

# Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2, Senedd

Meeting date: 16 July 2025

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

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## Hybrid

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### Private pre-meeting

09:15–09:30

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

09:30

### 2 Cymraeg for all? inquiry – Ministerial evidence session

09:30–11:00

(Pages 1 – 52)

Mark Drakeford – Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

Elin Burns – Director of Culture, Heritage, Sport and Welsh Language

Jeremy Evas – Head: Prosiect 2050

Attached Documents:

Key issues and Ministerial evidence session paper

Welsh Government evidence paper

### 3 Papers to note

11:00

#### 3.1 Cymraeg for all?

(Pages 53 – 68)



Attached Documents:

Letter from Urdd Gobaith Cymru: Providing written evidence on the Urdd's international programme – 12 June 2025

Letter from Urdd Gobaith Cymru: Clarifying the Urdd's provision for children and young people in the Caerphilly area – 17 June 2025

Letter from Sport Wales: Providing written evidence on the Committee's Cymraeg for all? inquiry – 4 July 2025

Letter from Menter Caerphilly: Providing further information on the Urdd's provision in the Caerphilly area – 9 July 2025

### **3.2 Public Interest Journalism**

(Pages 69 – 71)

Attached Documents:

Briefing from Talking Wales on the role of public interest news – 25 June 2025

### **3.3 Census 2021**

(Pages 72 – 73)

Attached Documents:

Copy letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority: Providing information about the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and England – 4 July 2025

### **3.4 Welsh Government international relations**

(Pages 74 – 78)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the First Minister: Raising concerns about the lack of ministerial representation at the Women's Euros – 1 July 2025

Letter from the First Minister: Responding to concerns about the lack of ministerial representation at the Women's Euros – 7 July 2025

Ministerial Inward – Outward Visits – June 2025 – 14 July 2025

### **3.5 Chairs' forum**

(Page 79)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair's Forum to all Committees: Seeking views on the 'Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Six Senedd' consultation – 8 July 2025

### **3.6 Inter-institutional Relations Agreement**

(Page 80)

Attached Documents:

Copy letter from the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee: Informing that the next meeting of the Creative Industries Inter-Ministerial Group will take place on 16 July 2025 – 9 July 2025

### **3.7 UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement**

(Pages 81 – 83)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action on engagement with the Welsh Government in relation to the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement – 11 July 2025

### **3.8 Legislative Consent: Data (Use and Access) Bill**

(Pages 84 – 85)

Attached Documents:

Copy letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning to the Chair of the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee: Providing an update on EU's data adequacy decisions for the UK – 14 July 2025

## **4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting.**

11:00

## **Break**

11:00–11:10

**5 Consideration of the evidence received, citizen engagement findings, and key issues.**

11:10–12:00

(Pages 86 – 115)

Attached Documents:

Citizen Engagement Findings report – Cymraeg i bawb?

**6 Forward work programme – Forward work programme –  
Consideration of the outline programme for the Autumn term**

12:00–12:15

(Pages 116 – 125)

Attached Documents:

Forward Work Programme Autumn 2025

**7 UK–EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement – Consideration of draft report**

12:15–12:30

(Pages 126 – 238)

Attached Documents:

Draft report on the UK–EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Document is Restricted



# Cymraeg for all?

A Welsh Government evidence paper for the *Cymraeg for All?* inquiry looking at the challenges and opportunities to increasing the use of the Welsh language across Wales, and in particular areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

July 2025

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# 1. Introduction

This Evidence Paper outlines our work to promote and strengthen the Welsh language across Wales, with a particular focus on areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

In *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, we set out our long-term vision for our language. Our ambition is not just to reach a million Welsh speakers, but to ensure that more of us use more Cymraeg every day—at home, in the workplace, in education, and in our communities.

Below, I include details on how we're approaching language revitalisation through a range of different strategies. These include via the independent Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, which examines how to strengthen public policy to support language sustainability at the community level, and to promote the everyday use of Welsh. I also highlight our sustained efforts in early years and education provision, including the expansion of Welsh-medium education through Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, and the significant Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill, which aims to ensure all pupils become independent Welsh language speakers by the time they leave school.

In addition, I outline our use of behaviour change methodologies to understand and increase language use, from parental decisions regarding Welsh-medium schools to supporting the intergenerational transmission of Cymraeg. The paper highlights recent progress in Welsh language technology, showing how tools like Microsoft Copilot and Teams are incorporating Welsh to make everyday use of Cymraeg easier in the workplace and beyond.

We also of course work to increase the use of Cymraeg in the workplace through the National Centre for Learning Welsh's programmes and our own internal strategies. Finally, I outline the vital role of cultural events and community organisations like the Mentrau Iaith, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and the National Eisteddfod in creating spaces for our language to thrive. Whilst, for reasons of brevity, this paper doesn't catalogue every strand of our work in detail, it provides an overview of our priorities and programmes. I look forward to exploring these further with the Committee.

**Mark Drakeford MS**, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, July 2025.

## 2. Key barriers and opportunities to the use of the Welsh language across Wales, but with a focus on areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

A challenge in areas with fewer Welsh speakers is, of course, the limited daily exposure to—and therefore opportunities for—using Welsh. In this section, I highlight several of the ways in which the Welsh Government aims to address the challenges of increasing the opportunities to use the Welsh language in such areas via (1) the second phase of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities (2) early years and education provision, (3) the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill and promotional activity. Later in the paper, I outline some of the work we're undertaking using behavioural science/change methodologies.

### **The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities (Second Phase)**

We established the independent Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities in August 2022. Its first phase (chaired by Dr Simon Brooks) presented its report, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language*, to us in August 2024. This phase focused on factors affecting higher density Welsh-speaking communities, including the economy, housing, planning, education, and inclusion. In February 2025, the Commission published a *Report on Town and Country Planning*. Evidence submitted highlighted that many planning authorities and professional bodies believe that there's a need to revisit planning policies and guidelines in relation to the Welsh language. We formally responded to the *Commission's report in May 2025*. Whilst some recommendations are more relevant to higher density areas, phase 2 of the Commission will consider others.

The second phase (led by Interim Chair Professor Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones) focuses on areas with lower densities of Welsh speakers and is considering the use of Welsh among young people, the transmission of the language within families and communities, and the importance of Cymraeg in sport. It aims to understand the challenges and opportunities in places where Welsh is less visible or audible such as Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil or Wrexham (the list is not exhaustive). Many of these areas have seen growth in Welsh speakers due to Welsh-medium education, but further support is needed to increase use beyond the classroom.

The Commission is expected to report on Phase 2 in Spring 2026.

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## Welsh-medium early years and education provision

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) have established a national approach of collaborative working and planning to support the expansion of Welsh-medium education, especially in areas where it's needed most. COVID-19 has disrupted progress, but having a robust infrastructure in place has meant that the system has recovered. All Strategic Plans are aligned with our *Cymraeg 2050* education milestones with a clear emphasis on increasing the percentage of learners having access to education through the medium of Welsh. The percentage of Year 1 pupils (5-year-olds) across Wales studying Welsh as a first language saw an increase last year—of just under 1 percentage point between January 2023 and January 2024 (from 23.4% to 24.3%). This equates to around 210 additional learners. Looking at the overall 5-15-year-old age group, the percentage of children aged 5 to 15 years old in primary, middle and secondary schools studying Welsh as a first language has increased from 19.0% in 2011 to 21.2% by 2024, an increase of 2.2 percentage points—or an additional 11,000 learners.

Giving young children access to the Welsh language during their early years is vital as we work towards reaching a million Welsh speakers. For many, their first introduction to Cymraeg will be in a Mudiad Meithrin supported setting. Over 11,000 children access Welsh-medium education and care through Cylchoedd Meithrin every week with close to 90% transferring to Welsh-medium education. In addition to the Cylchoedd already supported by Mudiad Meithrin, almost 100 settings during this Senedd term will have opened or expanded as part of their Welsh Government-funded *Set up and Succeed* programme. The total sum of weekly care hours provided by Cylchoedd Meithrin has been increasing year on year, with 8,906 care hours provided during 2023/24 compared to 8,554 in 2022/23. Much of this growth is seen in areas where there are fewer Welsh speakers, such as South-East Wales. There are now 90 Cylchoedd Meithrin in this region alone providing over 700 hours of Welsh language childcare every week, a substantial increase since the publication of *Cymraeg 2050*.

We've invested over £67 million of school capital funding to support the growth of Welsh-medium education since 2019. In South-East Wales alone, 6 new Welsh-medium primary schools have opened or are close to opening, and 5 others have been extended to increase their capacity. A further £20 million to support new and ongoing Welsh-medium capital projects will continue during 2025/26.

We provide annual funding of just under £9 million to support local authority delivery of WESPs through the *Cymraeg 2050* element of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG). This includes funding for the Siarter Iaith (see below) and Welsh language late immersion provision. Late immersion is an intensive

Welsh language learning programme available to learners (aged 7 years or over) who don't speak Welsh but wish to access Welsh-medium education at a later stage. It ensures that every new learner to the language has access to a Welsh-medium education when they need it and wherever they are on their learning journey. Welsh Government funding since 2021 has enabled all local authorities to establish their own late immersion provisions, benefiting over 4,000 learners.

## **The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill**

Whilst we can evidence clear progress through our work with our partners such as Mudiad Meithrin, local authorities in their delivery of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, schools and the education sector more broadly, we need more children exposed to more Cymraeg during their early years; more learners learning Welsh successfully whilst at school; and more opportunities for more young people to use their Welsh language skills more in further education, training and in their future careers.

That's why, through our Programme for Government and the Co-operation Agreement, we committed to introducing a Welsh Language and Education Bill during this Senedd term and why its unanimous passing on May 13 this year is significant. The Bill aims to make progress towards the *Cymraeg 2050* target of a million Welsh speakers by strengthening the role of the Welsh language in education, with the overarching goal of ensuring that all pupils of maintained schools in Wales are independent Welsh language users when they leave school.

Our first commitment is to establish one standard method, introduced by means of a Code, to describe Welsh language ability, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (the CEFR). We'll shortly engage with our stakeholders in education and beyond to shape the code's content and to better understand its potential in helping learners, teachers, parents and employers to understand their, their learners' or their employees' Welsh language ability at different stages of their Welsh language journey.

The Bill makes provision for the promotion of "Primarily Welsh Language" category schools, so that parents and carers can make informed choices when deciding on the language in which they would wish their child to be educated. And we've already taken steps to support this work. During 2022/23 we funded a pilot project to support local authorities, Mentrau Iaith and local authority Welsh Education Forums (WEFs) in South-East Wales to raise the profile of Welsh-medium education provision via the Cymraeg i Bawb partnership. I attended the partnership's conference in April of this year and witnessed for myself the positive impact an initiative such as this can have on how we work. The sharing of good practice, resources and knowledge has increased awareness and confidence amongst all our partners to provide parents and carers with relevant, timely and

accurate information about their local Welsh-medium education offer. We've expanded this programme to a national programme during 2025/26 through Mentrau Iaith Cymru, with £135,000 of Welsh Government funding in this financial year. Work is underway to consider best practice and lessons learnt from the pilot, to help identify priorities, and shape the national expansion, and a national partnerships officer has recently been appointed to develop the national programme. It's also informed by the work we've undertaken in behavioural sciences which I outline in the following section.

### 3. Approaches, techniques and interventions, including technology, that may encourage behaviour change and develop confidence so that more people use some Welsh every day

#### **Behaviour Change: increasing the numbers in Welsh-medium schools**

A recent behaviour change project we've undertaken aims to understand how parents decide whether to send their children to Welsh-medium schools. It found that parental decision-making is complex and influenced by factors such as location, recommendations from friends and family, school resources, and interactions with school staff. It suggests that parents are more focused on immediate concerns such as social and cultural aspects of schooling rather than the long-term benefits of bilingualism. As well as informing our own work at the Welsh Government, this work feeds into the *Cymraeg i Bawb* partnership between local authorities and the *Mentrau Iaith* which we've recently rolled out nationally and which I've explained above.

#### **Behaviour Change: the Intergenerational Transmission of Welsh**

Our [policy on Welsh Language transmission and Use in Families](#) commits to behavioural science-led interventions to help parents who have Welsh language skills to use their *Cymraeg* with their children. The main delivery agent for the policy is *Mudiad Meithrin*. We fund them to manage the *Cymraeg i Blant* programme, which supports families to introduce and use Welsh at home. This is done by working with Midwives and Health Visitors and through parent and child activities such as yoga and baby massage to support early language acquisition. During 2024/2025, nearly 3,392 *Cymraeg i Blant* sessions were held with over 27,664 parents and 27,818 children supported.

Alongside this work, a pilot behavioural science project—which we run jointly with *Mudiad Meithrin* and independent specialists—analyses how toys, music, and parental information can help prompt the use of Welsh in low-use households. The work will conclude next year and we're currently working on the next steps.

