

This document provides a translation of correspondence received from National Centre for Learning Welsh

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Bil y Gymraeg ac Addysg \(Cymru\)](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill](#)

WLE 17

Ymateb gan: Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol

Response from: National Centre for Learning Welsh

1. Background

1.1 The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established in 2016 following a tender process by the Welsh Government. The University of Wales Trinity Saint David won the contract to establish the Centre. The duration of the original contract was five years. The contract was extended for a further five years in 2021.

1.2 The Centre's aim is to create Welsh speakers that enjoy using the language, by providing a national Learn Welsh strategy and services. Since its establishment, the Centre has transformed the Learn Welsh sector. The numbers learning Welsh have increased by 33%, and in 2022-2023 its courses were completed by 16,905 people. Both face-to-face and virtual tutored courses are available, as well as online self-study courses. There are also plans for specific groups such as families, workplaces and young people. We also work with a number of specific sectors and have developed tailored Learn Welsh programmes, for example for early years education and care, health and care, further education/higher education, local authorities and sport. Recently, the Centre has been given responsibilities for providing a national programme for the education workforce. The Centre also has a programme for confidence building and use courses to help speakers that lack confidence or are reluctant to use their Welsh.

1.3 One of the Centre's first duties was to develop a Learn Welsh curriculum. The curriculum is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR forms the basis of the Centre's curriculum and is therefore used across its various plans and courses. The curriculum includes overviews that show progress in the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) across the levels from A1 to C1. They can be used in conjunction with the functional overviews and grammatical syntaxes. As learners make progress, they will learn to use the language (speaking and writing) in an increasing number of contexts, moving from the familiar (A1) to a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar situations (B2), being able to undertake listening and reading tasks of increasing complexity, moving from simple language in familiar contexts (A1) to much more complex and abstract language in a wide range of styles and contexts (B2). They will also be able to benefit from a growing pool of vocabulary, styles and registers (formal

and informal); grammar and syntax and pronunciation features. They will also start using the language with more confidence and depth.

1.4 The Centre has also led the 700-strong Learn Welsh workforce to implement the curriculum by introducing resources and training to deliver courses throughout the levels from A1 to C1.

1.5 Learners praise the Centre's provision - 99% said that they enjoy learning Welsh (Dweud Eich Dweud (Have Your Say) 2023-2024 questionnaire, 4,803 respondents).

1.6 In August 2021, the Welsh Government carried out a rapid review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The report stated that the Centre is:

'...recognised as a body that coordinates, plans, delivers and develops Learn Welsh provision at a national level... In the second phase of its existence, this role as a key and strategic institution central to the acquisition of the Welsh language needs to be developed and strengthened.

1.7 The Centre has now been established for eight years and has proven its expertise in terms of learning Welsh. The Learn Welsh sector is inspected by Estyn, with the Centre being inspected every three years. In its inspection report on the Centre in April 2024, Estyn noted that it is:

'central to numerous initiatives to normalise the use of the language'

'Leaders are confident in adapting and evolving any aspect of the service and operate creatively to innovate continuously... which leads to successful linguistic planning in all aspects of their work'

'The successful performance of the Centre... contributes firmly to achieving the targets in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers strategy'

1.8 Estyn recommends that the Centre continues to extend and share the expertise of the Learn Welsh sector, and continues to innovate by facilitating activities that integrate new speakers in their communities and in their work.

2. The general principles of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention

2.1 The Centre welcomes and supports the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill. It agrees that an ambitious programme of change is needed that requires action on several levels with regard to the Welsh language in education in

order to ensure that Welsh belongs to us all. We believe that it is very important to recognise that Learn Welsh (lifelong) opportunities include the scope of the Centre's current work.

2.2 We believe that establishing a new statutory body to lead on Learn Welsh (lifelong) is a long-term solution that offers stability to the sector. This is different from the previous system of following a grant allocation process for a limited period. The new Welsh Language and Education Bill will give every child in Wales a fair chance to become a Welsh speaker, whatever their background and whichever school they attend. We believe that the Centre's successes in presenting one clear learning path for learners have laid the basis for the Institute to build on this work in supporting the Welsh Language and Education Bill.

