Consultation on a Welsh Government draft strategy: a million Welsh speakers by 2050

Consultation response form

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Responses should be returned by 31 October 2016 to

Welsh Language Unit
Welsh Language Division
Education and Public Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
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or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: <u>UnedlaithGymraegWelshLanguageUnit@wales.gsi.gov.uk</u>

Question 1 – [Do you agree w	rith the approac	ch of creating	a long term	strategy for	r the We	lsh
language?							

Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor	
		disagree	

A long term strategy and commitment to support achievement of the vision of a million Welsh speakers in 2050 is welcomed. This target is achievable. Laying strong foundations in language planning and education policy development will support Welsh language recovery. Welsh was the language of our ancestors, in 1891 it was spoken by 54.4% of the population, roughly around a million speakers. We need to regain pan Wales ownership and support towards language development whether people speak Welsh or not. Doing so will encourage inclusivity and understanding of the opportunities that being bilingual offers.

A vision will remain so unless there is aligned legislation, policy, adequate resources and financial support to drive the operational activity. This has to be driven, led and managed by Welsh Government, with regulatory responsibility sitting with the Welsh Language Commissioner to truly achieve a fully bilingual Wales. Both bodies must collaborate and work in partnership to achieve the end goal.

Looking to overseas best practice in multilingual education, integration and language growth in the Basque country, Catalonia and Quebec will allow Wales to emulate the methods of success for language revival. A model for language recovery that should be considered for Wales, is the 4 pillars of language recovery (as referenced by the Basque Country), they are:

- 1. Adequate legislation
- 2. Planning
- 3. Economic Resources
- 4. Public Interest & Support

We must build on the progress made so far and ensure that the education system and labour market intelligence in terms of skills needs are aligned and that we create a system that is dynamic, innovative and works for everyone.

Engaging with key stakeholders to create credible and ambitious milestones around the pillars of language recovery that incorporates policy making, language planning, innovative education, constant promotion, the availability of services (public and private), technology development and opportunities to use the language will all need to come together to support the normalisation of Welsh and bilingualism (and multilingualism) in Wales.

Question 2 – Apart from a million Welsh speakers by 2050, there are no specific targets associated with this draft strategy as it stands. In your opinion, are there any targets or milestones that should be used to map the journey and measure our progress towards a million speakers?

Yes	No	Unsure	

The end goal is clear, however in order to remain focussed and committed there is a definite need for milestones and SMART objectives leading up to 2050.

Realistic reform language planning would be for a series of 5 year plans with annual reporting systems to keep the campaign on track. (6 x 5 year plans and a two years plan at the end taking us to 2050). There should be a lead in time of one year, so that the official plan takes effect in April 2018.

It is an ideal opportunity to evaluate the numerous existing annual Welsh medium development reporting mechanisms and assess if they are fit for purpose towards supporting achievement of the new strategy. Continuing with reporting mechanisms that work or updating/refining plans to suit the changing needs and vision is key. This process however could identify the need for the introduction of a new reporting and analytical tool.

Education

The Welsh medium education strategy annual reports and local authority WESPs are proving useful frameworks in this process of planning availability of Welsh medium education.

Further support and collaboration of the WESPs is crucial and the recommendations from the Estyn report into WESPs effectiveness must be realised. There needs to be improved consistency across the education sector and around Wales to improve effective data collection and outcomes as a result. Further education colleges are sophisticated in their data collection and with two thirds of Wales 16-19 year olds studying at college this sector is crucial to language development and revival. The Estyn report states that 'The partnership between local authorities and the Welsh Government in developing the WESPs, particularly in relation to setting targets, has been weak. The targets set by local authorities when aggregated do not align with many of the aspirations of the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy.'

Alignment, parity of support and consistency is key to a successful education system that supports the growth of Welsh medium education from 6 months to adulthood. To achieve this further education must be one of the key focuses for this strategy and receive its fair share of support and resources to truly develop the sector that can make that difference in young people using or losing the language.