#### **Behaviour Change: Organisational Development and Cymraeg: Leading in a Bilingual Country**

Our *Leading in a Bilingual Country* programme works with senior leaders to increase the use of *Cymraeg* in organisational culture. Rooted in organisational change methodology, it complements other language policy work and

advocates for positive, inclusive communication and leadership that fosters gradual, celebrated increases in Cymraeg. Three cohorts of leaders have taken part in the programme since 2021. We'll soon release video case studies of participants, and we've included written case studies in the appendix to this paper. Later this year, we'll invite a further cohort of leaders to take part.

## Welsh Language Technology

We believe that technology has a central role in increasing the use of Cymraeg. Our current priorities for the Welsh language and technology revolve around **helping more people use more Cymraeg** and are as follows:

- technology to increase the daily use of Cymraeg
- making sure everyone can access Welsh language technology
- improving Welsh language artificial intelligence (AI), and speech and language technologies (by sharing data and other means)

We recognise that technology has the potential to be transformative for the use of Cymraeg in the workplace and beyond, and to deliver our ambition of a bilingual Wales. We're building partnerships by working with tech companies to experiment and deliver what we need for the Welsh language in technology. In doing so, we advocate and assist them to make more Welsh available in more of their provision.

In the current financial year, we're investing £402,150 in Welsh language technology. Here are some highlights of our work relevant to the *Cymraeg for All?* Inquiry:

- Microsoft now supports prompting in Welsh in its Copilot artificial intelligence facility (ahead of many of the world's larger languages).
- Microsoft Teams has a human language Interpretation facility and can now transcribe Welsh and English simultaneously (we believe this is the first case of bilingual transcription available in Teams), aiding bilingual working.
- We've recently published 'Cymraeg mewn clic', a one click app on our corporate network that reduces "friction" (another behaviour change methodology) to using Welsh in technology, making it easier for more of our staff to have a full Welsh language experience on their work laptops.
- We're working with assistive technology companies to help them embed Welsh language technology components we've funded, e.g. to assist Welsh-speakers with Motor Neurone Disease to use a synthetic personalised version of their voice in Welsh after they lose the ability to speak.

- Last year, we published [a report on our Welsh language technology work from 2018 to 2024](#).
- We've also published a list of [available Welsh language technology](#) resources on our Helo Blod website so that people know where they can access Welsh language technology.
- We've made Cysgliad, a suite of Welsh language grammar checking and spellchecking tools available free of charge to individuals, the education and third sectors and to organisations with 10- members of staff or fewer. Over 15,000 have accessed Cysgliad for free as a result.

## Welsh in the workplace

Workplaces are key to the daily use of Cymraeg. More people than ever are learning Welsh with the National Centre for Learning Welsh (our funding to the Centre will be £15.629m for the current financial year). Over 18,300 learners were learning Welsh during 2023/24, an increase of 8% compared to 2022/23. The Centre offers free Welsh lessons to 16–25-year-olds, and 2,635 young people took advantage of this offer in 2023/24.

The Centre's *Cymraeg Gwaith* (Work Welsh) programme provides courses ranging from online self-study taster courses to intensive learning courses. As well as increasing the number of Welsh speakers and Welsh language use, Cymraeg Gwaith also helps organisations to provide more and better Welsh language services to their users. This puts them in a stronger position to provide services in Welsh (and where they apply, improve compliance with statutory duties imposed on them through Welsh language standards).

The most recent data we have for the Cymraeg Gwaith scheme is for 2023/24, during which 578 employers took advantage of courses provided by the scheme. During the same period, 6,071 employees undertook self-study taster courses, 954 followed learning courses with a tutor or with tutor support, and 331 undertook intensive learning courses.

Cymraeg Gwaith also tailors courses to ensure that they are suitable for specific sectors or workplaces. During 2023/24, 1,113 took part in the courses for the further and higher education sectors; 500 in the courses for headteachers and teachers; 610 in the programme for local authorities; 1,514 in the health and care sector programme; and 726 in the Camau programme that has been specifically developed for childcare workers. Sectoral courses give employees the skills and vocabulary which are specifically relevant for their workplaces, which at times is the confidence booster needed to help a person use their Welsh language skills in their daily work. There's been significant growth in the Cymraeg Gwaith provision within the Health and Care sector, with a Learn Welsh tutor based in

every health board, and specific courses being developed for areas such as Palliative and End of Life Care and Psychiatry.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh also provides Welsh language training for education practitioners, to deliver the *Welsh in Education Workforce Plan*. The Welsh Language Commissioner has a central role in sharing good practice in increasing the use of Welsh within workplaces and works with bodies to increase their use of Welsh internally. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol also plays an important role in helping young people to undertake vocational and university courses in Welsh, which will equip them with Welsh language skills ready for their future workplaces. All this work, of course, contributes to enabling learners in areas with fewer Welsh speakers, who've acquired their Cymraeg through the education system, to use their Welsh language skills after they leave school.

We're also working to implement our *Welsh linguistic infrastructure policy*. This work aims to make it easy for people to find words and terms in Cymraeg. It also explains how we'll coordinate work, and be proactive, so that we create and standardise new terms as soon as possible. The policy notes that we'll promote terminological and other resources to help people—be they new speakers, non-Welsh-speaking parents with children in Welsh-medium education, or people who use Cymraeg in their day-to-day work—to understand which resource is best for them.

In terms of the Welsh Government as a bilingual workplace, our own *Cymraeg.. It belongs to us all* strategy aims to make us a truly bilingual organisation by 2050. Early progress has shown that the number of our staff learning Welsh has grown significantly, from 73 in 2020 to 653 in 2025 (an increase of 795%). We also fund Bangor University (£70,350 in 2025/26) for the ARFer behaviour change project (based on a similar project in workplaces in the Basque Country). ARFer encourages the increased use of Welsh in workplaces via behavioural pledges and agreements between individuals and teams. We've also funded an ARFer mobile phone application (via the ARFOR programme) to make using ARFer even easier. Several Welsh Government staff teams are using, or about to take part in ARFer.

## 4. Effectiveness of initiatives aimed at creating the conditions and spaces to encourage more Welsh language use, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers

In areas with fewer Welsh-speakers, the role of organisations such as the Mentrau Iaith, Merched y Wawr, the National Eisteddfod, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Young Farmers Clubs are central in creating opportunities for people to use their Cymraeg in informal and social settings.

The network of mentrau iaith (to which we're allocating £2,795,900 in 2025/26), have a vital role in creating the right conditions and spaces to facilitate the use of the Welsh language. All Mentrau Iaith base their workplans on a comprehensive language profile assessment of their area. These assessments not only consider relevant data sources available to them but also looks at the vitality of the language within the community by mapping out what Welsh language and bilingual activities are already held and what are the gaps in provision. The Mentrau are then well placed to work with key stakeholders (including other grant partners) to initiate new projects based on local needs and aspirations.

Urdd Gobaith Cymru, (£2,713,500 from the *Cymraeg 2050* grant scheme in 2025/26), provides a wide range of extracurricular activities including cultural, sports and social events for children and young people. These activities provide an opportunity for Urdd members to strengthen their Welsh language skills as well as provide spaces to use the language. The National Urdd Eisteddfod is a pinnacle of a wide range of cultural activities held at local and county level. This year saw the Urdd break their record of 119,593 registered competitors across 400 competitions as well as a 43% increase in the number of new young speakers taking part in their National Eisteddfod in comparison with last year.

The National Eisteddfod, which receives £1,250,000 in *Cymraeg 2050* funding in 2025/26, is an important event which acts as a producer and catalyst for broader Welsh-medium arts and cultural activities. Although the Eisteddfod itself is an annual event held each August, each one is a multi-year project, based on community engagement and participation. The Eisteddfod brings communities closer together as well as creating new opportunities for people to learn and use Cymraeg. In recent years, we've also supported the National Eisteddfod in broadening the festival's reach and accessibility by funding free tickets for low-income families.

Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru, which receives £58,850 in *Cymraeg 2050* funding in 2025/26, supports a network of over 100 small community-based eisteddfodau, providing opportunities for children, young people and adults to

take part in a wide range of music, recital, literature and craft and food competitions. Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau employs two development officers which have supported many of the eisteddfodau to re-establish themselves following the COVID-19 pandemic. The local eisteddfodau continue to give young people the foundation to develop their performing talents.

In rural communities with fewer Welsh-speakers, the Young Farmers' Clubs, which receive £200,000 in *Cymraeg 2050* funding in 2025/26, provide a space for young people to meet socially as well as develop a wide range of skills including increasing their confidence in using the Welsh language. In recent years we've seen more young farmers members in more clubs which hadn't traditionally used as much Welsh taking part in more Welsh language activities and competitions (such as the YFC National Eisteddfod, public speaking competitions and Welsh language festivals). Our funding has provided an opportunity for many YFC county federations to plan and encourage the use and participation of its members in Welsh language activities.

Merched y Wawr, which receives £150,000 *Cymraeg 2050* funding in 2025/26, make an important contribution to the use of Cymraeg across Wales. They provide a wide itinerary of social activities for members through the medium of Welsh, and also help to increase the use of the language in the community, including by supporting new speakers.

We also recognise the enormous contribution of grassroots sports, which provides a wide range of participative sport activities for children, young people and young adults. In many cases these are provided by volunteers who dedicate their time and enthusiasm to a sporting activity they feel passionate about. We acknowledge the impact these activities have on the use of the Welsh language within our communities, providing a firm basis for the skills development within a particular sport but also in creating off the pitch Welsh language social networks.

## **Perthyn projects**

Perthyn is one of the main projects of our *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* (which supports Welsh-speaking communities with high numbers of second homes). The aim of Perthyn is to empower communities to develop socio-economic and housing solutions by means of establishing new social enterprises or community-led housing projects. The project has two elements; the first provides a specialist advice and support service to community groups to help them turn their ideas into viable projects. The second element provides a small grant of up to £10,000 to help communities get their projects up and running. Since 2022, we've awarded 64 grants within Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Conwy, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The feedback of the

Perthyn project has been encouraging. For example, the Hermon Chapel project in Pembrokeshire was able to draw down substantial funding to develop a former chapel. The project will provide two flats for local people whilst the ground floor will be a heritage centre and café which will create a valuable space for people to socialise in Welsh.

We want to see the success of Perthyn across the whole of Wales. So this year, we're expanding Perthyn nationwide. This means that communities all over Wales, including those with fewer Welsh-speakers, will be able to apply for a small grant to create more Welsh language spaces as well as help create new social enterprises and community led housing projects where the Welsh language is an integral part of their existence.

### **Y Siarter Iaith – the Welsh Language Charter**

We need to make it easier for more of our children and young people to use more of their Cymraeg in more aspects of their lives. The Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter) is key in promoting use of informal Welsh in schools and provides various activities to support learners aged 3-18 to enjoy the Welsh language. The aim of the programme is to help create bilingual citizens who feel inspired, comfortable and confident to use their Cymraeg.

### **Dydd Miwsig Cymru (DMC) – Welsh Language Music Day**

DMC recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Over 40 community gigs were held across Wales and thousands of school pupils had the opportunity to enjoy Welsh language music. We saw a significant increase in streaming of Welsh-language songs on the day itself, and numbers have remained higher than previously. It's clear that DMC is growing every year, strengthening Cymraeg through music and community.

DMC consistently achieves significant press coverage including UK-wide media such as The One Show and the Guardian. In Wales, ITV Wales, Wales online and the Western Mail have also showcased what DMC has to offer. This helps to promote the vibrancy of the language, our culture as well raising awareness of Wales and the Welsh language across the UK. Numerous case studies have shown that the day has influenced people not just to learn Welsh but also to engage with the Welsh language music scene thus also promoting the use of Cymraeg. Promoters across Wales now see DMC as an opportunity to organise events in areas where there have traditionally been fewer gigs in Cymraeg, as well as offering an opportunity to increase social capital in Welsh language spaces all over Wales.

## 5. Extent to which cultural events, such as the Eisteddfodau and Welsh language festivals, impact on language use in areas with fewer Welsh speakers.

I've referred above to the invaluable role that cultural events like Eisteddfodau and Welsh language festivals play in promoting Cymraeg. This is especially true in areas with fewer Welsh speakers. Eisteddfodau and Welsh language festivals offer immersive, informal Welsh language spaces where learners and speakers alike can engage with the language in a social context, which has the capacity to boost confidence and motivation to speak and learn more Welsh. Eisteddfodau are more than just day-long or weeklong festivals, they are a culmination of many months of community preparation, all of which takes place in a Welsh language space. We particularly welcome the visit of the National Eisteddfod to Wrexham later this year and the Urdd Eisteddfod to Newport in 2027. The National Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf showed how hosting such festivals can promote Cymraeg and provide a strong legacy for our language.

## 6. Conclusion

While our language faces challenges in areas with fewer Welsh speakers, there are also significant opportunities to increase its use, and there's a lot of work already afoot. The Welsh Government is implementing a comprehensive and strategic approach, integrating efforts across various sectors to increase the daily use of Welsh and to ensure its vitality for future generations. From strengthening early years and education pathways through Mudiad Meithrin, providing a firmer foundation for planning Welsh in education through the Welsh Language and Education Bill, to innovative applications of behavioural science and technology, we're systematically enhancing opportunities to learn and use Cymraeg.