2.3 We are fully supportive of including the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 in law. We believe that setting targets for increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace and socially will provide a definitive focus and a means of measuring the efficiency and reach of the work. The Centre's work in terms of Learn Welsh in the community, in workplaces and in families is an integral part of this and we believe that this work needs to be continued as part of the Institute's (lifelong) learning strategy.

2.4 The Centre welcomes the aim of creating a continuum of skills for Welsh that's based on the CEFR, just as the Centre has done for adults. This has supported and facilitated the journey of adults learning Welsh, including in workplaces, and it would be good to extend this to learners of all ages. We believe that the Centre has the operational expertise in this area to work with the Government in creating a clear and seamless continuum that will be an integral part of the Institute's work, which will be crucial to the success of the Bill and to producing more Welsh speakers. We believe that the CEFR offers a suitable framework for (lifelong) Welsh learning and that it would be possible to apply and tailor elements of the CEFR to children of primary age onwards.

2.5 The Centre supports the linguistic outcome that all pupils leave statutory education with the ability to speak Welsh confidently. The Centre fully supports the principle of progression in skills and provision for pupils. The Centre has developed a Learn Welsh program for people aged 16-25, doing so along the continuum (from A1 to C2). It collaborates with the tertiary education sector to ensure that these opportunities are available for young people in further education, higher education and apprenticeships. Since 2017 the Centre has also led an advanced programme for upskilling the further education and higher education workforce, as part of its Working Welsh scheme.

2.6 We believe that the role of the Institute is essential to ensure that the expertise of Learn Welsh along the continuum is a core part of the offer available to

young people, and also to ensure key Welsh skills as they gain access to the labour market. We believe that the Institute's expertise in teaching Welsh will be key to leading this work, but this will need to be done in collaboration and discussion with organisations such as Medr and the Coleg Cymraeg in order to ensure strategic collaboration. We believe that an independent body is needed with specific expertise in language acquisition and learning, which is also involved in language planning, to lead the (lifelong) Learn Welsh work successfully.

2.7 The Centre's Working Welsh scheme, which has recently developed a partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner in terms of the Welsh Offer, provides services to upskill workforces in a number of diverse sectors, which it does along the continuum (from A1 to C2). The Centre plans strategically to develop workforces to use more Welsh, which in turn enables them to provide services through the medium of Welsh.

2.8 One of the main objectives of the Centre's Working Welsh scheme is to support the Welsh language standards and increase employers' ability to increase the use of Welsh. Working Welsh has now worked with over 2,000 employers and has developed important Learn Welsh and Building Confidence and Use programmes with key sectors, including health and care. The Centre therefore welcomes the duty to review the Welsh language standards.

2.9 The Centre has developed significant plans with Mudiad Meithrin and Cwlwm to support the Welsh language skills of the early years education and care workforce. We believe that the continuation of this work within the Institute is essential in order to ensure that the continuum is active for every individual from cradle to grave.

2.10 The Centre supports the intention of creating a link between national targets and local targets for Welsh in education. It welcomes the aim of creating a link between the target of one million speakers and local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. The Centre is already collaborating with local authorities to provide Learn Welsh courses in schools where growth in provision is planned locally. This is happening as part of the work of the Learn Welsh Education Workforce programme.

2.11 The Centre believes that effective collaboration with a range of partners is essential in order to create better progression, experience and outcomes for learners as they become speakers. We believe that the Institute has a specific place in leading on many of the partnership discussions, and the Centre's work in this area is a good basis for further development.

Estyn has identified the Centre's partnership work as a strength:

'One of the Centre's notable qualities is the way in which leaders work together strategically to plan provision and opportunities to use the Welsh language through innovative collaboration with a range of valuable partners'. Inspection report 2024

3. Any potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill's provisions and whether the Bill takes account of them (including commencement and the United Kingdom Internal Market Act)

3.1 The importance of securing an education workforce that has the necessary skills in terms of the Welsh language is essential to the Bill's success. In 2024, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, through collaboration with the Welsh Government's Education Department, has published a Learn Welsh Education Workforce programme, and will extend the program in 2025 to include the current sabbatical courses. The programme matches the Welsh Government's Welsh in Education Workforce plan. Therefore, by the time the Institute is established, the Centre will have implemented, evaluated and grown this programme, and we believe that this experience and expertise can be a sensible basis for the Institute to continue leading the work. We also believe that the Institute has an important contribution to make towards the development of the Welsh-medium workforce, in order to ensure that one continuum is being implemented consistently in all schools.

