

20/11/17

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Annwyl Bethan,

I write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee. For ease, I have translated this letter to allow you to share its contents with fellow Members or staff if you so wish.

You will remember that Mudiad Meithrin's Chairperson, Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, and I recently gave evidence to the committee regarding the 'Cymraeg 2050' language strategy and the Welsh Government's aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

As a result of your report, meetings and continuous discussions with relevant Welsh Government representatives and the compact with Plaid Cymru, we understand that additional funding has been allocated to Mudiad Meithrin each year over a period of two financial years. We are extremely grateful for this and believe the investment will make a genuine difference as we aim to reach the target of establishing 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin (and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi) by 2021.

Earlier this year, we published a document entitled 'Meithrin Miliwn' in response to the new language strategy. We identified 10 steps that would be central to realising the Welsh-medium early years' contribution (through Mudiad Meithrin) as far as the aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is concerned.

The 10 steps are:

1. Undertake an urgent independent review of Mudiad Meithrin's resources in order to evaluate the support necessary to open 150 new Cylchoedd Meithrin and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi (as well as expanding the 'Cymraeg i Blant' scheme and supporting Mudiad Meithrin's support structures for existing Cylchoedd Meithrin committees and staff) – a review is currently under way;
2. Ensure Mudiad Meithrin's input regarding the future of the WESP nationally and at Local Authority level while adapting some of the outcomes (to include

- the Early Years) – points raised by Aled Roberts in his independent review of the WESP;
3. Ensure that where there are plans to open new Welsh-medium schools, that discussions are held with Cylchoedd Meithrin (where they currently exist) to discuss possible relocation and (where they do not exist) to provide an obstacle-free pathway to childcare and education for children aged 2 years and above on the school site;
 4. Continue to invest in a Welsh-medium scheme to train and qualify the Early Years workforce (such as ‘Cam wrth Gam’) in order to attract new entrants and to identify gaps in the workforce;
 5. Invest in encouraging and promoting Welsh-medium childcare and education in co-operation with grassroots partners;
 6. Ensure access for Cylchoedd Meithrin to capital grant funds through the ‘21st Century Schools’ scheme in order to encourage Cylchoedd Meithrin to open quality new locations (if not on school sites) as community hubs;
 7. Encourage a pilot scheme for schools who educate primarily in English to partner with Cylchoedd Meithrin in order to immerse older children in Welsh as part of the language continuum;
 8. Invest in a national immersion scheme by following the principals of the ‘Croesi'r Bont’ scheme;
 9. Ensure comprehensive data processes with access to birth data;
 10. Pilot various schemes in co-operation with the National Centre for Teaching Welsh in order to offer support to help parents introduce or use Welsh in the home.

This additional investment will therefore be used to realise the two main aims of opening 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin/Ti a Fi (in geographical areas where there is no provision) and contributing to increase the succession ratio to 90% by 2030. We will also concentrate on maintaining, supporting and assisting the existing network of Cylchoedd Meithrin by strengthening Mudiad Meithrin’s infrastructure (in terms of the services and advice we provide to our members).

At the same time we consider the work of our national training scheme (‘Cam wrth Gam’) to be a key part of the workforce plan. Also, working with parents and families through the ‘Cymraeg for Kids’ programme is crucial in the work of encouraging, promoting and supporting language acquisition at home.

We are aware that you as a committee will scrutinise aspects of the proposed budget and I felt that it was important for you hear about the exciting details of what is imminent as a result of this development.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Gwennllian Lansdown Davies

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arbenigwyr y blynyddoedd cynnar Welsh early years specialists

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