Although according to the Estyn WESP report further education institutions and work-based learning providers are outside the scope of local authorities' WESPs, colleges have been important partners and there are a number of examples where effective partnerships through 14 -19 learning pathways networks result in collaborative Welsh-medium courses being provided in key stage 4 and in some cases in post-16. Here is an example of the further education sector being asked to comply with one strategy but not being involved in another – being treated differently.

Despite this, colleges remain focussed on learner achievement and outcomes and engage to support learner progression and success.

The 14-19 space is changing as colleges are on hand to re-engage those 14 year old learners who would otherwise drop out of education. When planning Welsh medium education, we need to consider the colleges' role in supporting academia (GCSE space since 2016), A levels and Welsh BAC and the increasing importance of vocational qualifications and work based learning (as graduate jobs reduce)¹. What is planned for developing the Welsh/bilingual offer in this space? Colleges are more than happy to look for solutions and develop new ways of collaboration to ensure the learner is employed or moves on to higher education.

LLWR data can be used more effectively to report on any change and development in Welsh/ bilingual activity. The LA26 and LA57 data collection for colleges are key. Reporting on Welsh/bilingual developments also needs to be mainstreamed and integrated into general reporting methods and not kept separately simply as part of the WESPs.

Engaging with employers

The Welsh Government employer skills survey, 2015, identified that around one in seven (15%) recruitment and skill-shortage vacancies were ascribed, at least in part, to a lack of oral Welsh language skills and 11% ascribed to a lack of written Welsh language skills. What happens with this data – where is the action to solve this gap – are colleges and training providers involved?

Setting an ambitious target needs sufficient funding to ensure that choice for Welsh speakers is available across all of Wales, supporting people to have equal Welsh language vocational and/or academic routes post-16. Prioritising key priority areas for Welsh medium delivery such as health and social care, childcare, business administration, creative industries and agriculture and tourism and leisure allows for alignment of the demand for Welsh language services in these areas and jobs and growth in Wales.

When planning linguistic skills for the workplace there needs to be closer alignment with education and Careers Wales in their role on advising of the advantages of Welsh language skills. Busnes Cymru should also engage new businesses into what benefits language skills and offering a bilingual service can bring in business in Wales.

Question 3 – Do you broadly agree with the six areas of development outlined in the strategy – Planning, Normalisation, Education, People, Support and Rights?

Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor	
		disagree	

Supporting comments

It is broadly agreed that the six areas of development are important, however the 'rights' element does not necessarily need to feature. The Welsh Language (Wales)

¹ http://www.collegeswales.ac.uk/01-09-2016-Essential-to-promote-vocational-skills-in-face-of-shrinking-graduate-jobs-market

does not reference rights, more the 'freedom to use'. If we realise the normalisation of the Welsh language, rights will follow suit.

There are three extra significant areas of development that are missing and are key to measuring and promoting the value and use of Welsh in Wales, they are:

- 1. The Economy
- 2. Skills and employability (vocational and academic)
- 3. Promotion and facilitation (but this could be included in 'support')

Inclusion of these areas would support continuity when moving from one strategy 'laith Fyw, laith Byw (Living Language: Language for Living) to the new one of reaching 'One million Welsh speakers by 2050'.

As Welsh Government supported the launch of three Regional Skills Partnership recently, it would seem amiss should we not mention skills and employability and the economy. These three plans are innovative and will rely on collaborative engagement of people working together to inspire and stretch the capabilities and aspirations of young people and employees to attain high levels of education and skills. These skills will contribute to a capable, flexible and competent workforce who are able to add value to the economy.

These plans will also look to utilise the potential of Wales' assets, whilst promoting equality, diversity and the **Welsh Language** when responding to the challenges of the diverse economy, demographics and geography of the regions the three plans represent.

Discussions are already underway between the Welsh language department of the Welsh Government, ColegauCymru and the Regional Skills Partnerships to hold regional events to support the plans and promote the Welsh language within them.

More discussion into how Welsh language can be further integrated into the desired outcomes would be recommended.

Question 4 – How can you contribute to achieving the strategy's vision?