I'm encouraged by tangible progress in education and workplaces, supported by initiatives like the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Leading in a Bilingual Country. Our substantial investment in cultural events and community-led projects, such as Eisteddfodau, Mentrau Iaith, Perthyn and many others is creating essential spaces for informal language use in areas with fewer Welsh speakers. Together with our partners, we're building on the foundations for a truly bilingual Wales, ensuring that our language flourishes—and we're constantly working towards our *Cymraeg 2050* goals. We know there's more to do to increase the use of Cymraeg in areas with fewer Welsh speakers. That's why we established the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities. We look forward to receiving the Commission's recommendations next year and also to considering the findings of the *Cymraeg for all?* Inquiry.

## **Case Studies—Leading in a Bilingual Country**

Dr Ben Screen

Welsh Language Lead

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

*Wales is a singular noun but a plural experience, or so said Dai Smith. I think he's right on this. Wales is a small place with a big history, and that history is also one of language shift. Language shift being the more stale, academic term in our case of experiencing language minoritization and marginalization. The effect of this is psychologically and socially complex, and it plays out in organizations every day. Feelings of passion, fear, anxiety, respect but rarely indifference colour debates big and small about how our language should be used, by whom, where. It's dealing with this that's the hard bit and the aspect of the Leading in a Bilingual Country programme that's so crucial. People from all walks of life need to engage with Welsh at work and they'll have their own, completely valid, way of seeing Cymraeg. Welsh belongs to us all and that means taking at face value how others view Welsh.*

### **Collaboration**

*Promoting Welsh effectively means change and change should be people-centric. That means taking people with us. LIBC is practical, it looks at how that can be done. A major value of the programme in my view is that it talks through behaviour change models, communication theory and the essential building blocks of 'doing' Cymraeg in a way that inspires, that understands human behaviour. Hearts and minds and Cymraeg are axiomatic to the programme. The difference with LIBC is that it goes from rhetoric to action, giving you the tools to do exactly that.*

### **What did we do as a result?**

*LIBC inspired several impactful pieces of work, and those can be seen as real direct outputs of the discussions we had on the programme. One of those was an internal engagement framework we developed. Talking some direction from the COM-B behaviour change model, and 'Llais y Gymraeg' (a people-based narrative about the Welsh language that we learnt during LIBC), we sat down and mapped out what the core communication headlines for Welsh were, and how we should craft those messages. We began regularly sharing messaging focussing on staff achievements using Welsh, the support available for staff to use their Welsh & what Welsh means to our patients. We've really begun to*

Annexes to Welsh Government evidence paper on *Cymraeg for All?* for the Senedd Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

*build an organisational narrative around Welsh that's enabling and warm and some examples can be seen below.*

*We're on a journey; we've got work to do in our huge organisation and the core people around this agenda know that and are supportive. To put some structure around this, and to mark the milestones, we also developed a culture dashboard. It talks about more than compliance; it bakes in the individual behaviour change we need to see, as well as the core activities that need to shift to make a difference.*

*Senior leaders are crucial to this work and our internal Leadership Framework has also distilled core elements of LIBC into one package, so that those who lead in CTM UHB also lead on bilingualism and do so in a way that's inclusive, inspired and accepting of diverse perspectives.*

*Creating a regular positive and inclusive dialogue, building bilingualism into how we develop leaders and having a core set of metrics focussed on culture change are three things that LIBC gave us.*

**Welsh Language Standards**

*I was asked at a conference recently as part of a panel what difference the Welsh Language Standards have made to Welsh in the Health Board. The simple answer is that without the Standards we would be in a completely different position. Taking some inspiration from cultural and organisational change theory isn't a distraction from implementing Standards. I've found that both complement each other.*

**Fran Lewis**  
**Head of People and Performance**  
**Conwy County Borough Council**

*When I was first asked to go on the Leading in a Bilingual Country programme, I'll be honest, I wasn't that keen. However, I am so glad I did! It's really changed my mind set and improved my confidence about learning and using what Cymraeg we have, wherever we are on our language journey.*

*The light bulb moment for me was Julia Pardoe's session about psychological safety. Julia works on helping people learn Spanish in Spain and many of the lessons she's learnt are useful in Wales too. We know that language is a people thing, and one of the main barriers to using the Cymraeg we know, is a lack of hyder—confidence and a fear of making mistakes. Julia's session opened up how to set positive learning environments and agreeing with the people you are talking with what help you need—what works for you basically.*

*After the session I got my daughter to make me a badge which I still wear on my dysgu Cymraeg lanyard—it says “dysgwr nerfus.” A few colleagues have also asked for one! It's basically my hyder badge—reminding people that I do get anxious when I am flipping my brain into Cymraeg and translating back and forth so just go easy with me and don't instantly swap to English.*

*As a result of going on Leading in a Bilingual Country, I've started to use Cymraeg a bit more in the workplace—nothing flash, just weaving a bore da or sut wyt ti here and there, but I'm noticing that I am blushing less now when I have a go. The other result is the ripple effect this has on colleagues—I'm hearing them have a little go too and that's the point, isn't it? Cymraeg belongs to us all and together we can help each other use the Cymraeg we know.*

*I say use the Cymraeg we know purposefully—this was something I picked up from Doctor Cymraeg on his insta page and believe me it works! If you ask a person ‘do you speak Cymraeg? They will invariably either say yes if they are first language Cymraeg, and no if they feel the Cymraeg they know isn't good enough. However, if you ask someone if they know some Cymraeg—the response is so much more positive—let's face it, if we've lived here for a while we all know at least a couple of words and that's great—please have a go at using them! Wenglish is ok! We tried this on a group of managers. We asked them to put their hand up if they spoke Cymraeg—a few did, but not many. Then*

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*we asked them to put their hand up if they know some Cymraeg and the whole room did.*

*As a result of the programme, we've worked with our Cymraeg team to totally revamp our Welsh language promotion strategy—and we're pretty proud of how we've changed the tone a warm, friendly encouraging one—to encouraging our families, our communities and our staff to use our Welsh voice—we all have one.*

*The main lesson I've taken from the Leading in a Bilingual Country is just to use the Cymraeg you know—Wenglish is ok. Practising and using the language really helps you learn and really builds your confidence.*

**Grants to promote the Welsh Language 2025/26 (alphabetised)**

Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters

Bangor University: ARFer

Bangor University: Iriaith Welsh Language Technology

Bangor University: Termiadur

Cardiff University: Welsh Language Technology and text analysis

Cered

Cwmpas (Prosiect Perthyn)

Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant Cymru

Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru

Cymraeg i bawb

Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru

Gwallgofiaid

Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru Wikipedia

Mapio Cymru

Menter Dinefwr

Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr

Menter Iaith Abertawe

Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent Tor-faen Mynwy

Menter Iaith Bro Ogwr

Menter Iaith Brycheiniog a Maesyfed

Menter Iaith Caerdydd a'r Fro

Menter Iaith Caerffili

Menter Iaith Casnewydd

Menter Iaith Castell Nedd Port Talbot

Menter Iaith Conwy

Menter Iaith Dinbych

Menter Iaith Gwendraeth ac Elli

Menter Iaith Gwynedd / Bangor

Menter Iaith Merthyr

Menter Iaith Môn

Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf

Menter Iaith Sir Benfro

Menter Maldwyn

Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Mentrau Iaith Fflint a Wreccsam

Merched y Wawr

Mudiad Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin

Nantlle 2020

Papurau Bro (via Mentrau iaith Cymru)

Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg

University of Trinity St David: Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru—a Dictionary of the Welsh  
Language

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University of Trinity St David: Prosiect Bro—Sociolinguistic Survey  
Urdd Gobaith Cymru  
Wales Young Farmers' Clubs  
Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain

# Agenda Item 3.1

## ***This document provides a translation of correspondence received from Urdd Gobaith Cymru***

Dear Delyth and Heledd, and the Committee clerk,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Urdd to give evidence to the committee this afternoon.

Following one of Heledd's questions regarding the international aspect, and due to a lack of time towards the end of the evidence session, I would like to expand on Llio's initial response.

The Urdd has a wide-ranging programme of international provision that is led by the Urdd's international department, which is an important partner to the Welsh Government's own international department on a number of international programmes. Mali Thomas, our director of international affairs and communication, has already submitted evidence to the committee on this work.

We are very proud of the co-operation between the Welsh Government's international department and Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

Our international programme of work is connected to the Urdd Eisteddfod and all of the Urdd's community work. There is a strong cultural dimension to this work, which provides an excellent opportunity for young people to represent Wales and to be ambassadors on our behalf; they are the voice of Wales's young people, and they celebrate the Welsh language and culture as well as embodying our nation's values.

Listed below are but a few examples of recent and current projects:-

- Previous winners at the Urdd Eisteddfod travelling to Japan and America to perform, represent Wales's culture and gain experience of performing on the international stage.
- Urdd choirs (including winners of the Urdd Eisteddfod; *aelwyd* choirs, such as Aelwyd Hafodwenog and so on) performing as part of the Welsh Government's celebrations at the Football World Cup in Doha, Qatar, and the Rugby World Cup in France. They represent the modern, young and inclusive Wales.
- The 2025 Women's Euros in Switzerland, during which a series of events and projects will be held here in Wales and in Switzerland, with cultural ambassadors travelling to Switzerland.
- The Lorient Festival in France, where young performers were given an opportunity to perform on the international stage to celebrate and share Wales's traditions. This tour involved a range of young performers from all parts of Wales, including pupils from Fitzalan High School.

I would be more than happy to expand further on this aspect of our work and how the Urdd Eisteddfod gives children and young people an opportunity to celebrate and share the Welsh language and Wales's culture on the world stage.

Catrin

Dear Delyth, Heledd and Clerk of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

Following the Cymraeg for all evidence session on 12-6-25, and the evidence submitted by Lowri Jones on behalf of Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili, there was some misunderstanding regarding the provision for children and young people in the area. Lowri was not aware of the entirety of the Urdd's contribution and provision in the area, and as a result, there is a risk that the evidence could be misinterpreted.

The evidence submitted to the politicians is now part of an official record that is available to the public, including the Government and the press. As we were unable to respond, we have attached a list of our provision outside the classroom for children and young people in the Caerphilly area. Sian Lewis, Chief Executive of the Urdd, has brought the matter to Lowri's attention.

We would be grateful if you could share this information with the other Members of the committee, and acknowledge receipt of this e-mail.

Question from Heledd Fychan:

*Thank you, Osian. Clearly, as mentrau, you have a key role in terms of the Welsh in education strategic plans and in terms of the target of a million Welsh speakers, but also in terms of increasing and normalising the usage of the Welsh language. A number of your events are things that make the language a language of fun, so that Welsh isn't seen as something for the classroom alone. Do you think that we're doing enough to take full advantage of what you deliver in order to reach the Government's strategic targets, or do you think that there is more that could be done strategically, by the Government and so on, that would enable us to take full advantage, not just in terms of legacy in relation to the Eisteddfod or festivals and so on, but in terms of the range of work that you do, including the festivals?*

Lowri's response to the question from Heledd Fychan MS, as spoken

*“Thank you. Yes, quickly, I think that that's an important point, and in general, it does feel at times that the mentrau's contribution in terms of increasing use, especially for children and young people, is being undervalued, because quite often, we are the only providers of those opportunities in the community, on a regular basis and during school holidays and so forth. What we are seeing is that catch-22 situation: if the opportunities aren't sufficient for children and young people, we see a decline in confidence in Welsh language skills.”*

Thank you very much

Catrin



## Urdd Gobaith Cymru Provision – Caerphilly 2024 and 2025

### **School Holiday Provision**

#### **February Half Term 2025**

3 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 3 x Mini Multi-Sports Camp, Ysgol Penalltau  
 1 x Multi-Sports Camp, Rhymney  
 1 x Mini Gymnastics Camp, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)

#### **Easter Half Term 2025**

4 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 4 x Mini Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau -  
 2 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy) -  
 2 x Mini Gymnastics Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy) -

#### **Whitsun Half Term 2025**

2 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 2 x Mini Multi-Sports Camp, Ysgol Penalltau  
 1 x Junior Multi-Sports Camp, Cwm Rhymni  
 1 x Mini Gymnastics Camp, Cwm Rhymni

#### **Summer 2025**

3 x Mini Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 6 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 2 x Mini Gymnastics Camps, Ysgol Penalltau  
 4 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)  
 2 x Mini Gymnastics Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)  
 2 x Girls' Football Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)  
 2 x Boys' Football Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)  
 1 x Mini Rugby Camp, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy)  
 2 x Mini Athletes' Camps, Cwm Rhymni (Gwyndy) 2 x Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon  
 1 x Mini Multi-Sports Camp, Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon  
 1 x Mini Gymnastics Camps, Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon  
 2 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol Bro Sannan  
 2 x Mini Gymnastics Camps, Ysgol Bro Sannan  
 1 x Food and Fun, Newbridge Comprehensive School  
 1 x Junior Multi-Sports Camp, Cwm Rhymni (Gellihaf)  
 1 x Mini Gymnastics Camp, Cwm Rhymni (Gellihaf)  
 3 x Junior Multi-Sports Camps, Bro Allta  
 3 x Mini Multi-Sport Camps, Bro Allta  
 2 x Multi-Sports Camps, Ysgol y Castell



