



01/02

**Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner**

Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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22/01/2020

Dear Colleague

Consultation on degree apprenticeships

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on degree apprenticeships.

Beyond the fact that roughly 15 percent of individuals who are studying for a degree apprenticeship are Welsh speakers, we do not have specific knowledge of the position of the Welsh language in degree apprenticeship programmes. As a result we do not know to what extent current apprentices are completing their apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh and therefore maintain or develop their Welsh language skills. Nonetheless, in 2017 we published a briefing note on 'The position of the Welsh language in apprenticeship programmes in Wales'¹. It's likely that some of the key findings of this briefing note is also relevant to degree apprenticeships in Wales. The key findings of the briefing note were as follows:

- That the use of Welsh within work-based learning programmes and apprenticeships is very low.
- That the potential of apprenticeship programmes supporting the use of Welsh and developing a skilled bilingual workforce is not currently being realised.
- That a specific review of the position of the Welsh language in apprenticeship programmes is required.

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<http://www.comisiynyddygybraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/20171114%20S%20Nodyn%20briffio%20Prentisiaethau%20FERSIW%20TERFYNOL.pdf>

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- That more data should be collected and published in order to improve the understanding of the position of the Welsh language in work-based learning and apprenticeship programmes.

Since 2017 we have had meetings with the Welsh Government's civil servants and other key stakeholders in the sector in order to draw attention to the recommendations of our briefing note. In December 2018, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol published their 'Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan'. The action plan outlines the need to map current Welsh-medium apprenticeship provision and to use this as the basis for identifying areas where new apprenticeship frameworks ought to be developed through the medium of Welsh and bilingually. The action plan delegates responsibility for this work to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050 Welsh language strategy action plan 2019-20' also states that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Action Plan will incorporate developments to promote Welsh-medium and bilingual apprenticeships. Despite the above developments, it is unclear what impact such commitments will have on the number who study for apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, and what effect, if any, it will have on degree apprenticeships.

The committee's inquiry is particularly relevant in light of the last two points relating to improving the understanding of the position of the Welsh language in work-based learning and apprenticeship programmes. We would welcome any further information and evidence regarding the position of the Welsh language in degree apprenticeship programmes, and we hope that the Welsh language will be considered as part of the consultation. Such information and evidence will be important in terms of setting a future direction and to ensure that as many as possible of apprenticeships maintain and develop the Welsh language skills of students.

Yours sincerely,

Aled Roberts
Welsh Language Commissioner