ColegauCymru is a charity and limited company that raises the profile of further education among decision-makers in order to improve educational opportunities in Wales. We are a member-led body, representing all 14 further education colleges and institutions in Wales. We represent, promote and support the interests of colleges.

ColegauCymru will be supporting the achievement by adhering to the Welsh language standards and will support the further education (FE) sector to do the same in the future. ColegauCymru employs Welsh speaking staff and use of Welsh is actively promoted in the workplace.

As a representative body for FE, two thirds of 16-19 year olds in Wales attend a college, this demographic is testament to the important role that colleges have in achieving this vision. From the last census data, the age group 16-25 is identified as

the age where people become disengaged with Welsh and then record themselves as non-Welsh speakers.

Working with colleges to change this is key.

Colleges are active in their encouragement of learners to continue with linguistic progression, however the take up of Welsh language study at post-16 decreases and there are a number of reasons for this.

- 1. Learner demand Ideology that Welsh is the language of school and that they would like to choose English medium now that they are 16
- 2. Provision provision is low due to lack of demand or no staffing capability to make the offer (funding)
- 3. Linguistic progression opportunities linguistic progression into further education, employment or onto higher education are still not widely realised
- 4. The power of conforming I want to do what my friend does
- 5. Employability is it really going to help me when I look for a job lack of evidence reaching secondary schools

ColegauCymru and further education (FE) colleges and institutions

Since 2010 members of CollegesWales / ColegauCymru have implemented the three elements of the National Strategy for Bilingualism in further education (FE) that focus on:

- Strand 1: The development of a Welsh ethos at the college
- Strand 2: The development of bilingual communication skills to augment English medium provision
- Strand 3: The development of Welsh-medium or bilingual provision for post-14 learners

ColegauCymru and the sector are committed to the Welsh language and their responsibility to providing Welsh/bilingual opportunities for their learners and staff in Wales.

The Bilingual Champion scheme previously funded by Welsh Government was a success and sees all colleges employing a Welsh Language Champion/Manager/Director as a result. This scheme and these individuals are/were instrumental in promoting change and driving Welsh as a strategic priority in colleges. However, there is only so much one person can do. We welcome any further investment into FE that would allow for us to have a similar staffing scheme to the one that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol operate in HE, and ColegauCymru look forward to representing FE on development opportunities in this space.

Further investment and utilising Sgiliaith services in FE will continue to support lecturers to teach bilingually across Wales, empowering staff to reengage with their linguisitic skills. Sgiliaith services should be further utilised to extend some of their other services such as their best practice blended learning offer of A level provision via video conferencing in Welsh. This could work for vocational subjects that have a lot of theory teaching, such as in health and social care and childcare subjects. Increased resources would be required to support development in this space.

In order to work nationally with further education, we recommend that ColegauCymru networks, Principals meetings and events are utilised to engage key decision makers and drive change across Wales.

There is a real need to ensure that the whole of Wales benefits from these developments to support a thriving Welsh language. Learners can not face a postcode lottery as to what Welsh medium education and training options are available in the post-16 space.

This strategy for 'a million Welsh speakers by 2050' is an opportunity for cross sector and in-sector collaboration to further enhance and develop the linguistic vocational and academic opportunities that exist for all learners in colleges in Wales.

Colleges are increasingly commercial in their outlook, however as not for profit institutions that exist to serve the public all the funding is reinvested into college activity that benefits the learner. Working with colleges also opens up opportunities to work with their employer links and ColegauCymru can act as the link to pan Wales increased activity.

Question 5 – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve planning in relation to the Welsh language?

Yes	\boxtimes	No	Unsure	

Supporting comments

When we are faced with an opportunity for success that is crucial to our future prosperity as a country we need to take a look at the whole system and look at the barriers we have faced and why they still exist.

From the previous comments you will see that vocational education still remains the poor relation of academic education. When discussing educating and training people who speak Welsh, who are highly likely to remain local and become entrepreneurs and/or assets to society and the community, we need to support the linguistic offer in this area even more.

