



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

By e-mail to:

SeneddDiwylliant@senedd.cymru

28 November 2025

Dear Committee,

Wales-Ireland Relations

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your work following the findings of your 2023 inquiry into relations between Wales and Ireland, and as you look ahead to a joint statement between the two countries in 2030.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on the evidence we gave in [writing](#) and [orally](#) in 2023. That evidence referred to the collaboration taking place between the Welsh Language Commissioner and agencies in Ireland, and how we believe the relationship between the two countries could be strengthened in the context of promoting the use of the Irish and Welsh languages.

As we noted in 2023, that collaboration mainly stemmed from our membership of the [International Association of Language Commissioners \(IALC\)](#) and was independent of the Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021- 2025. We were not part of the discussions in drafting the Welsh Government's [Ireland-Wales shared statement 2030](#). However, because of the successful ongoing collaboration between ourselves and the Irish Language Commissioner (*An Coimisinéir Teanga*) and other agencies in Ireland, we would be very pleased to contribute to the development of a further joint statement between the two countries in 2030.

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Uned 2, Bloc C
Doc Fictoria
Ffordd Balaclafa
Caernarfon
LL55 1TH

0345 6033 221

post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru

Welsh Language Commissioner

Unit 2, Block C
Victoria Dock
Balaclafa Way
Caernarfon
LL55 1TH

0345 6033 221

post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales

Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

welshlanguagecommissioner.wales



In 2023, we referred to three areas where we saw the importance of collaboration between Wales and Ireland. We continue to believe that these areas are relevant, and below are examples of how we have continued our activities in these areas since 2023.

1. Legislation and language rights

There has been effective collaboration between the Welsh Language Commissioner and An Coimisinéir Teanga to protect and promote language rights, mainly through the International Association of Language Commissioners, enabling the sharing of experiences and good practice in our roles. An Coimisinéir Teanga has previously appeared before this Committee to give evidence on language rights and language policy in Ireland, and the Welsh Language Commissioner has given evidence to committees of the Dáil and the Seanad in Ireland as they scrutinised reforms to their Official Languages Act recently. These reforms have led to a system of language standards being set for public bodies in Ireland, modelled on Welsh language standards. An Coimisinéir Teanga is currently Chair of IALC. A successful IALC conference was held in Cardiff in 2024, exploring the effects of language legislation in Wales and beyond. The next IALC conference will be held in Galway in September 2026. We have identified several opportunities for Wales to contribute to the agenda of that conference, especially given Ireland's particular interest in the Welsh language standards following the reforms to the official languages legislation.

We are also interested in learning lessons about the impact of the Irish legislative provisions, for example in the context of the use of Irish in the media: [Overview of results for 2024 - Advertising by public bodies](#). The legislation also requires that 20% of people recruited to the public sector in Ireland be proficient in Irish by 2030, and that every public office in the Gaeltacht area operates in Irish. Increasing the use of Welsh in workplaces is one of the priorities of our new [Strategic Plan for 2025–30](#), as we see that creating, maintaining, and supporting Welsh-speaking workplaces is a key part of the strategy for ensuring the viability of the Welsh language. Similarly, workforce planning is an essential element in ensuring the compliance of bodies with Welsh standards and increasing the use of Welsh in other areas, including education and health. We are already leading this work with other strategic partners in Wales, sharing good practice, developing resources, and establishing a strategic forum in the field.

It will also be required that all public services provided in, and for, Gaeltacht areas be delivered in Irish. Again, this, and the fact that Irish will be the operating language of public offices in the Gaeltacht is of interest to us because of the importance of areas with a high density of Welsh speakers and the work and recommendations of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities.



We have also been able to assist An Coimisinéir Teanga with other aspects of their work. One example is their extended inquiry into Irish-medium provision in the secondary education sector. They wished to present comparative data on transmission as part of the research, and we were very pleased to be able to introduce An Coimisinéir Teanga to Welsh Government statisticians specialising in Welsh language and education data to assist with their request. We, of course, will be interested in learning about the findings of this inquiry because of our own policy work in the field of education.

It should also be noted that new language commissioners have been appointed in Northern Ireland, Pól Deeds, Irish Language Commissioner, and Lee Reynolds, Commissioner for Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition. We are already discussing with An Coimisinéir Teanga how to collaborate to introduce them to IALC and to share our experiences and good practice with them as they establish their offices.

