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Ymchwiliad i'r Adolygiad Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal  
Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon

Inquiry into the Priorities for the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Ymateb gan: Comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Response from: Welsh Language Commissioner



Dr Dai Lloyd  
Chair  
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
[SeneddHealth@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddHealth@assembly.wales)

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Dear Chair

### **Priorities for the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee**

Thank you for the opportunity to suggest matters the Committee may wish to focus upon as part of its scrutiny of health, social care and sport during the fifth Assembly.

I envisage the Committee may be interested in specific pieces of work I will have undertaken and published information about them occasionally during the term of the fifth Assembly. Matters of interest may arise in light of research I have conducted, reports published, recommendations made to Welsh Ministers, or in relation to my responsibility for providing advice to any person. I would be more than happy to advise the Committee as and when required on strategic matters aimed at strengthening the position of the Welsh Language in Wales.

It is also possible that matters of public interest will lead to Committee discussions in light of my adjudicating on investigations into specific cases or as a result of publishing reports on investigations into failures to comply with Welsh Language Standards.

Turning to specific policy matters, it is widely recognised that effective communication is an essential element of good health and social care services. Language is integral to effective communication. That was one of the findings of the statutory inquiry I conducted in 2014 into the Welsh language within primary care, *My Language, My Health*. In accordance with powers given to me by Section 7 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, I made 33 recommendations to Welsh Ministers in light of that inquiry in order to improve Welsh medium primary care services in Wales. On the basis of the

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg  
Siambrau'r Farchnad  
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair  
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

Welsh Language Commissioner  
Market Chambers  
5-7 St Mary Street  
Cardiff CF10 1AT

0845 6033 221  
[post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.org](mailto:post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.org)  
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

0845 6033 221  
[post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org](mailto:post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org)  
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English



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Commissioner

significant body of evidence gathered, recommendations for improvement were made in areas such as

- dignity and respect for the patient
- service planning
- the need for an active offer of a service in Welsh
- workforce planning
- education and training
- data and research

I presented the findings of the inquiry to the fourth Assembly's Health and Social Care Committee in a meeting held on 2 July 2014. I note that primary care is one of the topics that the committee itself has identified as a priority for scrutiny during the fifth Assembly. It would be timely for the committee to review progress in implementing the inquiry's recommendations as part of its scrutiny of primary care.

In order to ensure that the health and social care service in Wales is able to deliver in Welsh to those who need it, the Welsh Government is implementing a strategic framework for the Welsh language within this field, *More than Just Words*. The first strategy was published in 2012 and it was revised earlier this year for the period 2016 – 2019. Four years into the implementation of this strategic framework, I believe it would be beneficial for the committee to review the success of the strategic framework in achieving its goals. By doing so quite soon, the committee's work could inform the implementation of the framework over the next few years, up to 2019.

I trust these suggestions prove useful.

Yours sincerely

**Meri Huws**  
Welsh Language Commissioner