Adult Community Learning

As the body that represents Wea YMCA community college, the role of adult community learning and upskilling of adults in this space is increasingly important. Dysgu Cymraeg and Wea YMCA could collaborate to increase provision and success in this area.

Awarding Bodies and Qualifications Wales

Increasing provision is one thing, but change in this space alone will not allow for an aligned system. The supporting infrastructure also needs to develop. Qualifications Wales and awarding bodies who want to do business in Wales must support the colleges' delivery of qualifications. The 6 key priority areas for Welsh medium development in Wales, identified back in 2010, still suffer from a limited range of Welsh/bilingual qualifications and resources to support the colleges.

Welsh language Resources

When a Welsh /bilingual qualification is available, resources and materials to support the teaching can take up to two years to complete. When introducing / planning qualifications in Welsh/ bilingual the Welsh Government resources department needs to be involved in creating the resources to support this development so that the whole package is available to lecturers at the beginning of term.

Presently there are numerous barriers to accessing Welsh medium qualifications and Welsh medium resources. Engaging with the Federation of Awarding bodies through Qualifications Wales, will support the formation of a system that works for all. Support from WG to help ColegauCymru, Qualifications Wales and FAB, improve this system is welcomed.

Sadly colleges on a daily basis continue to battle the prejudice that exists with some awarding bodies (centrally located and managed in England with little or no understanding of Welsh needs) around studying in Welsh/bilingually. With the Welsh language receiving official status in 2012, this should not be happening in 2016. Should this attitude continue, it raises barriers to provision and without the whole system aligned to support the teaching then normalisation of Welsh language vocational study will remain unrealised.

Question 6 – In your opinion, how else can we engender goodwill towards the Welsh language in order to further normalise it?

The Welsh Government must lead by example – if they are not adhering to their own Welsh language standards the entire process will lose credibility and momentum.

Partnership

ColegauCymru has engaged a number of Welsh Government funded promotional bodies in Memoranda of understanding to formally engage collaboration to support the promotion of Welsh in colleges. This collaboration has been about providing choice to learners be that in higher level academia/vocational study opportunities through projects with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol or in supporting external informal opportunities through the Urdd and or Mentrau laith.

This is only the beginning of the process of normalisation and more needs to be done to further ensure resources are fairly distributed across all sectors in Wales.

The recent setting of targets for Welsh Government funded bodies to engage with colleges has seen an increase in activity that is welcomed by the sector. This increased activity is crucial to engaging new audiences, Welsh speakers (there are at least 300 in each of the 12 FE colleges), non-Welsh speakers and learners, to promote a sense of ownership and pride whether they speak Welsh or not. It is what makes Wales different and brings us together.

Campaigns and events

Different campaigns such as the Sŵn music festival and Welsh music day are certainly working to engage college students who have not been exposed to any Welsh music or Welsh since school. Tafŵyl in Cardiff is also becoming an annual event of success – can we assess who the audience is and further engage a new audience?

The FAW campaign and use of Welsh saw people in Wales and around the world recognising Welsh as a living language spoken by management and team members.

Employability

Increasingly the message needs to be about employability. The Welsh Government Employability Plan will be an ideal opportunity to further highlight Welsh as a key employability skill.

Services

When dealing with young people we need to ensure that there are Welsh technology developments that keep up to date with advancement in technology in English. Basic services such as online banking, online booking, online shopping and social media are key areas for development. It then becomes a normal way of life. (Facebook, Microsoft and Gmail are all good examples of technology development in Welsh to date.)

Research

It would be worthwhile commissioning research into why post-16 learners are not taking up the Welsh medium offer and what could change this habit.

Question 7 – What else is needed to convert positive attitudes towards the language into speakers?

Welsh language awareness

You can not underestimate the power of Welsh Language Awareness courses.

ColegauCymru with Welsh Government funding compiled an online Welsh language awareness pack that had options for accreditation through Agored Cymru or a quiz that would be taken at the end of the videos.