<b>Community Clubs</b>	<b>Location</b>
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Swimming Lessons, Bedwas Leisure Centre	Bedwas Leisure Centre
Bro Sannan Gymnastics Club	Ysgol Bro Sannan
Caerphilly Gymnastics Club	Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili
Mini Football Club – Caerphilly	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy
Girls’ Mini Football Club – Caerphilly	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy
Girls’ Football Club – Caerphilly	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy
Mini Rugby, Caerphilly	Caerphilly Leisure Centre
Caerphilly Racquets Club	Morgan Jones Park
The Urdd’s Mini Athletics Club	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy
The Urdd’s Athletics Club	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy
Multi-Sports Transition Club (Gellihaf)	Cwm Rhymni, Gellihaf
Multi-Sports Transition Club (Gwyndy)	Cwm Rhymni, Gwyndy

<b>After-school Sports Club</b>	<b>Location</b>
Multi-Sports Club, Ysgol Caerffili	Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili
Lunch Club, Ysgol Bro Sannan	Ysgol Bro Sannan
Multi-Sports Camp, Ysgol Penalltau	Ysgol Penalltau
Multi-Sports Camp, Ysgol Bro Allta	Ysgol Bro Allta
Multi-Sports Club, Tir-y-Berth	Tir-y-Berth School
Multi-Sports Club, Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon	Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon
Multi-Sports Club, Ysgol Gilfach Fargoed	Ysgol Gilfach Fargoed
Gymnastics, Ysgol y Castell	Ysgol y Castell
Multi-Sports Club, Ysgol Cwm Derwen	Ysgol Cwm Derwen



<b>Youth Community Provision</b>	
Caerphilly Welsh Youth Club – 20 – 40 young people attend weekly. In the process of seeking accreditation for making a simple meal.	Virginia Park Youth Centre
Caerphilly Welsh Youth Club 2 (awaiting confirmation of start date)	Blackwood
Young people supporting Caerphilly Pride	
Young people from Cwm Rhymni / Youth Club attending the Caerphilly County Youth Forum with an Urdd officer	Penallta House
Collaboration with the local authority youth department on its provision / clubs.	
Secondary trips organised during the holidays.	
Summer Fun Festival – collaboration with the authority's youth department: 3 clusters – North / South / Central	
<i>Swogio/volunteer courses, Youth Weekend in Llangrannog and Trips to France/Disney have been popular with young people in Caerphilly</i>	
Volunteering projects for young people with the Urdd – for pupils at Ysgol Cwm Rhymni and second-language schools in the county	

<b>Work with secondary schools</b>	
Second-language lunchtime clubs at Islwyn High School and Idris Davies School.	
Transition sessions (Primary to Secondary) arranged, as well as activities during the summer.	
Cylch Cwm Rhymni Eisteddfod, but also hosting the regional Eisteddfod in Caerphilly.	
Urdd Camps – all Welsh primary schools have been to Llangrannog for a week in May.	

# Sport Wales Response

‘Cymraeg For All’

Written evidence for the  
CCWLSIR Committee

# 1. Sport Wales' Response

## **Background:**

Sport Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales at both community and elite levels. We are financed by annual funding from the Welsh Government and from the National Lottery. We are the main adviser on sporting matters to the Welsh Government and are responsible for distributing Government and National Lottery funding to sport in Wales.

Sport Wales is one of the smallest public bodies in Wales and our budget is comprised of running costs, grant funding for National Governing Bodies, national partners and local authorities to deliver sport, but also community sport – investing and growing local opportunities for clubs and societies to serve the needs of their local communities.

We are one of the 56 public bodies in Wales which are subject to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act; we meet our duties under the Welsh Language Standards and care deeply about our place in Welsh society and culture. We work closely with the Older People's and Children's Commissioners and filter all our work through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We strive to be the best we can be and give the best we can offer to all people along the sporting pathway, from children starting out, to medal-winning athletes, to a diverse career path in the sporting sector, to older people staying fit, healthy and independent.

## **Sport Wales insight: School Sports Survey 2022**

One of the world's biggest surveys of young people, the 2022 School Sport Survey, gave young people a voice on sport and wellbeing in Wales. The survey gives us and the sector a rich insight into participation levels, behaviours and attitudes.

Thanks to the hard work of schools, local authorities, and others across the sport and education sector, we were able to listen to the voices of over 116,000 pupils, and almost 950 teachers.

The depth of evidence means that we – and our partners – can make more informed decisions about future investment resources. We can analyse emerging trends and develop sport in a format that motivates children and young people today. It also allows us to examine under-represented groups and we use the evidence to tackle some of the barriers that prevent children and young people taking part.

## **Welsh Language findings:**

In 2022, 116,038 pupils from 1,000 schools in Wales took part in the 2022 Sport Wales School Sport Survey. The below information shares the data by use of

Welsh Language, highlighting key figures and patterns. We define pupils who speak Welsh as those who self-identify as being able to speak fluently in Welsh or can talk confidently or simply in Welsh.

We've structured this around the Vision for Sport in Wales: 'An active nation where everyone can have a lifelong enjoyment of sport'. We want as many people as possible to be inspired to be active through sport, where everyone feels able to take part no matter their sporting background, in a sporting landscape that responds to the needs of people at different stages of their life, to create a wide range of positive experiences.

### **Active Nation**

The Vision for Sport in Wales is to create an active nation. We want as many people as possible to be inspired to be active through sport. This section explores participation by frequency, setting and sports, as well as volunteering.

- Pupils who speak Welsh are more likely than pupils who do not speak Welsh to participate in sport outside of the curriculum three or more times per week (participation three times a week or more is Future Generations Indicator 38). 46% of pupils who speak Welsh participate in sport outside of the curriculum three or more times per week, compared to 35% of pupils who do not speak Welsh.
- Pupils who speak Welsh are more likely than pupils who do not speak Welsh to participate in sport in both an extracurricular and community club setting at least once a week.
- The top three sports that pupils who speak Welsh participate in at least once a week in a community club setting are football, swimming, and rugby.
- Pupils who speak Welsh are more likely to volunteer or help with sport at school or in their community than pupils who do not speak Welsh. 28% of pupils who speak Welsh volunteer or help with sport at school or in their community, compared to 21% of pupils who do not speak Welsh.

### **Everyone**

The Vision is for everyone. From people who don't see themselves as sporty to people who win medals, across all demographics. This section explores participation within Regional Sport Partnerships.

	<b>Welsh Speaker</b>	<b>Non-Welsh Speaker</b>
<b>South Wales</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>36%</b>

<b>Mid Wales</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>West Wales</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Gwent</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>North Wales</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>34%</b>

## Lifelong

The Vision is for life. It responds to the needs of people at different stages of their life. This section explores demand and motivators/enablers to do more sport.

- 50% of pupils who speak Welsh have unmet demand for sport
- The top three sports in demand for pupils who speak Welsh are swimming, cycling and basketball.
- The 2022 School Sport Survey asked pupils to select responses to the question 'I would do more sport if...'. The top three selected responses from pupils who speak Welsh are 'If I had more time', 'If there were more sport opportunities that suited me' and 'If I was more confident'.

Note: Unmet demand refers to those who do not participate in sport three or more times a week, yet have a demand to do more sport.

## Enjoyment

The Vision focuses on creating a wide range of positive experiences so everyone can enjoy sport. This section explores enjoyment and confidence.

- Pupils who speak Welsh enjoy sport in PE lessons 'a lot' more than they do in extracurricular or community clubs.

Table 2: Enjoyment of sport in different settings, by use of Welsh language.

*Enjoyment of sport in different settings, by use of Welsh language.*

	<i>Enjoyment of PE a lot</i>	<i>Enjoyment of extracurricular sport 'a lot'</i>	<i>Enjoyment of community club sport 's lot'</i>
<i>Welsh Speaker</i>	60%	44%	53%

Non-Welsh Speaker	56%	36%	42%
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- Across all settings, pupils who speak Welsh are more likely to enjoy sport than pupils who do not speak Welsh.
- Pupils who speak Welsh are more likely than pupils who do not speak Welsh to feel 'very confident' in trying new sports. 31% of pupils who speak Welsh feel 'very confident' in trying new sports, compared to 25% of pupils who do not speak Welsh.

**Please note that the next school sports survey round will take place in 2026**

## Sport Wales and the Welsh Language:

### **Urdd: (TALK TO ANNABEL RE SPECIFICS)**

As a key strand of our Welsh language commitment Sport Wales works in partnership with and invests in the Urdd to deliver Welsh language opportunities in sport and physical activity

### ***A summary of some of the Urdd's achievements in 2024-25 include:***

- After School provision: Opening provision into new schools as volunteer pools grow.
- Community Clubs and Holiday provision: expanding on the offer of specific community provision through including summer sport activities; Continued focus to targeted sports such as swimming and gymnastics and outcomes such as women and girls.
- Volunteers and coaches: continued training and the development of new coaches and volunteers; A new apprentice role has started to support events.
- Work with the secondary schools and further education ('FE') colleges in specific areas to create a young workforce of volunteers that can support the growth of inclusion projects.
- Welsh lessons have now commenced for the new volunteers before they are signposted into supporting community provision.
- Collaboration with the FE sector in delivering national and regional events.
- **Regional Competitions and National events:** Continue to hold several regional competitions with participation levels continuing to be very high. Schools and colleges continue to have a huge appetite for participating in inclusive, well-run competitions. Events are planned to link with high profile major sporting events.

- Supporting inclusion through partnership working to enable a programme of 1-1 pool support that then makes swimming teaching programmes fully inclusive. Training has now also been provided to staff to enable delivery of 1-1 pool support.
- Staff Development: Continue to ensure staff have relevant qualifications to deliver high standards of provision; provide coaching/leaders

### **URDD Apprenticeship Partnership:**

Plas Menai have recently partnered with the URDD apprenticeship programme for our 2025 apprentices, enhancing our training opportunities. This new partnership allows apprentices to pursue Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications in Outdoor Programmes, Leisure Management, and Essential Skills, all while offering the option to study through the medium of Welsh or learn Welsh as a new language. We are delighted to have welcomed four local Welsh-speaking trainees to our Instructor Development Programme (IDP) Apprenticeship for 2025.

### **Welsh Language Commissioner:**

Sport Wales continues to work with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu team to encourage our partners to extend their Welsh language offers and in turn to encourage more opportunities for young people to take part in sport through the medium of Welsh. Sport Wales has also revised the Capability Framework (which forms the governance base for our funded partners) to include the need to implement suitable arrangements for the appropriate provision of opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

### **Plas Menai**

Delivery of Welsh language activities is extremely important for community engagement and impact. 60% of the Plas Menai team speak Welsh fluently, with a further 15% learning the language. Most of the programme can be delivered in Welsh, or bilingually, and the choice of language is agreed in partnership with the customer.

### **During 2024/2025**



84 activities / courses were delivered in the medium of Welsh.



92% of swimming lessons were delivered in the medium of Welsh, or bilingually



24% of all school activity was delivered in the medium of Welsh



250+ local children took part in the Swim Safe programme, in conjunction with Gwynedd Council's Byw'n Iach team. This was delivered in the medium of Welsh.

Plas Menai has continued to increase the number of Welsh speaking staff to improve the resilience of its Welsh offer across the programme of participation and instructor courses for different sports and qualification levels.

### **Instructor Recruitment:**

The Parkwood Leisure team have used several different approaches to increase the Welsh language skills in their workforce which include:

- Advertised posts as Welsh speaking essential roles to maximise the opportunity to increase language skills.
- Upskilling a former Plas Menai instructor who speaks Welsh to deliver instructor courses.
- A first language Welsh speaker has been recruited to join the instructor pool.
- Advertised for Welsh speaking instructors who are in the process of achieving their qualifications.
- Plas Menai has also contacted existing staff and its pool of freelance instructors to offer support for them to learn Welsh to be able to instruct in the language in future years.

## **. Grassroots sports investment:**

Sport Wales community investment schemes such as the Be Active Wales Fund support clubs to continue to offer both sporting provisions in predominantly Welsh speaking areas, as well as investment in supporting Welsh language sporting provisions. This includes things such as accessing funding for Welsh language coach education courses.

Additionally, our A Place for Sport Fund with Crowdfunder supports a range of funding opportunities and provides a higher percentage of funding if projects identify specific impacts on Welsh language as part of their grassroots delivery.

We continue to invest in Sport Partnerships across Wales. We want Wales to be an active nation where everyone has the opportunity to have a lifelong enjoyment of sport. For some this is already the case, but despite the very best efforts of many people, others are still unable to access the same level of opportunities to take part and enjoy being physically active.

In Wales, taking part in physical activity at least 3 times a week is recognised as a national wellbeing indicator. Alarming, around half of all young people who identify as Black, Asian or from minority ethnic groups; more than half of all young people with a disability; almost 6 in 10 young people from the most deprived communities; and over half of all girls, are still participating less frequently than this.

