and deserve, a wider Welsh language offer across Welsh Colleges and through apprenticeship schemes.

Welsh language support for new parents

You mentioned during the meeting that there is support for new mothers and babies via the 'Fi a fy mabi' programme. Please can you set out how this is promoted to new parents and whether you are working with Health visitors to promote the programme? Have arrangements for the promotion of this programme been adapted in light of the coronavirus pandemic?

Welsh Language Commissioner

You mentioned that the Welsh Government's Prosiect 2050 would take on some work areas currently within the remit of the Commissioner which would free up resources. Can you clarify which aspects of the Commissioner's work you anticipate Prosiect 2050 will undertake, and what discussions have you had with the Commissioner about this development?

When the Commissioner gave evidence to the Committee at our meeting on 1 October 2020, he said:

'The workload is increasing and the size of the organisation has remained the same or has shrunk. Now I identified that problem last year in the forecast I provided to Government. I think that was realistic.'

You said that you are having regular discussions with the Commissioner to make sure he can fulfil his functions under the Welsh Language Measure. Given his comment to the Committee, are you confident that the Welsh Language Commissioner has sufficient resources to meet his statutory obligations?

Have you had any discussions with the Commissioner on the anticipated savings resulting from remote working, and if so, what impact will this have on his resources?

Following the cyber-attack on the IT system used by the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, you agreed that there may be need for additional help or support. Can you confirm whether the Commissioner has requested additional funding to deal with the effect of the cyber-attack and where this funding will come from, should you agree to provide it? The severity of the attack will obviously take time to resolve, can you provide any dates by which you hope the Commissioner's office will be back to normal?

Additional funding for COVID related pressures

You also mentioned during the meeting that, if necessary, you will bid for funding from the central COVID fund to support the Urdd. Please can you let the Committee know the criteria on which you will base your decision on when to apply to the fund? Are you considering applying to the central fund to support any other organisations promoting the Welsh language, such as the National Eisteddfod, following the decision to cancel this year's event?

In order to inform the work of the committee and the Plenary debate on the Draft Budget I would be grateful if you could respond by 2 March.



I will be copying this letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee to inform its scrutiny of the Draft Budget.

Yours sincerely,

Bethan Sayed.

Bethan Sayed MS

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