Lack of knowledge breeds lack of understanding and this pack highlights the language journey that Welsh has been on. It involves people in the history and invites people in a subtle and powerful way to be a part of its future. The resource has open access and is available on ColegauCymru moodle. https://moodle.colegaucymru.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=146

Language Awareness across all organisations in Wales should be an integral and compulsory part of the induction process and training in public, private and third sector organisations.

Role Models

One thing is key, for young people it is very much about role models. Celebrities or local business people need to be encouraged to talk about how speaking Welsh has helped them and why it matters to them.

Digital services

Also key to converting attitudes is making digital services as accessible in Welsh as they are in English. Progress has been encouraging, such as Facebook, Windows and Gmail, but we need to continuously innovate to ensure people see the value in the language and do not feel let down by advancement because the language option is not available.

Question 8 – Are there a document in order to incre	•	•		
Yes		No	Unsure	

There are two main parts that can ensure an increase in the number of speakers and a thriving Welsh language and they are:

- 1. Language transfer (creating speakers through the education system that will transfer the language to their children)
- 2. Education system (creates new speakers of the language from a young age that supports a norm that is not questioned by children. The outcomes are then that all children in Wales by the end of the foundation phase can speak some Welsh).

Donaldson reported the two best things about the Welsh education system as

- 1. the foundation phase and
- 2. the Welsh language.

We need to take the best practice identified in the foundation phase in terms of Welsh language teaching and normalisation that exists in English medium schools and apply it to junior years, secondary schools, colleges and work based learning in Wales.

Change in ITE and PGCE content

In order to ensure that we can grow the provision of teachers with linguistic skills and confidence to teach in Welsh, the Initial Teacher Education standards and the content of the PGCE courses needs to be reviewed and refined (and aligned for schools and FE). This is an opportunity to investigate further alignment of standards/qualifications and introduce a system that supports dual recognition for teaching allowing staff to teach in schools and or FE.

In order to succeed Wales must be radical and look to adopt the Basque model where it is not possible to become a teacher without a certain level of Basque. For new teachers Welsh would become a core part of the course to ensure that they are learning the necessary skills to be a competent teacher in Wales. For all qualified teachers/lecturers a target would be set for lecturers/teachers to be released to upskill their Welsh language skills to a certain level in order to provide Welsh language opportunities for all learners in Wales.

The role of 'Dysgu Cymraeg' is critical in this space as they allow for adults and over 16s to re-engage or continue with their linguistic journey.

	•	her objectives or actions the number of people who		
Yes		No	Unsure	

Early Years

The Early years and Mudiad Meithrin and the role of colleges in training the future workforce in our nurseries and schools are key in supporting young people to use Welsh. ColegauCymru and Mudiad Meithrin are in discussion about closer collaborative opportunities.

In order to support the success of the foundation phase in terms of Welsh language embedment, we need to ensure that education routes all clearly demonstrate the academic/vocational and linguistic progression and access that a learner in Wales deserves. A piece of research looking at learner progression through the education system would be beneficial, to identify gaps. Prioritising and funding a Welsh/bilingual linguistic offer in vocational study at post-14 for the future of our people and communities is crucial.

There is an increased need for consistency across Wales. There has been a recent growth in Cardiff and Rhondda in terms of use of the language that results in an increase in the demand for Welsh Meithrin opportunities for children in these areas. Welsh Government needs to facilitate working partnerships with colleges, universities, awarding bodies, qualifications Wales and Care Council for Wales to ensure there are clear progression routes in this field with language at the core.

Employer needs

Increased focus on employer and skills needs will support people to use their Welsh in the workplace and socially. The introduction of Welsh language standards in the public sector will drive change in this area. But what about the private sector we largely engage with this sector on a daily basis? Working with the CBI, FSB, local chamber of commerce and the WRC will engage businesses to consider how the Welsh language can improve their business.