However, a staggering 96% of young people have said that they would like to do more sport, showing a huge level of opportunity if the sporting offer is right.

### **How will Sport Partnerships help?**

There are numerous potential benefits of Sport Partnerships, which will differ in different areas depending on each partnership and what suits them best.

Sport Partnerships will:

- Address inequalities in sport participation across Wales.
- Increase the diversity of strategic partners and delivery mechanisms within the regions.
- Assist us in ensuring there is the right support and opportunities in place for those who are not regularly physically active – with a clear focus on removing barriers for those who need the most help.
- Help us take steps to meet the high demand from those who are active but want to do much more.
- Enable a collective strength, from combining resources, learnings and expertise across each region.
- Give each region the ability to target resources toward those with the greatest need.

On top of the development of our sport partnerships, we are committed to the Welsh Government's national action plan for a bilingual Wales. We encourage our funded partners to consider and implement suitable arrangements for the appropriate provision of opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

## **Summary**

We are happy to respond to the 'Cymraeg for All' consultation and are pleased to see the work being put into this subject by the committee. We agree that it's crucial to understand the distinct barriers to language use, how to develop confidence and changing language behaviour so that people start using more

Welsh in their everyday lives is key to the viability of the language in all communities.

Whilst there is still much work to be done, we are proud of our partnership work and how increasingly, sport and physical activity is delivered to young people in the language of their choice. We believe that partnership work is key and as stated we encourage the use and development of the Welsh language as a standard request in our investment offer letters. The development of regional Sport Partnerships will only support our partners delivery in the Welsh language by using local skills to solve local needs.

***This document provides a translation of correspondence received from Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili***

For the attention of: The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

Dear Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to read through the transcript of the committee meeting held on 21 June, and for the opportunity to give evidence during the meeting itself. I would like to add a further explanation to the comments that I made at 12:36:10 during the meeting when discussing our provision as Mentrau and as a key partner to local authorities. I was referring to our provision of cultural opportunities to adults, children and young people during the school holidays. It was not my intention to undermine the work of any other organisation by referring to our provision, but I would like to note that Urdd Gobaith Cymru also provides different opportunities to those provided by the Mentrau during school holidays and on an ongoing basis within the community. It is possible that my comments may have been misleading, although this was not my intention. I understand that the Urdd has provided a comprehensive list of the opportunities that it provides in the Caerphilly area for the committee's attention. Again, this provision is different to our provision as Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili.

I would be grateful if this clarification could be added to the transcript, if possible.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to give evidence to the committee,

Yours sincerely,

Lowri Jones

Chief Officer, Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili

## **Briefing to the Senedd Culture Committee**

Community Cohesion and Democratic Engagement in Wales: The Role of Public Interest News

**Date: June 2025**

**Prepared by: Huw Marshall, Talking Wales**

**Purpose:** To highlight the challenges facing community cohesion and democratic participation in Wales due to the decline in local and national public interest news provision, and to propose pathways for policy response and investment.

### **1. Context and Problem Statement**

Wales faces a critical shortfall in public interest journalism. Beyond the BBC, no dedicated Welsh national public interest news provider with reach exists. Legacy local news publishers, notably Reach plc and Newsquest, have significantly reduced editorial capacity across Wales. This has contributed to an emerging "news deserts" across the country, leaving many communities with little or no regular access to independently produced, fact-checked, relevant information.

This erosion of news provision directly undermines community cohesion and democratic engagement, weakening public trust and increasing susceptibility to misinformation, a pattern explored in detail in the 2025 Lessons from Southport report.

### **2. Key Challenges**

#### **A. Erosion of Local Information Ecosystems**

The rapid decline of local titles and hollowing out of editorial teams means that key issues, from council decisions to community developments, go unreported.

In the vacuum, misinformation, rumour and divisive content on social media become dominant sources of information.

#### **B. Public Misinformation and Institutional Fragility**

As documented in Southport, a single event triggered widespread unrest due to an absence of trusted local reporting, compounded by algorithmic amplification of misinformation online.

Similar vulnerabilities exist in Wales, particularly in communities affected by poverty and poor digital literacy.

#### **C. Community Cohesion Under Threat**

Misinformation exacerbates tensions between communities, as witnessed in Southport. The News Futures Forum participants emphasised that a decline in public interest news reduces shared understanding and weakens social resilience.

The underrepresentation of Welsh voices and a lack of community-rooted editorial perspectives in Wales aggravate this.

#### **D. Democratic Disengagement**

Citizens in Wales are less likely to be informed about local democracy, devolved policy, or opportunities for civic participation if no trusted media is covering these issues in a relevant, accessible way.

A weakened information environment undermines electoral engagement and informed public debate, especially at local and Senedd levels.

### **3. Emerging Solutions and Opportunities**

#### **A. Support for Initiatives like Talking Wales**

Talking Wales (<https://talking.wales>) is pioneering a cooperative model of public interest news rooted in communities and supported by its readers and members.

It combines digital-first reporting with community engagement and aims to build a network of local newsrooms contributing to a national platform.

This model aligns with the recommendations from the Southport report, including:

Newsrooms as resilience hubs.

Debunking and fact-checking initiatives.

Greater collaboration with civic institutions.

#### **B. A Welsh Public Interest News Fund**

Drawing inspiration from Ireland and Scotland, a Senedd-backed Public Interest News Fund, independent from Creative Wales and managed by the Public Interest News Foundation, could help sustain independent news providers through matched funding, investment, innovation grants, and capacity-building support.

Criteria would include editorial independence, public service ethos, and community accountability.

#### **C. Integration of News Literacy in the Curriculum**

As noted in the Southport findings, embedding media literacy in education, especially around critical thinking and evaluating sources, is essential to future-proofing community resilience.

#### **D. Policy Support for Local News Infrastructure**

Measures might include:

Reforming public notice advertising to support local media.

Supporting cooperative and non-profit ownership models.

Exploring tax relief or commissioning contracts for verified public interest news outlets.

#### **4. Recommendations to the Committee**

Hold an inquiry into the state of local and national public interest news in Wales, including mapping news deserts and stakeholder consultation.

Support a pilot Public Interest News Fund for Wales, in partnership with the sector and key stakeholders such as the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF).

Champion policy reform to redirect public advertising and democratic information to community-focused and verified news providers.

Back the development of a Welsh news literacy strategy, jointly led by the education and culture departments.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The decline in public interest news in Wales is not just a media issue but a threat to democracy, cohesion, and informed citizenship. Community-led solutions like Talking Wales, and national coordination inspired by the Lessons from Southport report, offer a roadmap toward a more resilient, better informed and cohesive Wales.

References: [Lessons Learnt From Southport](#).

# Agenda Item 3.3

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MDFWL/00338/25

Sir Robert Chote  
Chair  
UK Statistics Authority  
[Robert.Chote@Statistics.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Chote@Statistics.gov.uk)

4 July 2025

Dear Sir Robert,

Thank you for the letter of 17 June regarding the UK Statistics Authority's recommendation to the UK government about the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and England.

I welcome the thorough and transparent process that has underpinned this recommendation, including the extensive research by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the engagement with expert advisory bodies, and the wide-ranging public consultation including with stakeholders here in Wales. The Welsh Government recognises the importance of timely, inclusive, and high-quality population statistics to inform policy, allocate resources, and support the delivery of public services across Wales.

I welcome the recommendations to plan for a questionnaire-based census of population and housing in Wales and England in 2031, as well as the further development of statistical outputs using administrative data. Not only will this ensure that the statistics that the ONS produces about Wales are more frequent and timelier but will also ensure that they continue to meet user needs for inclusive, accurate and granular statistics, building on the successes and lessons learnt from Census 2021.

I particularly welcome the emphasis on the continued development of high-quality statistics about the Welsh language. This remains a priority for the Welsh Government, and I look forward to continuing our close collaboration with the ONS on this. This will ensure that future outputs will support our measurement of Welsh language ability and use, and enable us to monitor progress towards our target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

As plans for the 2031 census progress, it is vital that the ONS engages early and meaningfully with Welsh users and considers the Welsh context in both the content and conduct of the census. I hope lessons from Census 2021, including around the ethnicity question and bilingual addressing, will inform future improvements.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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[Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I note the reference in the recommendation to the UK government's digital ambitions and the potential for developments in digital identification to support the future statistical system. Our Chief Digital Officer will work closely with the UK government on these plans and consider how Welsh services can benefit from common platforms. But nevertheless, the ONS must be mindful of where such plans may relate to English services only and ensure the quality of Welsh statistical estimates also remains a priority.

The success of the digital-first approach in 2021 shows the public's willingness to engage online. We see potential for further innovation in 2031, both in question design and in the integration of administrative data. However, it remains essential that people unable to respond digitally are fully supported through alternative means. Welsh Government officials will continue to work closely with the ONS to ensure effective communication and engagement with all population groups in Wales.

I am also aware of the challenges faced by traditional statistical production techniques in recent years. Therefore, the continued commitment to develop the use of administrative data is fundamental. It ensures we have a statistical system which can provide the data we need to understand and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and make decisions in the years ahead, particularly in areas where the census cannot capture particular topics.

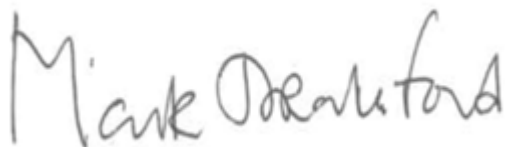
The Welsh Government will commit to the recommendation to provide a regular, reliable and ongoing flow of the critical administrative datasets. Officials will continue to work with the ONS and with our partners here in Wales to support this work. We have already demonstrated our commitment to this over the years, for example, in our work in supplying datasets to the ONS to support the delivery and quality assurance of Census 2021.

I have already written to both the acting National Statistician, Emma Rourke, and the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office, Georgia Gould MP, outlining the Welsh Government's support of the Authority's recommendations. I look forward to the UK government's response to the recommendations.

Thank you again for your continued engagement. We look forward to working together to deliver a modern, inclusive, and trusted statistical system that meets the needs of all users in Wales and across the UK.

This letter has been copied to the Senedd's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Mark Drakeford AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

—  
**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations  
Committee**

Eluned Morgan MS  
First Minister  
Welsh Government  
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0300 200 6565

By e-mail

01 July 2025

**Urgent Representation at the Women's Euros – Wales vs France**

Dear First Minister,

I write on behalf of the Committee to express our deep disappointment at the absence of ministerial representation at the Women's Euros fixture between Wales and France on 9 July 2025.

This match is not only a significant sporting event, but also a moment of national pride. We are advised that the Prime Minister is attending England's fixture, and the President of France is expected to support his national team in person. The lack of Welsh Government representation risks conveying that our women's team is not afforded the same recognition or support as others on the international stage.

We urge you to reconsider this position as a matter of urgency. A visible ministerial presence would demonstrate the Welsh Government's commitment to gender equality in sport and its support for our national athletes.

Would you kindly confirm whether a minister will now be attending the match to provide the visible support our team deserves and to ensure that Wales is proudly represented on this important international stage?

Yours sincerely,



**Delyth Jewell AS**  
**Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Ein cyf/Our ref: PO/FM/0321/25

Delyth Jewell AS/MS  
Chair  
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

4 July 2025

Dear Delyth,

I am writing in response to your letter regarding Welsh Government representation at the Women's UEFA Euro 2025 fixture between Wales and France on 9 July 2025 in St. Gallen.

I am delighted at our Women's national team's historic achievement in reaching the finals of the Euros for the first time. It will be a great privilege for me to attend the opening match against the Netherlands in Lucerne on Saturday 5 July. The Minister for Culture, Skills, and Social Partnership will also be attending the Wales v England game. As you will know, it is important to strike a balance between ministerial attendance and expenses for the public purse. As a government, we are fully behind Rhian Wilkinson's team. I am looking forward to supporting Wales throughout the competition and to seeing the whole country cheer them on.

The Welsh Government will consider additional ministerial attendance in Switzerland should Wales advance beyond the group stages.

I would like to highlight the positive impact our £1m Partner Support Fund is having with positive projects and activities in Switzerland and across Wales. A summary of the projects is available [here](#). Each one is set to celebrate Wales' women's sporting success in their own way, whether it be hosting mini football tournaments, organising viewing parties for matches, or creating art murals. They all aim to promote interest in the women's game, encourage increased and long-term participation in sport, and project Wales' values around equality and inclusion.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I remain committed to raising Wales' profile internationally. Our 'Tîm Cymru' approach with our partner organisations, continues to promote Wales as a confident ambitious nation on a global stage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Eluned Morgan**

## MINISTERIAL INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

June 2025

INWARD VISITS	
13 June	<b>Visit to Wales by Minister for Culture at the Government of Catalonia</b> The Minister for Sport and Culture met with the Minister for Culture at the Government of Catalonia at St Fagans National Museum. The meeting, which included representatives from Amgueddfa Cymru, explored potential areas of collaboration across the sector. The visit was an important step in deepening the relationship between Wales and Catalonia, ahead of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between both Governments later this year.
25 June	<b>Meeting with UNRWA</b> First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice met with a representative from UNRWA Office for Europe, to hear an update on the humanitarian situation in Gaza.
26 June	<b>Utah State visit to Wales</b> The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning held a short bilateral with Lieutenant Governor Deidre Henderson and gave a welcome to the delegation of government officials during their visit to Wales. The main purpose of the visit was to discuss renewable energy, including the nuclear industry.
OUTWARD VISITS	
11 June	<b>First Minister meeting with Swiss Ambassador in London</b> The First Minister met with the Swiss Ambassador at his residence in London to discuss Welsh participation in Euro 2025, ensuring Wales can capitalise on growing Swiss links and ensure we deliver a legacy.
11 June	<b>First Minister attendance at Wales and Japan Business Reception</b> The First Minister attended a business reception organised by the Japanese Embassy to celebrate the strong economic links between Wales and Japan. The First Minister met with business guests, held press interviews and held a short informal bilateral meeting with the Ambassador.
17 June	<b>Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning at Paris Airshow</b> The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning attended the Airshow to reinforce the Welsh Government's commitment to growing the closely integrated aerospace and defence sectors. While in France, the Cabinet Secretary met with the UK Ambassador to France and key companies.

Senedd Committees

Via e-mail

8 July 2025

## Consultation: Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd

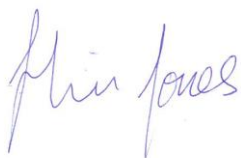
Dear Chair,

You will be aware that the Chairs' Forum is currently considering how committees have operated during the Sixth Senedd. The aim of this work is to identify whether committee procedures and practices can be improved to ensure the scrutiny function is as effective as possible, and to use this information to inform the Seventh Senedd. The Forum is keen to consider wider cultural issues around the operation of Senedd committees, as well as practical matters such as size and function.

The Future Senedd Committee has also made a [number of recommendations](#) to the Forum about the committee system and considerations for the Seventh Senedd, and these have been factored into our work on this matter.

The Forum has launched a [consultation](#), and we would be grateful for the views of individual Committees on the questions in the [consultation document](#), and any reflections that you may consider relevant by **12 September 2025**.

Yours sincerely,



Elin Jones MS/AS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



# Agenda Item 0.6

Jack Sargeant AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DC/JS/00471/25

Mike Hedges MS  
Chair  
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

[SeneddLJC@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddLJC@senedd.wales)

9 July 2025

Dear Mike,

I am writing in accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement to notify you that the Culture and Creative Industries Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) will meet on 16 July 2025.

This will be chaired by the UK Government Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP. I will be representing the Welsh Government at this virtual meeting.

I anticipate the meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss recent creative industries developments, including the publication of the Creative Industry Sector Plan, international activity, and ongoing engagement.

I have copied this letter to the Chairs of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

Yours sincerely,

**Jack Sargeant AS/MS**  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership  
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



## Submission to the Senedd Legislation, Justice, and Constitution, and Culture and International Relations Committees

**July 2025**

This paper is submitted by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), further to Committee staff drawing to our attention the discussion at the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee session on 2 April 2025, during which WCVA's role and engagement with the Welsh Government in relation to the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) were referenced.

We welcome the opportunity to provide clarification and additional context regarding our involvement in this area, including recent and ongoing engagement with Welsh Government and our role on the UK Government's Domestic Advisory Group (DAG).

### Background

In November 2023, WCVA gave evidence to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee's inquiry into UK–EU governance, which was later published in the Committee's report. In that evidence, we highlighted the need to establish clear mechanisms to support greater coordination and engagement between Welsh civil society and government in relation to Wales–EU matters (such as the reinstatement of the EU Advisory Group).

Our Vice-President, Tom Jones, met with the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, to raise concerns about the limited capacity of Welsh civil society to engage meaningfully in the UK–EU civil society structures established under the TCA. The First Minister acknowledged these challenges and invited us to pursue the matter with his successor.

On 3 February 2025, WCVA wrote to First Minister Eluned Morgan MS, restating our concerns and formally requesting a meeting with the First Minister. This letter set out:

- The need to continue discussions held with the previous First Minister about the voluntary sector's role in projecting Wales's progressive and outward-looking identity.
- The importance of ensuring the sector can sustain its links with European partners and contribute to UK–EU TCA structures, including the DAG and CSF.
- The challenges around our capacity as the only Wales specific member of the DAG and the potential need for resource facilitate coordination and engagement in this space.

We are not aware of any new structures having been put in place, and while we have maintained ongoing contact with Welsh Government on various matters, we have not had formal, regular engagement specifically on the TCA during this period. We recognise that this may in part reflect wider changes within Welsh Government in 2024, as well as ongoing reviews of how formal sector engagement mechanisms operate between the sector and the Welsh Government under the Third Sector Scheme.

## Recent Developments

We welcome the steps taken by Welsh Government very recently to re-engage on this agenda:

- In June 2025, WCVA has met with both the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Rebecca Evans MS, where the UK–EU relationship and the role of the voluntary sector were discussed.
- Welsh Government also facilitated a constructive meeting between WCVA and Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, in his role as the UK Government's lead on UK–EU relations.
- We were invited to explore a potential application under Agile Cymru to support sector activity in this space.
- Welsh Government officials have indicated that membership of the Trade Policy Advisory Group (TPAG) could be an avenue for our continued involvement. However, as set out in our earlier correspondence, WCVA's capacity to participate in all trade fora is limited, particularly as the dedicated third sector resource we had come to an end and no alternate funding was put in place.

Given this, we have suggested that Ministerial Meetings under the Third Sector Scheme, which are intended to take place regularly could be resumed in the economy portfolio. As one part of their agenda, these would offer a practical and proportionate mechanism for information exchange and coordination around Wales's engagement with the UK–EU relationship. These meetings have not yet resumed following the change in administration

but we believe they could provide a valuable channel for civil society input into future developments.

WCVA remains committed to working constructively with Welsh Government and others in this space. We hope this note helps clarify our current engagement and supports the Committees' work in ensuring inclusive and coordinated governance in the context of the TCA.

Charles Whitmore

Head of Strategic Partnerships

Email: [cwhitmore@wcva.cymru](mailto:cwhitmore@wcva.cymru)



Andrew RT Davies MS  
Chair  
Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

14 July 2025

Dear Andrew,

The Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee report on the Legislative Consent Memoranda for the Data (Use and Access) Bill included a recommendation for the Welsh Government to provide regular updates on its discussions with the UK Government on EU Data Adequacy and any implications the Bill may have on trade until the UK's adequacy status beyond December 2025 is secured.

In response, the Welsh Government gave a commitment to provide updates on these matters to the Committee as part of general Ministerial scrutiny meetings and, at other times, as and when there is anything significant to report.

I am writing to update the Committee that, on 24 June 2025, the European Commission announced it had adopted a six-month extension to the existing EU data adequacy decisions for the UK until 27 December 2025.

The extension was initially proposed by the European Commission in March 2025 to allow for the Data (Use and Access) Bill to pass through the UK Parliament with Royal Assent received on 19 June 2025. The European Commission is now assessing whether the UK's new legal framework continues to provide an adequate level of protection for personal data. Based on this assessment, the European Commission has indicated it will decide whether to renew the EU data adequacy decisions for the UK.

Whilst this assessment is ongoing, the Welsh Government will continue to engage with the UK Government in relation to the EU's data adequacy decisions for the UK through the appropriate inter-governmental channels.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I trust the Committee will find this update useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca". The script is cursive and fluid.

**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio

cc.

Chair, Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations  
Committee

Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

# Agenda Item 5

Welsh Parliament  
**Citizen Engagement Team**

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## **Cymraeg for all?:** Engagement Findings

June 2025



This report has been produced by the Senedd's Citizen Engagement Team for the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee. © Senedd Commission Copyright 2024 The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the Senedd Commission and the title of the document specified.

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# 1. Engagement Summary

The following engagement summary offers an overview of the engagement programme design, delivery, and key findings.

## Background

1. The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee is conducting an inquiry to explore the challenges and opportunities for increasing the use of the Welsh language across Wales, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers.
2. The Committee wished to understand the motivations for learning Welsh, in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers in particular. They were also interested in understanding whether there is an impact from events like the Eisteddfod on Welsh learning and if that influences motivation.
3. The Citizen Engagement Team facilitated focus groups with Welsh learners and individuals with varying abilities in the language. This report summarises the perspectives shared by the participants.

## Objectives

4. The objective of the focus groups was to deepen the Committee's understanding of the issues within the inquiry's terms of reference and to explore participants' views and experiences.
5. Views were gathered to ensure that those with lived experience contributed to the evidence-gathering programme, with a specific focus on the following inquiry terms of reference:
  - Examine the key barriers and opportunities to the use of the Welsh language across Wales, but with a focus on areas with fewer Welsh speakers;
  - Understand the extent to which cultural events, such as the Eisteddfodau and Welsh language festivals, impact on language use in areas with fewer Welsh speakers



## Methodology

- 6.** The Citizen Engagement Team proposed a qualitative approach to engagement, comprising a series of focus groups.
- 7.** Focus groups were conducted face-to-face or online, depending on how the group usually met.
- 8.** The format of engagement was largely comparable between sessions but varied slightly to meet participants' needs and facilitate an organic, qualitative conversation.
- 9.** The engagement comprised of:
  - **13 focus groups and one interview** in total
  - **Seven in-person and seven online** sessions
  - **Four written responses** were also received from participants who were unable to attend the focus groups but wanted to contribute their views

## Participants

- 10.** The Citizen Engagement Manager contacted Welsh language course providers and local organisations such as Menter Iaith to recruit participants from areas of low-density Welsh speakers in the north and south east of Wales and the Welsh valleys in the south.
- 11.** **97 participants** contributed their views, primarily from the Senedd regions of North Wales, South Wales Central and South Wales East. However, because of the nature of online learning, some groups included participants from other regions, including some based in England.
- 12.** Participants included a mix of learners with different proficiency levels, and native Welsh speakers who were either reconnecting with the language after a prolonged period or seeking to deepen their engagement with it.

## Ethical Considerations

- 13.** All interview notes were anonymised, and each focus group's output was reviewed and approved by participants for accuracy.
- 14.** All methods used in this project adhered to the standards set out in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and complied with relevant data

protection and safeguarding legislation to ensure the ethical treatment and privacy of all participants.

## Key Findings

### Motivations to learn

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- 15.** The main motivations to learn Welsh among the groups were varied. Many participants expressed **personal** reasons, such as wanting to communicate in Welsh with family members or children attending Welsh language schools.
- 16.** Others were motivated by **professional** aspirations, aiming to use Welsh in their workplace or to enhance their career development opportunities.
- 17.** Additionally, **cultural** factors played a significant role, with several participants mentioning feelings of shame for not speaking the language, or a deep desire to connect with their Welsh heritage through the language.

### Resources

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- 18.** Participants highlighted a variety of resources that they had utilised in their efforts to learn, or use more of, the Welsh language.
- 19.** These included **online platforms** such as Duolingo and "Say Something in Welsh," as well as **formal lessons** offered through educational institutions.
- 20.** Many also mentioned Welsh-language **television and radio** programs, along with Welsh **books**, as valuable tools for language acquisition.
- 21.** Local **events**, such as coffee mornings and group walks, were considered helpful for practising conversational Welsh, as were sessions like "Sesiwn Siarad."
- 22.** Some participants also noted attending Welsh **gigs**, following Welsh-language **social media** accounts and YouTube channels, or joining Welsh **choirs** and **religious groups** as effective ways to immerse themselves in the language and culture.

### Barriers

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- 23.** Participants had encountered many barriers to learning and using the language, but the most common were a **lack of confidence** to use Welsh in settings outside their formal learning environments, a **lack of time** to commit to exploring additional opportunities to use the language, and a **lack of opportunity** more generally to practice Welsh in their community or everyday scenarios.

**24.** Other barriers discussed included there not being enough **information** available about what is going on in their area, or a **lack of events** in general.

### **Cultural events**

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**25.** Overall, participants felt Welsh cultural events were **important** to support the Welsh language, and those who had attended an event, small or large, had enjoyed their experience.

**26.** Some participants **didn't feel confident** to attend an event like the Eisteddfod, or the **cost** had been a barrier for them.

**27.** In general, participants wanted to see **more events** local to them, and would like to see **more promotion** to non-Welsh speaking communities to encourage more engagement with the culture and language.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the programme of engagement.

## 2. Engagement Findings:

This section outlines the key themes and views expressed by the people interviewed.

### Motivations for learning Welsh

#### Personal motivations

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**28.** Many participants expressed a strong desire to learn Welsh for personal reasons. A significant number of individuals wanted to communicate with family members who are Welsh speakers.

*"It's part of my heritage. I want to understand and speak Welsh with my family." Foundation course participant*

**29.** Another common motivation was to support children who attend Welsh language schools. Parents and guardians felt that learning Welsh would help them better assist their children with schoolwork and integrate more fully into the school community.

*"My children go to a Welsh medium school, so for me it's to be able to help them with their schoolwork." Entry course participant*

#### Professional

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**30.** Some individuals were motivated by professional reasons, such as using Welsh in the workplace or enhancing career opportunities.