3.2 The Centre has worked closely with initial teacher training providers, providing consistent resource to help them to include 35 hours of Welsh learning training as part of the course along the continuum (from A1 to C2). This work allows further development for the education workforce within the Centre's Education Workforce Learn Welsh programme, and to do so by continuing along the continuum within their work placement. We believe that this collaboration is the basis for further development at the Institute to integrate more Welsh learning provision, including intensive opportunities, as an integral part of teacher training in Wales and to ensure a smooth continuation of the education workforce's professional development programme. An education workforce that's qualified in terms of the Welsh language will be key in ensuring the Bill's success, as well as realising the objectives of the Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs Act.

3.3 We support the Bill further expanding the duties of the Institute with the work of developing the education workforce, building on the initial work that has begun by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. It is also important to recognise that ensuring fair time for the education workforce to develop its skills is essential, and so more clarity is needed on the approach for funding release time for local authorities. We believe that clarity must be ensured regarding the Institute's contribution to providing the language learning expertise along the continuum when training the future education workforce as well.

4. The appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation

4.1 We believe that the Bill gives sufficient attention to what will be in subordinate legislation and that the subordinate legislation will in turn provide more detail and appropriate references, which will assist in ensuring the success of the Bill.

4.2 We are specifically supportive of the subordinate legislation that gives power to confer additional functions to the National Welsh Language Learning Institute. Ensuring the description of the Institute's duties is crucial, and it is also important to ensure that the organisation can adapt, evolve and respond to what is needed when implementing the Bill.

4.3 We also believe that effective governance is key to the Institute and we supportive the appropriateness of being able to vary the organisation's membership and sub-committees.

5. Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill

5.1 We fully support the Bill's objective in terms of raising standards within English-medium schools, and to support moving along a language continuum. Understanding of a continuum in this context is crucial. It is important to ensure consistent support for every school and every pupil, including Welsh-medium schools.

5.2 The National Centre for Learning Welsh has been established since 2016 and is recognised as an organisation that operates successfully and to a high standard. It is important that the establishment of the Institute builds on these successes and allows the continuation of the work of a sector that operates so successfully. The Learn Welsh sector employs approximately 700 people, with the majority of these being tutors, and during 2023-24, 16,905 learners had completed 29,485 Welsh learning activities. It must be ensured that establishing the Institute does not destabilise the work that has taken place during (Stage 1 and 2) of the Centre's existence and that the Government takes advantage of the expertise and excellence of the sector during its establishment. We believe that, by operating in this way, the Institute offers stability to the Learn Welsh sector and allows long-term strategic planning for (lifelong) Welsh learning.

5.3 A lack of clarity as to the duties of bodies attached to the Bill, directly and indirectly, can lead to delays and duplication of work. Despite this, we believe that establishing an Institute as a body with specific duties and recognised as a body that leads on all elements of (lifelong) Welsh learning is a means of meeting this. Successful partnership working will be key to ensuring the efficiency of this.

6. The financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum)

6.1 We believe that the Centre's current work remains crucial for ensuring the growth of the Welsh language and reaching 2050 targets. We believe that assurance is needed that the role of the Institute in the future will continue to give a clear and deserving focus on this work as well as the other responsibilities that will form part of its functions. As a result, therefore, it must be considered that the Institute's budget enables the provision of (lifelong) opportunities to learn Welsh on the same scale as the Centre does currently and allows the extension of the work to support the Bill.

6.3 The current status of the Centre is a company limited by guarantee. The Centre's current aim is to create Welsh speakers that enjoy using the language, by providing national Welsh learning strategy and services. The Centre's current structure includes corporate services eg finance, data, IT as well as directorates that specialise in learning and teaching, marketing and communication, and developing workforce Welsh skills, including the statutory and post-16 education sector.

6.4 In the context of the financial consideration of the costs for establishing the Institute, it is important to acknowledge the Centre's current list of functions and compare it with the Institute's list of functions.

