

## CFA19 UCAC

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol |  
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Cymraeg i bawb? | Cymraeg for all?

Ymateb gan: UCAC | Evidence from: UCAC

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### **1. What are the main barriers that prevent wider use of the Welsh language in areas with fewer Welsh speakers, and what might help to change this?**

#### **MAIN BARRIERS**

- Opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh and to use Welsh in informal contexts.
- A tendency to view Welsh as a language that belongs only to certain groups/age cohorts.
- Welsh speakers in areas with a low percentage of Welsh speakers do not have opportunities to practise/use their Welsh when using services.
- As the density of Welsh speakers in these areas is low, people assume that others do not speak Welsh and therefore do not start conversations in Welsh. As a result, occasional opportunities to speak Welsh informally, or to use services through the medium of Welsh, are lost.
- In some areas, there is a higher percentage of Welsh speakers in certain age groups; as a result, some groups feel isolated, and the opportunities to undertake certain types of activities are rare.
- If the percentage of Welsh speakers is low, it is a challenge to organise Welsh language activities that will attract reasonable numbers of people to events. Not only is the percentage of Welsh speakers low; we cannot expect everyone of a similar age to have the same interests either.
- People live very busy lives, and they find it difficult to give the Welsh language their time and attention – for example, by learning the language or attending Welsh medium activities.

#### **THINGS THAT COULD HELP**

- Introducing some Welsh elements within existing English-medium activities.
  - Conducting more fun activities through the medium of Welsh, such as youth clubs, or a variety of activities for all ages.
  - Ensuring opportunities for former pupils of Welsh-medium schools to continue using Welsh after they have left school, and ensuring opportunities for pupils who have acquired some Welsh in English-medium schools to continue developing their Welsh language skills.
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- Partnership working – ensuring that all associations/initiatives that work through the medium of Welsh and that promote the Welsh language come together to organise activities. Being part of something small can feel isolating and dispiriting, but seeing that you are part of something greater is a positive experience.
- Working with schools in order to a) identify 'customers' b) advertise opportunities to use the Welsh language c) discuss possibilities and gaps in provision d) engage with pupils to find out what kind of activities they would like to see in their area.
- Ensuring that activities conducted through the medium of Welsh are not elitist and expensive. We do not want any individual to be deprived of opportunities to use the Welsh language for financial reasons.
- Ensuring that activities conducted through the medium of Welsh are promoted within the community. We need to ensure that there is effective communication with the community as a whole, with every method and mode of communication being used.
- Encouraging employees who can speak Welsh to use 'Cymraeg Gwaith' (*Work Welsh*) badges, so that people are aware of the opportunities available to communicate through the medium of Welsh.
- Encouraging businesses and services to promote Welsh, ensuring that Welsh-speaking employees use the language.
- Ensuring that people are aware of the benefits of bilingualism and are therefore keen to see their children speak Welsh.
- Ensuring that there are enough opportunities to learn Welsh, and identifying various ways of learning the language – opportunities within the workplace, face-to-face classes in the community, online lessons.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient funding to finance activities through the medium of Welsh.
- Ensuring that, in areas with a lower percentage of Welsh speakers, there are strategies in place to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce. These strategies should form part of the professional development system for the workforce, with support provided for the workforce as people move from stage to stage along the linguistic continuum.
- There is a need to explore how individuals can double their use of the language, and to support them on their journey and inform them of the opportunities available to them. This information should be clear and accessible, as opposed to placing the onus on the individual.

**2. What sort of spaces and opportunities might encourage greater use of, and increase confidence in, the use of the language in areas where day-to-day use of the language is limited?**

- Sports clubs, and opportunities to receive training / take part in exercise through the medium of Welsh.
  - Spaces equipped with the latest technical resources – encouraging people to use the latest technology through the medium of Welsh. It is important that people realise that the Welsh language belongs to the twenty-first century.
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- Various activities that appeal to young people.
- Welcoming spaces, such as Welsh cafes, where people can relax through the medium of Welsh.
- 'Warm' spaces and spaces with internet access, so that people can work remotely; these spaces should clearly be identified as settings where Welsh can be spoken, and could be combined with Welsh cafes.
- Regular engagement with young people is vital, in order to identify what appeals to them. There is no point organising activities if they are not appealing.
- There should be opportunities to acquire the language at a very young age – the sooner the better – and we should ensure that there are opportunities to keep using the language. Linguistic progression is important.
- More work is needed on the benefits of bilingualism and the benefits of Welsh-medium education. We should bear in mind that most people around the world are bilingual or multilingual.
- Late language immersion opportunities should be provided for families and not just for school pupils.