*"I'm lucky that I work for an organisation who are very supportive of people learning Welsh....and it felt like a good development opportunity." Entry course participant*

*"I'm learning Welsh because sometimes it's difficult to find Communications jobs." Foundation course participant*

**31.** Others talked about intellectual pursuit and enjoying the process of learning the language.

*"I enjoy the challenge, grammar and so on, and I use ordinary Welsh in the classroom with young children aged 3-7." 'Siawns am Sgwrs' participant*

## **Cultural connection**

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**32.** Participants also mentioned a desire to connect with their Welsh heritage. Learning the language was seen as a way to embrace and preserve their cultural identity.

*"My personal view is I should speak Welsh, being from the area and feeling that pride of speaking Welsh". Entry course participant*

*"I've always wanted to be able to speak my language. I feel deprived. I wasn't allowed my own language. And now I'm determined to learn." Foundation course participant*

*"To become a truly Welsh you have to speak Welsh, so I'm trying to claim my heritage." Proficient course participant*

**33.** Several participants shared their experiences of reconnecting with their Welsh heritage, with some expressing how they had once spoken the language but had lost it over time due to various circumstances.

*"I come from a Welsh-speaking family and I had lost the language." Proficient course participant*

*"I wanted to reconnect with my roots." Proficient course participant*

*"I come from a Welsh background, I am a Welshman, but when the family passed away, I almost entirely lost the Welsh language... If you live in Wales, you miss out on so much if you don't speak the language." First-language participant*

**34.** Further to this, participants in almost every focus group talked about a feeling of shame at not being able to speak the language, which they were keen to address.

*"Being Welsh and not speaking your language is a bit embarrassing really". Entry course participant*

*"To overcome the shame of not being able to talk the language of my country." Entry course participant*

*"Shame. Can't speak the language. Can't sing the anthem." Proficient course participant*

**35.** Across many focus groups, it became clear that participants had heartfelt reasons and emotions tied to their experiences of learning or rediscovering the language.

*"It opens up a different world. Welsh music is great, I like listening to Radio Cymru in the car and exploring new music and reading different books." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

*"I feel like I am part of a special country." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

*"I realised that I didn't know much about Welshness and I felt like I was missing out." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

## Resources

### Online tools

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**36.** All sessions talked about the use of online tools such as *Duolingo* and *Say Something in Welsh*, although sessions with participants at the beginning of their learning journey seemed to find these tools the most useful. However, they sometimes found the difference in north and south Wales dialects confusing.

**37.** Participants also referenced local YouTube channels where Welsh is spoken in natural settings, which aids in developing their vocabulary.

*"I'll do Duolingo and it's more of an aide memoir. It just keeps me ticking over." Entry course participant*

*"There's loads of digital stuff that is really valuable." Entry course participant*

**38.** Participants who use the online resources explained they were useful as an additional tool, but emphasised the importance of real-life practice for building confidence.

*"Every methodology has its strengths, and they work best together."  
Participant from North East Wales*

## Welsh media

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**39.** The majority of the groups used Welsh television and radio as a way of engaging in the language. However, some found certain programmes difficult to follow, and others were frustrated that programmes weren't available for longer on catch-up and streaming services.

*"I watch a lot of sports. It's quite hard to keep track of what they're saying and just keep talking very, very fast". Entry course participant*

*"Even the kids' programmes, they speak really fast!" Entry course participant*

**40.** Others talked about using Welsh social media, following different accounts such as Doctor Cymraeg and Welsh language celebrities to keep up with the language.

*"I've been trying to engage with a lot more Welsh social media, so I'm trying to understand jokes and memes and videos and these little snippets that add to the more structured learning here." Entry course participant*

## Local events

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**41.** Participants talked about local events and sessions they attend to practice their Welsh, such as coffee mornings, local walks or book clubs. Some follow Welsh music and attend gigs, others attend Welsh theatre productions.

**42.** There were also more online opportunities since the pandemic, for example, sessions run by the National Library of Wales.

*"I enjoyed a poetry course last year and it was great to use the Welsh language to create things, to learn in another situation, it didn't feel like being in class but felt like being creative with the language. This increased my confidence to speak." 'Sesiwn Siarad' participant*

**43.** However, many in-person opportunities to practice spoken Welsh were influenced by the location of the group, and participants with weekday commitments often found it challenging to access such opportunities at convenient times.

**44.** Participants highlighted the importance of combining formal and informal settings to apply what they had learned. While immersive experiences were highly valued, many acknowledged the logistical difficulties these opportunities often presented.

## **Residential courses**

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**45.** Those who had experienced immersive residential experiences talked positively about courses at Glan Llyn and Nant Gwrtheyrn, and emphasised the benefit of these experiences.

*"Being totally immersed [in the language] is the only answer. A full immersion on a residential weekend- we'd come out of that feeling much more confident. That's what's needed." Foundation course participant*

**46.** Those at the start of their learning journey thought they would be valuable, but said the opportunity hadn't arisen for them to attend a course, or they felt it would be difficult for them to attend one due to the time commitment.

**47.** A suggestion was made for the option of immersive days rather than the weeks that are currently available, as they could be less disruptive and more cost-effective.

*"If I had the written stuff that we learned, and then go apply it next week in that immersive day, I'd probably learn better that way". Entry course participant*

## **Barriers to using the language**

### **Confidence**

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**48.** One of the most significant barriers for many participants was a lack of confidence, particularly among new learners and those reconnecting with the language.

*"I think the biggest hurdle for me with most things is just having the confidence to speak." Entry course participant*

**49.** Many expressed difficulty in using Welsh in everyday situations, especially when engaging with fluent speakers.

*"I hit a wall with talking to adults. Total lack of confidence...Some are better than others at not correcting everything." Entry course participant*

**50.** A recurring challenge was the fear of making mistakes or being judged, which deterred participants from practicing in public.

*"I don't have the confidence to go into the shop and use Welsh."  
'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

*"What can happen is you start off in Welsh and then in about 30 seconds you're out of your depth." Entry course participant*

**51.** Despite these challenges, some participants took proactive steps to build their confidence, such as initiating conversations in Welsh wherever possible. Others sought opportunities in Welsh-speaking areas or leaned on friendships and local connections.

*"There's a lady on the check-out at Morrison's with a 'Siarad Cymraeg' badge, so I always try to speak to her when I go." Entry course participant*

*"I try and start every conversation in Welsh. There are lots of people who speak Welsh, but you might not know it." Foundation course participant*

**52.** The role of safe spaces for practicing Welsh was emphasised, as learners often felt overwhelmed in unsupportive environments or when focused too much on grammar. Others pointed out the lack of local opportunities to engage in casual conversations in Welsh.

*"Being focused on getting grammatical things right veers you away from just chatting." Foundation course participant*

**53.** Participants also highlighted the disparity in attitudes among first-language Welsh speakers, which significantly affected their confidence. Some participants felt judged for their accents or minor errors.

*"I feel there's a lot of judgement that goes with speaking Welsh. If I don't say it quite correctly, if I've got a bit of an English accent." **First-language participant***

**54.** Overall, participants acknowledged that while they could read Welsh more confidently than speak it, the key to overcoming this barrier was gaining positive, consistent practice in supportive environments.

*"It's feeling confident outside the classroom." **Entry course participant***

*"I find I can read Welsh a lot better and still have no confidence in speaking it just because of the reply, you know, continuing that conversation." **Entry course participant***

## **Time**

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**55.** Time constraints were also a common challenge. While some participants said retirement or the lockdown during the pandemic had given them more time to focus on learning, those still in employment found it harder to commit.

*"I think that my main thing is time. I work full time. I feel like if I had more time, I could point my brain at Welsh a bit more." **Entry course participant***

**56.** Opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace varied—one participant explained that regular use of Welsh at work had boosted his confidence. Another explained this was his primary opportunity to use the language.

*"I practice where I can at work. People at work know I'm learning, so they speak Welsh with me." **Intermediate course participant***

*"I need to be able to speak Welsh at work, but 1) I am not confident and 2) I can't yet talk about my actual work - just social chat, which means we have to revert to English very quickly." **Intermediate course participant***

**57.** Participants who had the opportunity to learn during work hours noted that this arrangement was hugely beneficial, as they would struggle to dedicate personal time to learning the language.

**58.** Finding opportunities to practice outside of working hours was an issue for many participants.

*“All the Welsh-speaking groups here are during the day, which I can't attend due to work.” Intermediate course participant*

### **Lack of opportunities**

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**59.** A lack of opportunity to practice or use the language was raised by a number of participants.

*“I hit a brick wall because I have no one to practice with.” Foundation course participant*

*“Even in places like North and West Wales, just speaking in shops and supermarkets, it's really hard to use it...I say thank you and the usual bits.” Foundation course participant*

**60.** Others highlighted regional disparities in the availability of local resources, such as coffee mornings or trips. Some were able to travel long distances to take up opportunities elsewhere, but others had no choice but to miss out.

**61.** Participants also expressed frustration that both classes and many community events pause during the summer and school holidays, leading to extended periods with fewer opportunities to use the language.

*“There'll be nothing at all unless we meet up ourselves and then we just end up talking in English. There's one barbecue in July and then there's nothing.” Intermediate course participant*

### **Young people**

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**62.** Young people with varying abilities in the language took part in one of the focus groups. In discussing attitudes towards the language in their area, they felt that a lot of young people aren't supportive of the language.

*"A lot of young people I've spoken to feel it isn't 'cool' to use Welsh."  
Young person*

**63.** They'd like to see English medium schools do more to promote the benefits of being able to speak Welsh. They feel young people are not interested in learning Welsh and can't wait to drop it as a subject in school.

*"They feel it's pointless and is just another GCSE." Young person*

**64.** Participants felt that the teaching of Welsh in school needs to change, suggesting there needs to be more opportunities to practise basic Welsh instead of exams.

*"Welsh lessons need to be more exciting." Young person*

**65.** They'd also like to see more opportunities to learn Welsh outside of school for those under the age of 16. They felt that there were currently no opportunities.

**66.** These views were echoed by some adults taking part in different groups, with some commenting that there was a lack of support for the language as a subject in some schools, and that attitudes negatively impacted how young people view the language.

*"The young people think that learning Welsh is a waste of time, that it is a dead language, and their parents say there is no point in learning the language." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

### **Lack of information**

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**67.** A common concern was the difficulty in finding information about local events. Some participants, particularly those with lower digital literacy skills, reported difficulties in finding information about Welsh-language events and resources, and while many are advertised online, participants noted that you often need to actively search for them or rely on word of mouth.

**68.** This inconsistency made it challenging to discover opportunities in their own areas. Several participants suggested the need for a central website or app that could bring together events and resources for learners to improve accessibility.

*"I would like to know more about them actually, because I know there are some Welsh bands and Welsh singers around who sing contemporary music, but I don't know enough about them and I don't think I'm within those circles enough to know about them."*

*First-language participant*

**69.** Many participants noted that being part of the Welsh-speaking or learner community makes it easier to discover events. Those who are not actively involved in these circles often have fewer opportunities to learn about what is happening.

*"But I hear about these things because I am part of the Welsh-speaking community. My friends who don't speak Welsh don't know that these things are going on."* *Participant from North East Wales*

**70.** In North Wales, many felt that non-Welsh speakers were either unaware of the Eisteddfod in Wrexham this year or believed it wasn't meant for them.

*"Not many English speakers know about the Eisteddfod. Only Welsh speakers or Welsh learners talk about the Eisteddfod. There aren't many adverts to attract non-Welsh speakers."* *Participant from North East Wales*

## **Cultural events and their impact on the language**

**71.** Participants were asked about their experiences of Welsh festivals or events and whether they had an impact on their use of the language.

### **Eisteddfodau**

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**72.** Some participants shared positive experiences of attending festivals and community gatherings, which had fostered a sense of belonging and provided opportunities to practice the language.

*"When we went to the Eisteddfod, it was very welcoming and as soon as people knew you were at Entry level, they would talk at your level and use simplistic vocabulary, which was really beneficial, and it was just lovely."* *Entry course participant*

*"I went to the Eisteddfod with work and it made my day because I had my lines to read, but I managed to say something in Welsh off my own back so it was very good for confidence." Intermediate course participant*

**73.** However, some participants expressed a lack of confidence in attending events like this and felt it was quite an intimidating environment with so many fluent Welsh speakers.

*"I've been, but I did feel like a fish out of water." Entry course participant*

*"It's something that I would like to do, but I probably wouldn't have the confidence." Entry course participant*

**74.** One participant had a negative experience during their first Eisteddfod, where they felt that people were impatient with them and insisted on responding in English. *"The first Eisteddfod was very difficult for me... I was discouraged."* However, they went back and did not encounter the same experience at subsequent Eisteddfods.

**75.** One group discussed how participants felt that people's attitudes towards learners were sometimes not welcoming; one mentioned hearing that you shouldn't attend the Eisteddfod if you're not fluent.

**76.** Some participants felt that attitudes and prices could deter people from attending the Eisteddfod, and suggested that something like the Cardiff Bay Eisteddfod, with free admission and less pressure, might open doors for people and allow them to drop in and see what's happening.