2. Wider Language Planning

The Ireland-Wales Shared Statement 2030 refers to the importance of collaborating to promote the use of Irish and Welsh languages in the context of our national strategies, including through programmes supporting all communities learning and using Irish and Welsh, and on the intergenerational transmission of Welsh and Irish. I have already referred to elements relevant to this above in the context of the work of An Coimisinéir Teanga and the Official Languages Act of Ireland from the perspective of the use of Welsh in workplaces and communities with a high density of speakers.

Since 2023, we have also developed our engagement with other organisations in Ireland beyond An Coimisinéir Teanga. We are currently advising Dublin City Council and Conradh na Gaeilge, the democratic forum for Irish-speaking communities, on the development of a badge to promote opportunities to use Irish, modelled on the [laith Gwaith badge](#). The [laith Gwaith logo](#) indicates that someone speaks Welsh and that others are welcome to speak Welsh with them. We are celebrating twenty years of the badge's existence this year.

We have a policy team with extensive knowledge of national policy in the field of the Welsh language. This team has been discussing language policy and language impact assessments with Údarás na Gaeltachta, the regional authority responsible for economic, social, and cultural development in Gaeltacht areas. Opportunities to share knowledge of this kind are essential given the importance of areas with a high density of Welsh speakers, and the potential we see for the Welsh language promotion standards as a framework for coordinating intensive community language planning. We will also soon be



meeting with one of the committees of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly scrutinising rural housing policy.

3. Standardising, protecting, and promoting place names

When giving evidence to the Committee in 2023, we also referred to another aspect of our work as Commissioner where we have much to learn from Ireland, namely in the field of place-names. As Commissioner, we have a responsibility to recommend the standard forms of place-names, but our recommendations do not have statutory power. As we explained, in Ireland the Minister for the Gaeltacht prescribes standard forms of Irish place-names in regulations, so there is no ambiguity in the forms of place-names officially used. The substantial research work of the Placenames Branch in Ireland provides authoritative recommendations on which forms should be adopted, along with the wealth of research underpinning them, available to the public through the [Logainm.ie](https://logainm.ie) database since 2007, a resource developed by Dublin City University with funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media.

Since 2023, our own work in the field of place names has developed significantly. We have now published our [database of standard Welsh place-names](#). In addition to continuing our work in recommending the standard forms of place-names to local authorities and collaborating with agencies such as the Ordnance Survey, we have also extended our work by providing advice on standard forms of geographical names to national parks; the names of monuments for Cadw; and of environmental sites to Natural Resources Wales. We also have a statutory role under the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 as we advise the Democracy and Boundaries Commission Cymru on the names of the new Senedd constituencies. At the same time, of course, the Welsh Government has increased its work in the field of place-names by publishing research on trends in changing place-names in Wales and a programme of work arising from it. Despite the developments in our work as Commissioner and the recent work of the Government, we believe there is much that we can learn from the work in this field in Ireland.

Other opportunities arise from policy areas in [the Ireland-Wales Shared Statement 2030](#) that could contribute greatly to opportunities to learn and share experiences to promote the Welsh and Irish languages, including in the fields of education, research and innovation; economy and trade; communities, diaspora and sport. It would be beneficial, therefore, if the Welsh language was incorporated as a consideration in the development of the Government's work in these policy areas. For example, important work is underway in Wales to develop Welsh language skills and a bilingual workforce arising from the recent Welsh Language and Education Act, alongside Medr's responsibilities with regards to the



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Welsh language in the field of tertiary education and research that could be useful to share with Ireland. Our universities also conduct extensive research in the field of language planning. As Commissioner, we work with businesses to promote their use of the Welsh language, seeing it as a unique marketing tool belonging to these businesses from Wales. Significant work has been and continues to be done by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities looking at the use of Welsh in communities, making recommendations that would strengthen the sustainability of communities that would be relevant to the work of Údarás na Gaeltachta. The Welsh language, therefore, permeates beyond the field of Culture, Language and Heritage policy in the Statement.

Lowri W. Williams, Strategic Director, will be pleased to discuss these matters further with you in the evidence session on 10 December.

Yours sincerely,

Efa Gruffudd Jones
Welsh Language Commissioner