

DWLP04

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol | Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Datblygu'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg ôl-16 | Development of post-16 Welsh language provision

Ymateb gan Cymwyterau Cymru | Evidence from Qualifications Wales

05 April 2024

Dear Committee



Qualifications Wales welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee.

In this evidence we provide high-level background information that describes our work to increase the range of qualifications available in Cymraeg and explain the current funding challenge.

This information will contribute to your understanding of how decisions around future funding for the development of post-16 Welsh language provision will impact the Cymraeg 2050 trajectory and targets.

Sector reviews

Since being established, in 2015, we have undertaken regular reviews of different employment sectors (sector reviews) to understand whether qualifications and the qualifications system are meeting the reasonable needs of learners. In so doing we consider all the matters set out in the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 – including:

'the desirability of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, including through the availability of assessment arrangements that provide for assessment through the medium of the Welsh language, and of qualifications that otherwise promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language'

Following a sector review we may undertake substantial reform, as we did with 'Health and Social Care, including Childcare' and 'Construction and the Built Environment'. In these sectors, working with partners such as Social Care Wales, we identified the need for a new suite of Made-for-Wales qualifications. When we undertake reforms of this nature, we require awarding bodies to make the new qualifications, and all supporting resources, available in Cymraeg.

Sector reviews may not lead to major reforms but may identify specific qualifications where there is demand but not availability in Cymraeg. In such cases we work closely with the relevant awarding bodies to encourage them to make them available through the medium of Welsh and we may then support this through our grant scheme.

Welsh medium grant scheme

Since 2016, Qualifications Wales has made a grant scheme available to awarding bodies so that they can increase the range of qualifications made available in Cymraeg. In this time the number of qualifications made available through the medium of Welsh, where there is demand, has increased significantly.

In recent years we have been working closely with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in a strategic partnership. This has allowed us to target our grant scheme with greater effect so that both organisations are working in a coordinated manner.

We have also produced various resources to support awarding bodies and initiated regular support groups. We also have a specific Cymraeg stakeholder group which, along with our partnership working, helps us to target our grant scheme in line with the needs of learners and centres.

These actions have increased demand for the grant scheme significantly and we have gone from a position of underspend against the budget provision to significant demand for the scheme that outstrips the funding that we have available.

Funding

Alongside the whole of the public sector, we face significant demands on the funding that is made available to us. Each year we make available a Welsh medium grant scheme of £180k. Before 2023/24 this allocation of funding was greater than the claims made by awarding bodies. However, in 2023/24 we anticipate that claims will be closer to £230k. We have been able to accept bids from awarding bodies up to £250k as Welsh Government committed to providing additional funds up to the value of £70k if we were unable to fund the larger grant

scheme ourselves. In 2024/25 we anticipate that demand for the scheme will grow again, and we currently anticipate that bids for grant funding may be as high as £300k. Similar to last year we have secured agreement from Welsh Government that they will provide additional funding if required.

While we are grateful for Welsh Government's commitment to provide additional funding if needed, the increase in bids for grants indicates that our work to promote the availability of qualifications in Cymraeg is working and will likely need additional funding in the future.

The availability of qualifications through the medium of Welsh is strategically important to the growth of Welsh medium post-16 education. There are many challenges in increasing the range of qualifications available in Cymraeg, not least the low demand for many post-16 qualifications (the vast majority of post-16 qualifications have fewer than 100 certifications in total).

We remain committed to working with partners, including Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, to increase the range of qualifications available in Cymraeg and support post-16 Welsh-language provision.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive
