

DWLP05

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 Comisiynydd y Gymraeg | Evidence from Welsh Language Commissioner

The additional funding provided in 2022-23 and 2023-24 enabled the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (the Coleg) and the National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Centre) to intensify their activities in the post-16 sector. For example, it led to the appointment of more Welsh-medium lecturers and assessors and expanded the Welsh language training available to staff and students. Whilst it is difficult to predict the exact impact of the decision to reprioritize the additional funding on the numbers learning Welsh or studying through the medium of Welsh, it is reasonable to conclude that some of the work outlined above will slow down or not be developed further. This is likely to have a negative impact on the development of post-16 Welsh language provision.

In this context, it ought to be emphasised that the development of post-16 Welsh language provision starts from a very low baseline. The most recent data on further education (FE) and work-based learning (WBL) shows an increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual learning activities (see appendix 1 and 2). Nonetheless, the general increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is primarily due to an increase in learning activities that includes a 'small amount of Welsh-medium learning'. Whilst we in no way wish to trivialise the significance of such progress, it is important to emphasise that increasing the number of learners who study a more substantial proportion of their courses through the medium of Welsh is also required if the Government's Cymraeg 2050 policy objectives are to be achieved.

The work of expanding Welsh language provision in FE and WBL is merely starting, and there is a long way to go. The attempt to expand Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in these sectors has been an uphill battle over the past decades, and there is nothing to suggest that this will change soon. It is therefore

clear that significant investment will be required to achieve the Government's policy objective in relation to post-16 Welsh language provision.

Our [recent research into the views and experiences of learners in the post-16 sector](#) clearly highlights the demand for Welsh-medium and bilingual education in various contexts, including in schools. Learners are proud that they can speak Welsh and consider the language an advantage for their career prospects. The research provides further evidence of the need for proactive and ambitious plans to expand Welsh language provision, and to tackle the obstacles that learners are currently facing.

Looking ahead it is an exciting time for tertiary sector with the new Commission being established. It is important to place the decision to reprioritize the £3.5m additional funding in the context of the significant budget and influence that the Commission will have, particularly in terms of setting priorities and developing a new strategic direction for the tertiary sector. Although there is a tendency to view such a new body as the panacea to all problems, there is an opportunity here for the Commission to use its regulatory and funding powers to ensure the Welsh language is a strategic priority for the sector throughout. The data clearly shows the extend of the challenge, and to make meaningful progress it will be necessary to mainstream the Welsh language into all aspects of strategic planning, particularly the arrangements for funding provision and bilingual workforce planning. The expertise of the College and the Centre will undoubtedly be essential in this context.

Appendix 1: Learning activities by medium of delivery in further education, excluding work based learning

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Welsh-medium	0.1% 690	0.3% 1265	0.3% 985	0.2% 755	0.3% 880	0.3% 915	0.3% 890	0.1% 410	0.07% 250
Bilingual	3% 13,730	2.3% 8,755	1.1% 3,875	2.9% 10,010	2% 6,810	2.7% 7,890	3% 9,005	2.6% 8,410	2.5% 8,355
Significant amount	0.6% 2,810	0.8% 3,020	0.4% 1,570	0.7% 2,325	1.3% 4,425	1.0% 2,885	0.8% 2,405	1% 3,375	1.4% 5,185

of Welsh-medium learning									
Small amount of Welsh-medium learning	3.5% 16,040	3.9% 15,145	2.8% 9,880	3.5% 12,160	5.3% 18,490	5.0% 14,690	6.8% 20,060	9.3% 30,410	10.5% 38,125
English-medium	92.8% 431,620	92.7% 355,530	95.4% 337,680	92.7% 322,910	90.1% 313,190	90.3% 265,505	87.8% 259,380	86% 279,845	85% 308,690
Welsh-medium and bilingual provision overall	7.2%	7.3%	4.6%	7.3%	8.9%	9%	10.9%	13%	14.5%

Appendix 2: Learning activities by medium of delivery in work based learning

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Welsh-medium	0.3% 620	0.4% 685	0.3% 515	0.3% 520	0.4% 565	0.5% 675	0.8% 945	0.7% 750	0.6% 710
Bilingual	3.4% 6,475	3.1% 5,045	3.2% 5,135	2.9% 4,850	2.9% 4,305	2.9% 3,620	3% 3,730	2.9% 3,065	3% 3,640
Significant amount of Welsh-medium learning	0.2% 325	0.3% 415	0.3% 465	0.3% 530	0.3% 435	0.3% 380	0.4% 555	0.6% 595	0.5% 580

DWLP05: Datblygu'r ddarpariaeth Gymraeg ôl-16 | Development of post-16 Welsh language provision

Small amount of Welsh-medium learning	3.2% 6,110	4.7% 7,675	6.9% 10,945	6.7% 11,010	8.3% 12,355	9.3% 11,495	13.3% 16,525	19.5% 20,450	25.5% 30,325
English-medium	92.8 174,875	91.5% 148,665	89.3% 142,285	89.3% 147,775	88.1% 130,455	87.0% 107,850	82.5% 102,239	76.3% 79,810	70% 83,210
Welsh-medium and bilingual provision overall	7.2%	8.5%	10.7%	10.3%	11.9%	13.0%	17.5%	23.7%	29.6%