**3. Can you share examples of successful initiatives or activities that have encouraged Welsh language use in areas where use of the language is limited?**

- The creation of festivals as a way of raising awareness in the community.
- School events, such as workshops and musical festivals, that reach out to the community and local English medium schools.
- Initiatives related to national activities e.g. Y Fari Lwyd, Mentrau Iaith activities.
- Work undertaken with football and rugby associations to hold events before major festivals.
- Activities in which a number of partners come together and collaborate to undertake Welsh language activities.

**4. How could technology and digital tools help to increase the use of the Welsh language, especially among those who use the language infrequently or who lack confidence?**

- Very often, the messages that appear on social media are short. So, reading a few messages in Welsh would instil confidence in individuals, as they would see that they understand short messages of that kind.
  - The ability to check and ensure accuracy by using a digital checker for spelling and grammar – Cysill, for example – would benefit some individuals and bolster their confidence. This sort of technology offers flexibility on a number of levels – time, place, level, etc.
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- Language acquisition programmes, such as Duolingo, can be used to learn a language in your own time. This provides greater convenience and offers language-learning opportunities to more people. There is an element of personalised work.
- Technology removes geographical barriers.
- It is important that young people see that the Welsh language is compatible with modern technology.
- More digital platforms that can help non-Welsh speaking parents who send their children to Welsh medium schools. It is important that this information is freely available to parents.

\*We need to ensure that resources are available to non-Welsh speaking parents to promote Welsh outside school settings –

e.g. Welsh music lists on Spotify; Welsh-medium digital resources.

- Collaborative work with Adnodd on the creation of more digital resources for non-Welsh speaking parents, such as audio books, would ensure that children would hear words being pronounced correctly.

## **5. What impact, in your view, do cultural events such as national Eisteddfodau or Welsh language festivals have on Welsh language use, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers?**

National Eisteddfodau and Welsh festivals have raised awareness around the Welsh language, and there are numerous examples of the legacy left by Eisteddfodau and other festivals. Activities driven by the advent of an Eisteddfod or a festival being held in a certain area have continued long after the Eisteddfod or the festival has ended.

- Musical festivals also encourage groups of people to take part in Welsh language activities – people who would not, as a rule, participate in these activities.
- Being part of a national festival or a high-status event creates the sense of belonging to something greater, and this often provides encouragement to Welsh speakers in areas where there are not many other speakers of the language. Events of this kind also encourage some people to learn the language and subsequently join the community of Welsh speakers in the area.

## **6. How might these events (whether large or small in size) be adapted or improved to better serve communities with fewer Welsh speakers?**

- We should ensure that the events are promoted within the community from the outset. Perhaps events should be held where a range of people from other similar communities can discuss their experiences when the Eisteddfod or another specific event came to their
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community. Someone who has learned Welsh as a result of the Eisteddfod could be invited to share their experiences.

- It would also be an idea to seek the views of local people in a timely fashion, in order to respond to the demands of the local community. It would also be a good idea to engage with people who are already Welsh speakers, as well as prospective Welsh speakers and those who have shown no interest in the Welsh language thus far.
- It is also important that nothing is taken for granted. We must be aware that there are people in our communities who do not know exactly what an Eisteddfod is. We must inform the local community about what is happening and ensure that people are aware that they are welcome to attend the event and participate in it.

**7. Are there any other matters you would like to draw to the Committee's attention about the Welsh Government's approach to supporting the Welsh language in areas with fewer Welsh speakers?**

- It is important that the Welsh Government facilitates plenty of opportunities for individuals to acquire the Welsh language – cylchoedd Ti a Fi, playgroups, a sufficient number of Welsh-medium schools within the reach of every individual – and ensures that there is continuity in Welsh-medium education for people of all ages, abilities and interests. Increasing the percentage of Welsh used in English-medium schools is also vital, with the aim being to provide as much Welsh-medium education as possible in the long term. Ensuring free transport to Welsh medium schools is key if there are no Welsh medium schools in the vicinity. It is important to fund opportunities to acquire and practise the Welsh language. It is also important that the Welsh Government sets an example by affording the Welsh language status as a language of administration and communication, and by using Welsh naturally and without translating everything from English.
  - In order to promote the Welsh language in our schools, it is important that the Government collaborates with educational institutions of all kinds, including teacher training institutions (TEIs). We must ensure that we have the workforce that we need.
  - Collaboration with organisations such as the Urdd and the YFC movement is vital.
  - It is important to ensure that fair and adequate funding is allocated to the promotion and growth of the Welsh language.
  - Funding is required to host events of a high standard, and to maintain suitable Welsh language spaces in which the language can be used in a social context.
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