

Additional information from the NASUWT Cymru following the evidence session on 2 October 2024

Please find evidence re. additional questions:

•What are your views on the language categories that will be applied to schools under the Bill? Do you see any big difference from the current arrangements set out in non-statutory guidance?

The proposed system is simpler. These will be clearer and easier to understand providing enough information is shared with parents and the public on their meaning. The categories do not stand alone, schools are based in communities, and the demographic nature of those communities will impact on the appropriate categories. In terms of transition, Welsh Government needs to ensure it has provided enough support to the communities, and resources and training for teachers and other education staff, to support an increased use of Welsh language. The Welsh Government must also recognise that schools can only successfully transition whilst also transitioning the workforce of that school. Re-training, redeployment and recruiting will not happen overnight and possibly will not happen in the transition timescales proposed.

•How important and necessary are the provisions in the Bill for Primarily English Language, partly Welsh schools to apply for a maximum of two periods of exemption from the requirement to deliver 10% Welsh language education? Are you content with these arrangements?

Each school is required to prepare a Welsh language delivery plan and under this new Bill/Act would be monitored against their achievements and outcomes. Schools do not exist in isolation, and may reflect that linguistic demographics which surround the school in the local community. Some pupils will hear Welsh spoken in other locations outside of school, and at home. Other pupils will not hear Welsh spoken unless in school. Another factor impacting on the achievement of the objective of 10% Welsh language provision is the availability of Welsh medium teachers – there is crisis in Wales in recruitment of Welsh medium teachers. Welsh Government needs to ensure there has been a mapping of teachers able to speak through the medium of Welsh, work to increase the numbers being recruited, ensure the Welsh medium of ITE is increased, and ensure that proper provision for teachers to improve their Welsh language skills are also protected e.g. through sabbaticals. Without this Primarily English language provision schools are being pressured to deliver on a target that is

outside of their control. The continuum should be implemented at a pace that reflects local circumstances.

Reports from UNESCO on promoting of minority indigenous languages focus on the need for promoting and encouraging an increase of the language within the community as well as the school. Welsh Language Commission reported in 2016 that Welsh learning had moved from the home to school, and in 2016 4 out of 5 children aged 5-15 mainly learn Welsh at school.

In relation to all pupils achieving the B2 level, the Welsh Government needs to take account of this particularised location of Welsh language usage in schools, rather than community and home, when assessing the probability of this goal in the Bill being achieved, as well as the needs of ALN students. The definition of CEFR B2 is 'At this level, students can function independently in a variety of academic and professional environments in English, although with a limited range of nuance and precision' (it has been compared to A level). ESTYN 2018/19 report on student take up of A level Welsh first language noted a drop in uptake. Estyn notes that whilst attitudes to Welsh remain positive, desire and confidence of a minority of learners fade, and many choose to study their courses through English at KS 5. There needs to be more research on the achievability of CEFR B2 in a pupils career.

It is clear from the ESTYN report that the previous non-statutory guidance linked to WESPs has failed to achieve an increase in Welsh language use in Primarily English schools. The failure has been linked to a lack of resources in terms of funding and in successfully enabling Welsh medium teachers to be trained either in ITE or through release from their teaching duties.

Without good resources, and proper planning, to support the implementation of the objectives within the Bill – this could well result in another failed Welsh language policy initiative.

•Do you believe is it is clear enough what will happen if a school does not provide at least the minimum amount of Welsh language education in accordance with its category? Should the Bill provide for any mechanisms or sanctions to be taken?

This is not clear. If the Bill is to be taken seriously some indication of support should be made, which would enable any school to achieve the minimum within it's category. The Union is concerned that the Bill should be able to sanction schools for any lag in attainment – not least when a school's ability to meet any category requirements is dependant on its staff resources. Schools that struggle to employ

Welsh-medium teachers or are unable to fund immersive training for staff to meet the demands of its category should not be sanctioned but rather should be adequately supported.

•To what extent do you agree with the creation of a National Institute for Learning Welsh and the role that the Bill sets out for it?

How much of a role do you believe it should have in terms of statutory education and how would you like to see it working with existing organisations such as schools

It is logical for one body to hold an overarching view on the development of Welsh language in Wales. The relationships would be most successful if based on co-operation and co-production, with collegiate working on drawing up of objectives and implementation pathways. Any creation of monitoring roles needs to be carefully scrutinised for impact on workload and extra pressure on teachers. Any scrutiny should be collegial and with the purpose of identifying support needs, and not to feed into any sanction mechanisms.