Since the abolishment of the Welsh Language Board in 2012, activity promoting Welsh to business has been reduced. As a result, we have lost a number of services (banking) and there has been limited appetite for any development. Further emphasis on this development will lead to increased use and understanding that Welsh can be used outside of school. An opportunity to engage the Mentrau laith in language promotion with business locally and a strategic outlook for engaging big business (in particular retail) is a must.

Greater use of the laith Gwaith badge in the service/customer facing roles will also allow for customers and users to use their Welsh before their English when they recognise the symbol.

Along with increased activity in the promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language, with campaigns similar to the ones run by the Welsh Language Board – e.g. Dechrau pob sgwrs yn Gymraeg – Welsh Government should involve organisations that are directly linked to the target market to run these campaigns on its behalf, e.g. colleges (ColegauCymru) and work based learning providers (NTfW) when targeting post-16 audience.

Question 10 – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve the infrastructure that helps people to use Welsh?

Yes	\boxtimes	No	Unsure	

Supporting comments

There are already organisations funded by the Welsh Government that make up the infrastructure to support language learning and promotional activities in the community. These organisations have done an amazing job at supporting existing Welsh speakers, it is now time to reach out to new untapped audiences if Welsh is to grow and flourish.

This requires a new mind set – that of working with colleges in Wales to engage and support the activity of learning and living that goes on in and around college to make the language accessible to all. Luckily a number of the 'Dysgu Cymraeg' centres are now located in college, Coleg Cambria, Coleg Gwent and GLIM in partnership with Bangor University. two new Welsh centres are located on college campuses, giving direct access to young people in the community to study and enjoy extracurricular opportunities in Welsh. This is a step in the right direction. The synergy of these locations/partnerships and collaboration can already be evidenced.

Engaging with employers is crucial to success, be that public, private or third sector and we know the importance of the NHS as a result of the More than Words strategy. Involving colleges as education and training providers and employers to grow the skills base is key.

Question 11 – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve the rights of Welsh speakers?

Yes	No	Unsure	

Supporting comments

The majority of Welsh speakers do not want to make a fuss and default to English in the course of their everyday lives.

What is required is a collaborative national campaign identifying situations where people can use Welsh. This campaign can focus on examples of best practice and

highlight opportunities and raised awareness of the legislative development that now supports Welsh speakers to be free to use their Welsh.

Continuing to raise the profile through the good work of the Minister of Lifelong Learning and Welsh language, in engaging AMs and Ministers to support investment in the Welsh language is imperative.

Question 12 – The Welsh Government will publish a series of detailed policies in specific policy areas during the strategy's lifespan. Which policies do you think we should prioritise for publication during the first five years of the strategy?

The first 5-year plan (2018-2023)

- Support FE to introduce a vocational offer in Welsh, invest in supporting colleges to recruit sufficient Welsh speaking staff or upskill existing staff
- Make the changes to ITE, PGCE course content and introduce Welsh language as a compulsory part of the course – all teachers in Wales must now reach a certain level of Welsh before they can teach (following the Basque model and similarly to the North Wales Police model, that no one questions and which has been a success in offering a Welsh service in North Wales). With the language demographic changing this would have to be a blanket Wales policy
- Workforce planning locally colleges, local authorities and businesses to work together to identify Welsh language skills needs (research)
- Embed Language awareness courses for all employers in Wales
- Online services and technology developments
- Promotional campaign to highlight change.

Question 13 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

There is a real sense of passion and desire to grasp this opportunity of reaching a million Welsh speakers in Wales, from the Senedd to the street, and collaboratively we can influence change for the benefit of the individual, the community, the economy and Wales as a whole.

Welsh Government should publish a post-Brexit plan in education (from primary school to post-graduate research, including vocational study, work based learning and academia), business and the civil service with all having specific actions to ensure Wales produces sufficient bilinguals to meet the future requirements of Wales and the world. Accountability arrangements, good governance and leadership are also key elements that will drive the success of this strategy. Implementation and review of the five year plans in terms of objectives met will also be critical in gaining momentum and public approval.

This is the opportunity to cease underfunding of Welsh language and education, in particular vocational education, to feed a thriving language and community that will make reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 a reality.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:	