The Institute's functions	The Centre's current functions
(a) to provide strategic leadership and direction for all Welsh learning providers;	<p>The Centre has established 10 Learn Welsh providers, who are experts in language acquisition and learning. They provide Welsh learning services on behalf of the Center for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Adults in the community or virtually (ii) Young people in tertiary education and schools (iii) Young people aged 16-18 (iv) Workforces (v) Families
(b) provide, or facilitate the provision of Welsh language learning materials;	The Centre has created a Welsh Learning Curriculum based on the CEFR, developing learning and

	<p>teaching resources to support them at all levels from A1-C2.</p>
<p>(c) planning for the development of the education workforce for the purpose of improving Welsh language teaching;</p>	<p>Since 2024, the Centre has developed a Welsh learning programme for the education workforce, which will extend in 2025 to include the sabbatical provision. The programme includes various provision for the education workforce in order to improve Welsh language teaching methods.</p> <p>Currently, the programme's reach in the 2024-25 academic year is approximately 2000 practitioners.</p> <p>We anticipate that this programme will need to grow significantly to support the Bill's objectives.</p>
<p>(d) Make arrangements to provide opportunities to learn Welsh</p> <p>(i) for the education workforce</p> <p>(ii) in the workplace, and</p>	<p>The Centre awards and manages contracts with 10 core providers and some additional providers in order to ensure quality opportunities to learn Welsh.</p> <p>Since 2024, the Centre has been leading the Education Workforce Welsh learning programme.</p> <p>Since 2017, the Centre has been leading the Working Welsh programme, which provides opportunities to learn Welsh in the workplace.</p>
<p>(iii) for people over the compulsory education age;</p>	<p>Since 2023, the Centre has been leading an Onwards with Welsh programme, which gives specific opportunities for young people aged 16-25 to learn Welsh. Community-based and virtual adult Welsh learning is a significant part of the Centre's work.</p>

<p>(e) make arrangements to provide opportunities to learn Welsh—</p> <p>(i) for the education workforce,</p> <p>(ii) in the workplace, and</p> <p>(iii) for people over the compulsory education age;</p>	<p>The Education Workforce Welsh learning programme</p> <p>The Working Welsh programme</p> <p>The Onwards with Welsh programme for 16-25 year olds</p> <p>Community-based and virtual adult Welsh learning</p>
<p>(f) design and develop Welsh language learning provision for people over the compulsory education age, or facilitate such design and development;</p>	<p>The Centre designs and develops Welsh learning provision, working in partnership to tailor and contextualise.</p>
<p>(g) develop and maintain a national Welsh language learning curriculum for people over the compulsory school age;</p>	<p>The Centre has developed and maintains a Learn Welsh curriculum. The curriculum draws on various other curricula in different contexts, and aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It also leads the 700-strong Learn Welsh workforce to implement the curriculum by introducing resources and training.</p>
<p>(h) collect and publish data, at least once every 12 months, on Welsh learners above the compulsory school age.</p>	<p>The Centre is a statutory data publisher and has established robust data structures to comply with the code of practice and publish data annually. The Centre's data includes post-16 learners that are learning Welsh, and forms the basis of all the Centre's planning work.</p>

We believe that, considering the Centre's current structure and funding, further extending the work programme for the Education Workforce will be the biggest additional cost in terms of the Institute's functions.

6.5 It's vital that sufficient funding is secured to plan and provide language training to the education workforce on a much larger scale than the Centre is currently able to do. The explanatory memorandum refers to moving resources from other parts of the system. The Centre has experienced this when attracting additional funding from various Welsh Government policy departments, and is therefore aware that operating in this way is possible. However, there is a need for certainty when establishing the Institute as to the exact budget that will allow a programme at the right scale for extending the Welsh learning programme for the education workforce.

The Centre is grateful for the opportunity to be part of the consultation process. It is excited about the possibilities of continuing to evolve its work as part of the Institute. The Centre supports the principles and ambition of the Welsh Language and Education in order to ensure that Welsh belongs to everyone.

Dona Lewis
Chief
Executive

The National Centre for Learning Welsh

[Estyn inspection of The National Centre for Learning Welsh April 2024](#) [2021 Rapid Review](#)
[Annual Report 2023-24 The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)