

Bilingualism in Wales’ Further Education Colleges

ColegauCymru / CollegesWales

ColegauCymru / CollegesWales is the national educational charity that represents all of Wales’ further education (FE) colleges and designated FE institutions. Its Board comprises college principals and chairs of corporations, appointed by member colleges.

ColegauCymru’s services to its members include: networks, conferences, research, consultancy and the sharing of good practice.

It also works closely with a wide range of partners in post-16 education and training. Through ColegauCymru colleges are represented on various committees and groups which influence and shape policy in post-16 education and life-long learning.

Normalising the Welsh language in further education colleges

Mainstreaming the Welsh language in further education colleges is a strategic aim for ColegauCymru.

Colleges, through ColegauCymru, adopted a **National Strategy on Bilingualism in Further Education** (2010). Since then, in order to support colleges to achieve the Strategy’s aims, ColegauCymru invested in the post of Director of Bilingualism.

We work closely with Sgiliaith, a progressive and innovative centre located in Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and funded by the Welsh Government. It provides training and support to further education colleges and other providers in order to increase bilingual and Welsh-medium teaching skills.

The **Bilingual Champions** project, which started as a pilot project with three colleges in 2005 with Welsh Government funding, is helping colleges to develop capacity, confidence and expertise in bilingual / Welsh medium teaching. The project was rolled out incrementally from 2010, with additional colleges brought under the project in 2012 and the rest followed in January 2013.

We manage a **network** for the Champions in partnership with the Welsh Government.

Policy Development



The further education colleges are continually developing new ideas and innovating, sharing good practice within the sector and also looking at international practice.

ColegauCymru partnered with Sgiliaith recently to lead a delegation of the post-16 sector, funded by Erasmus+ and including a Welsh Government official, to the **Basque Country** to look at how bilingualism is being normalised there.

ColegauCymru is organising an **International Conference on Teaching and Learning** that will take place in Cardiff on 29 February 2016.

Speakers from organisations and partners from Finland, the Basque Country and Canada have been confirmed. Wales' colleges and universities will also discuss their international developments on the day.

Working with others



In 2014 the Urdd and ColegauCymru signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the aim of strategic joint planning to deliver **formal and informal opportunities** for Wales' young people to use the Welsh language.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in 2013. Its key purposes:

- Improve **Welsh-medium and bilingual progression routes** in further education, work-based learning, adult learning and higher education.
- Share **teaching and learning resources and innovative practice** in Welsh medium education and support the staff development needs of teaching and support staff in both sectors.

Resources for Learners



- With funding from the Welsh Government, ColegauCymru worked with its member colleges last year to strengthen Welsh in the colleges with residential and **extra-curricular events** and also the production of a **leaflet to encourage learners to use their Welsh**.
- The leaflet, which was launched at the Eisteddfod, encourages Welsh speakers to use their language skills and to develop their communication skills whilst at college and beyond. It notes the opportunities that are available in the colleges and through partner organisations such as the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, including the benefits in the world of work.

Resources for Staff



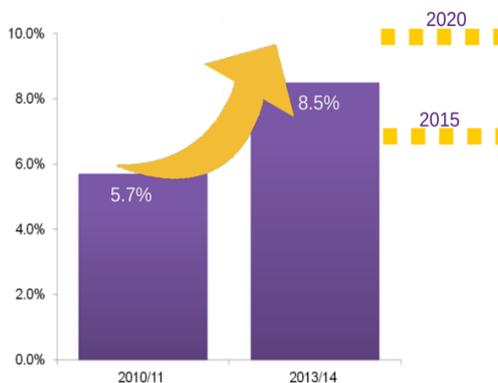
ColegauCymru has developed a pack of **video resources on the context and status of the Welsh language in Wales and in post-16 education and training**, thanks to funding by the Welsh Government. The pack is available through ColegauCymru's continuous professional development website, Moodle. The aim is that colleges use the pack as part of the staff induction process.



We heard from bilingual educators in the care sector that they were finding it difficult to source specialist resources through the medium of Welsh. With funding from the Welsh Government, we designed a **bilingual website that brings together teaching resources for the care sector**.

ColegauCymru launched a good practice handbook at the National Eisteddfod 2012: "Encouraging Further Education Learners to Continue with their Education through the Medium of Welsh". It was developed by Aberystwyth University in partnership with Wavehill. It shows numerous examples of good practice and progress in colleges across Wales.

Progress



Colleges have increased the percentage of bilingual provision substantially over recent years and have surpassed the targets set by the Welsh Government in its Welsh-Medium Education Strategy (2010).

In 2010/11, 5.7% of learning activities in further education colleges were delivered bilingually or through the medium of Welsh.

The target was 7% by 2015 and 10% by 2020.

The Welsh Government's annual report on the Strategy (July 2015) shows that colleges had reached 8.5% by 2013/14 – higher than the 2015 target and well on course to meet the 2020 target.

Further Information

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