## **Pontypridd**

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**77.** Several participants noted that when Pontypridd hosted the Eisteddfod, there were many non-Welsh speakers in attendance and the Welsh language was much more visible and audible throughout the town. They felt the event had left a lasting impact on the presence of Welsh in the local area.

**78.** For most, it had been their first time attending the festival. Several mentioned that even non-Welsh-speaking friends from Pontypridd had visited and enjoyed the experience, with some inspired to begin learning Welsh as a result.

*"I went to the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd last year....and I felt like at home there." Proficient course participant*

*"It was very important to be able to go to Pontypridd, to immerse myself in the language." Proficient course participant*

*"We spent the day down in Pontypridd... it was absolutely wonderful." Entry course participant*

**79.** Participants noted that, following the Eisteddfod, local Welsh-speaking coffee mornings were noticeably busier, as more people showed interest in learning and using the language.

*"People from around here probably got more inspired to take up learning Welsh, just because of how interesting it was." Foundation course participant*

*"The impact of this was being persuaded to keep going from Sylfaen to Canolradd - so being in this class came out of it last year!" Intermediate course participant*

**80.** Those living in Pontypridd described a strong sense of pride and community while the Eisteddfod was in town, expressing joy at seeing the Welsh language celebrated so prominently in their hometown.

**81.** However, not all experiences were positive. One participant, attending as a learner, felt the festival wasn't as inclusive as it could have been for those still learning the language. Others agreed, commenting that the learners' area felt like an "afterthought" and was physically "cut off" from the rest of the Maes. They expressed a desire for greater visibility and support for learners, suggesting that normalising mistakes and celebrating progress would help create a more welcoming environment for those still developing their skills.

*"I don't think it was that we weren't wanted – it was just that we were so far away from everything, when really we should be celebrated. We are the ones who are passionate. I thought it was sad that we had our own café, our own stage. I think the Eisteddfod were missing a beat because if we were integrated more with the main event, I think more people would be interested in what the learners are achieving." Intermediate course participant*

*"I think if they put a spotlight on learners and people see us making mistakes, more people would want to learn Welsh and not be embarrassed to make their own mistakes." Intermediate course participant*

## **Wrexham**

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**82.** Participants from the north east of Wales expressed excitement about the Eisteddfod this year, and many remembered the last Eisteddfod in Wrexham in 2011.

*"Everyone encouraged us to speak as learners. By the end of the day, I felt confident." 'Session siarad' participant*

**83.** One of the participants was greatly looking forward to the Eisteddfod and feeling comfortable speaking the language on the *Maes*.

*"We don't speak much Welsh at home, but once we go through the gate to the Eisteddfod, we switch to Welsh, it's great." 'Session siarad' participant*

**84.** Overall, the participants themselves were looking forward to the Eisteddfod, but there was a feeling that non-Welsh speakers in the area were not interested in attending or did not feel that the Eisteddfod was an event for them.

*"I am very excited because it's my first time going to the Eisteddfod. But talking to people at work, there is no mention of the Eisteddfod." 'Session siarad' participant*

**85.** Some felt that holding the Eisteddfod in the town centre would attract more people to the event rather than requiring them to travel to something outside the town. A comparison was made to a recent Focus Wales event, which attracted more people due to its location in the town centre and the inclusion of both Welsh and English bands.

**86.** Overall, participants felt that the Eisteddfod (and smaller festivals) were very important to the Welsh language and to learners. However, they wished to see more encouragement for non-Welsh-speaking communities to make it a festival that attracts and welcomes everyone, not just Welsh speakers.

## Events more generally

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**87.** Participants widely recognised Welsh festivals and events as pivotal for fostering language engagement and use. Many appreciated how these gatherings offered immersive experiences that brought the language to life.

**88.** One learner highlighted the value of events like Tafwyl, noting its ability to create a rare and enriching opportunity to be surrounded by Welsh. Others praised free events, such as Ffiliffest, for their accessibility and welcoming nature.

*“Especially if you live somewhere where you’re not exposed to Welsh all the time, having something like Tafwyl, gives people the opportunity to see how it feels to be immersed in Welsh, which I think is a really rare and lovely opportunity to have.”* **Intermediate course participant**

*“Ffiliffest is definitely a lovely one to go to because it's a free event.”* **Entry course participant**

**89.** For those living in areas with limited exposure to Welsh, festivals like these were seen as instrumental in nurturing interest and showcasing the vibrancy of the language. Festivals also played a significant role in demonstrating that Welsh was not distant or inaccessible but rather a thriving, everyday language.

*“I think there are lots of opportunities. I think it’s getting better and better every year. It is very much a living language in the places that I go to with the Welsh language events and festivals. And that’s really positive.”* **Entry course participant**

*“Ar ôl mynd i Tafwyl, roedd mwy o ddiddordeb gen i yn y Gymraeg achos dangosodd Tafwyl i mi fod yr iaith yn fwy, a ddim yn bell.”* **Foundation course participant**

**90.** While some lacked the confidence to participate or felt that such events might not be meant for them, many discovered a newfound appreciation for Welsh cultural celebrations and felt encouraged to practice their language whenever possible.

*“I think before I started learning in this class, I maybe sometimes felt like they weren't for me. I could have gone, but I wouldn't have been able to engage with it in in the sort of spirit that it was meant, but I*

*think that having real world enjoyable opportunities to use Welsh, and be part of that community, I think is a real motivator to improve my own skills.”* **Entry course participant**

*“I can see a whole world of music I didn't listen to before, but also I can understand a bit of it. And maybe learn a bit through osmosis. So the Welsh language music festivals also encouraged me to go to a few gigs too.”* **Entry course participant**

**91.** Some participants suggested that smaller gatherings, such as local reading festivals, could provide a more intimate and welcoming environment compared to larger events like the Eisteddfod. These smaller settings might help attendees gain confidence and were seen as equally important in promoting language engagement.

## 3. Solutions

In this section, we present a range of ideas shared by participants during the engagement sessions. These suggestions reflect diverse perspectives and aim to inspire further discussion and progression toward positive change.

### More learning resources

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**92.** Participants highlighted the need for more adult-friendly reading materials and accessible community spaces where learners could practice their Welsh language skills without fear of judgment.

*"I think it'd be quite nice to have highlighted places, shops, libraries, cafes, where Welsh learners have the courage to go and just have a look." Entry course participant*

### Expanding classes in Welsh

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**93.** Many participants expressed interest in seeing more leisure activities and classes conducted through the medium of Welsh, beyond conversational practice. Examples included fitness classes, art workshops, and even learning additional languages via Welsh.

*"Linking it with sport would be nice, like going climbing. A Welsh-friendly evening where you're not exclusively asked to speak Welsh, but you can converse in Welsh with those who want to." First-language participant*

*"I would like to see more arts and crafts activities and music in the local area." Foundation course participant*

### Opportunities for engagement with native speakers

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**94.** A recurring suggestion was to create more opportunities for learners to interact with native Welsh speakers. Currently, most interactions are limited to

fellow learners or second-language speakers. These conversations could boost learner confidence and foster greater acceptance of learners within first-language Welsh communities.

### **Local events and inclusivity**

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**95.** Participants also voiced the need for more localised events within their areas, especially in regions like north east Wales, where such opportunities were felt to be scarce.

*"I want to see more events. There isn't much in the north-east. I'm happy to travel, but locally here there isn't much." Participant from North East Wales*

**96.** More opportunities outside of working hours were a common request among all the groups.

**97.** There was also enthusiasm for bilingual events, as these could create a more welcoming environment for both learners and non-Welsh speakers. Such events could help integrate Welsh into broader cultural celebrations and ensure accessibility for all.

*"It perpetuates this idea of Welsh being an 'other' thing. And actually, us having Welsh events and English events as opposed to events where it brings both together." Participant from North East Wales*

*"I felt this when I started learning. I didn't want to go to that because I couldn't really speak Welsh, and it felt a bit off-putting...I felt it was a real barrier to me when I first started learning and wanted to go to events." Participant from North East Wales*

### **Youth-oriented opportunities**

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**98.** Many groups suggested introducing more events designed for younger people, such as weekend or evening activities outside of school or work hours.

*"There are many things for children and there are many things during the day that work for retired people... It would be nice to have something for younger people." Participant from North East Wales*

**99.** There were calls for activities that encourage children to use Welsh outside of school, paired with events for parents, such as a Welsh café at schools in the evenings.

*"The children are losing confidence after leaving school in the evening, they need something else to go to in order to speak the language." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

*"My husband went to the Welsh school in Wrexham, but after leaving school he has no confidence to speak Welsh. I don't want my son to feel the same way after leaving school. Maybe we need support for children leaving school and creating bridges." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

### **Centralised information platform**

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**100.** Participants strongly advocated for a centralised platform where information about Welsh-language events could be easily accessed. A suggestion was made to model this after platforms like awni.cymru, which promotes Welsh-language gigs. Expanding this concept to coffee mornings, plays, and other events could significantly boost engagement.

### **Promoting the Eisteddfod**

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**101.** While discussing the Eisteddfod, participants suggested better outreach, especially through schools, to highlight that attendance does not require fluency in Welsh. Emphasising that the Eisteddfod celebrates Welsh culture as a whole, rather than focusing solely on the language, could draw a more diverse audience.

### **Welsh in education**

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**102.** Increased access to Welsh-language schools was seen as a crucial step toward normalising and promoting the language in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers.

*"There isn't enough effort to help second-language speakers, that's the problem here in Wales. Why are there six schools in one town and only one Welsh medium? That's not good enough." 'Sesiwn siarad' participant*

## Annex 1: Focus Group Questions

The following questions served as a flexible guide for the interviewer and were not all asked of each participant.

**103.** The interviews were participant-led, allowing for an organic conversation flow; questions were not presented in a specific order or exact wording but were used to facilitate discussion based on the participants' responses and needs.

### **New Learner/Speaker**

1. When did you start learning Welsh?
2. How would you describe your ability in Welsh?
3. With whom do you learn the language (Learn Welsh Provider/SaySomethinginWelsh/through work etc)? Anyone else?
4. What level are you currently at when it comes to learning? (i.e. Entry, Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced)
5. What was the main reason for learning the language?
6. What kind of opportunities would you like to see in your area to use more Welsh/help you learn?
7. Have you attended any Welsh language event or festival, be it a local or national event, in the past year?
8. What events or festivals were these?
9. What was the impact of attending these events or festivals on your decision to pursue learning the language?
10. Are there enough Welsh or bilingual events or festivals to have near you? What kind of events would you like to see more of locally?
11. (If there has been a major festival in the area recently) What impact have you seen on the Welsh language in the area following your visit to this festival? Why do you say this?

## **A non-confident Welsh speaker**

1. When was the last time you used your Welsh?
2. Do you remember with whom/where did you use Welsh?
3. Do you receive any support to boost your confidence and increase your use of Welsh? In what way?
4. How often do you use your Welsh? (e.g. daily, weekly, or less frequently.)
5. Where did you mainly learn Welsh? Eg. At home, at school, through your work...
6. What would encourage you to speak more Welsh?
7. What opportunities are there in your local area (e.g. community, village or town) to use the Welsh language that you have?
8. What kind of opportunities would you like to see in your area to allow you to use more of your Welsh/help you gain confidence?
9. Have you attended any Welsh language event or festival, whether local or national, in the past year?
10. What events or festivals were these?
11. What was the effect of attending these events or festivals on your use of Welsh?
12. Did it have any effect on your confidence? In what way?
13. (If there has been a major festival in the area recently) What impact have you seen on the Welsh language in the area following your visit to this festival? Why do you say this?
14. 22. Are there enough Welsh or bilingual events or festivals to be had near you? What kind of events would you like to see more of locally?

## **No or little Welsh, but a child within the Welsh-medium education system / early care**

1. How would you describe your ability in Welsh?
2. (If a little Welsh) Where do you learn the little Welsh that you have?

3. (If not Welsh) What was your motivation for your child to receive early care/education through the medium of Welsh?
4. What kind of opportunities does your child have to use Welsh in your local area (e.g. community, village or town)?
5. What kind of opportunities would you like to see in your area for your children to use more Welsh on a daily basis?
6. What kind of clubs or societies, if any, are available locally for you or your child to bathe in Welsh?
7. Have you attended any Welsh language event or festival, whether local or national, in the past year?
8. What events or festivals were these?
9. What was the effect of attending these events or festivals on your sense of the language?
10. (If there has been a major festival in the area recently) What impact have you seen on the Welsh language in the area following your visit to this festival? Why do you say this?
11. Are there enough Welsh or bilingual events or festivals to have near you? What kind of events would you like to see more of locally?

## Annex 2: Partner Organisations

The Citizen Engagement Team would like to thank the following organisations that supported the engagement programme.

Bangor University	The National Centre for Learning Welsh
Coleg Gwent	University of South Wales
<i>Menter Iaith</i> Fflint a Wrecsam	
Lloyds Bank Foundation	
Saith Seren, Wrexham	
<i>Senedd yr Ifanc</i> , Wrexham	



# Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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# Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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