



Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of responses

National policy on Welsh language transmission
and use in families

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

- 1.1. In July 2017, we published our National Welsh Language Strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. As the Strategy's title suggests, we want to see the number of those who can speak Welsh rise to 1 million by the year 2050 (from the current number recorded at the 2011 census of 562,000). We also envisage that the percentage of the population that speak Welsh daily, and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh, will increase from 10 per cent (in 2013-15) to 20 per cent by 2050.
- 1.2. Work to increase the rates of Welsh language transmission in families is an important aim of the Strategy.
- 1.3. On 11 February 2020, the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language (the Minister's title at that time) published a consultation on a draft *National policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families*.
- 1.4. The consultation sought views on the draft policy's aim of:
 - creating new initiatives to inspire today's children and young people to speak Welsh to their children in the future;
 - providing practical advice and techniques to families where not everybody speaks Welsh; and
 - providing support to Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children.
- 1.5. The consultation period was due to run for 12 weeks to 5 May 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was extended to 30 September 2020. Stakeholders were informed of the extension via e-mail.
- 1.6. It was possible to respond to the consultation through three channels: online, by post and by email.
- 1.7. As well as inviting written responses via the channels listed above, we also held conversations with 12 parents. We analyse these responses in the section 'Conversations with Parents' below.

Overview of consultation responses

- 2.1. We received a total of 42 responses to the consultation. These came from individuals as well as organisations. The organisations who responded were local authorities, education and training organisations, organisations whose work relates to children and young people and organisations whose work relates to the Welsh language.

- 2.2. Responses were submitted via online form. We also offered the option of completing the form offline and returning it by email. It was also possible to return a hard copy of the form by post. No respondent used the postal route; three respondents emailed a ‘free form’ response, which didn’t use the consultation response form we’d provided.

Table 1.1: Routes of Response

Route of Response	Number of responses
Form submitted online	19
Form emailed	18
Free form response emailed	3
Post	0

- 2.3. We received fourteen in Welsh, twenty-three in English and three in both Welsh and English.
- 2.4. Not all respondents answered all questions. This is summarised in table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Summary of substantive responses to the consultation questions

Consultation Question	Number of responses
Q.1a	39
Q.1b	39
Q.1c	35
Q.2	37
Q.3a	36
Q.3b	31

- 2.5. The consultation didn’t ask closed questions so no quantitative data is available. In our analysis, we’ve included the responses to the direct question asked and we’ve also analysed any general responses which didn’t directly reference the consultation questions and attributed comments to the relevant question. Within the analysis we have provided a summary which draws out the main view expressed and alternative views.

Summary of responses

- 3.1. The majority of responses we received supported the policy and its proposed actions. There were some negative responses which included generic comments against funding the Welsh Language more broadly.

- 3.2. We also received some comments which were outside of the scope of the policy, in that their focus was not aimed at Welsh language transmission within the family, so we've not summarised them in this report.

Question 1: This draft policy sets out our proposed actions to support and increase Welsh language transmission in families.

Question 1a: Will the actions we propose allow us to do this?

- 3.3. 39 respondents answered this question.
- 3.4. In general, there was broad agreement among all respondents on the actions of the policy. Most responses highlighted specific actions, which were most relevant to particular fields or geographical areas. A few respondents agreed with the actions but provided little commentary on them and others provided a comprehensive response with comments against all of the policy actions.
- 3.5. Although the response to the policy and its actions was mostly positive, some respondents stated that some actions were ambiguous and therefore difficult to comment on.
'The actions outlined seem sensible and reasonable. However we do not feel that we can comment on their success as the actions are very general.'
- 3.6. Many respondents stated the importance of clearly linking the policy to other Welsh Government policies, programmes and projects, in particular those within Cymraeg 2050.
- 3.7. Some respondents highlighted the need for planning and implementation at a local level as well as nationally, but this would only be possible by developing local knowledge and evidence to allow actions to be tailored to communities.
- 3.8. A number of respondents mentioned the need for research as an important factor to the success of the policy and the implementation of the actions. Some felt that ensuring comprehensive new and current research was a priority and that we need a better understanding of problems, barriers and opportunities. Learning from other countries with comparable sociolinguistic situations to those as the Welsh language in Wales was also highlighted as being important.
- 3.9. There was support for actions focusing upon parents/carers, particularly related to improving their language skills and their understanding of the importance of speaking Welsh to their children before they go to school.

- 3.10. Also highlighted was the importance of including families of children with additional learning needs and in particular children and young people who are deaf.
- 3.11. Some organisational responses, highlighted how their own programmes and projects could contribute to specific actions. Co-operation was seen by many respondents as key to the success of many of the actions.
- 3.12. On a local level, some organisations offered a response from a local perspective and were eager to cooperate on trialling interventions within their local areas.
- 3.13. Other comments regarding the likely success of the proposed actions highlighted the importance of sufficient resources to achieve them; the quality of their implementation; the willingness of people to engage; and marketing and communication.

Question 1b: Are there any actions missing from the draft policy?

- 3.14. 39 respondents answered this question.
- 3.15. There was a strong focus on the importance of the early years period in forming behaviours around language transmission. Respondents emphasised, for example, *'the importance of the role played by the early years sector in the successful implementation of the policy by developing Welsh language skills with children from birth and supporting parents through various strategies providing support to them to use the language at home.'*
- 3.16. Other respondents highlighted the need to have more focus on the early years workforce, including childminders and their role in supporting families to transmit the language to the next generation.
- 3.17. Some respondents also suggested actions targeting parents during the pre-natal period and the possible role of midwives and health visitors in encouraging families to speak Welsh to their children.
- 3.18. Some respondents highlighted the need for an action which addresses the vital role of the extended family in language transmission. In particular the role of Welsh speaking grandparents who often fulfilled informal childcare duties while parents were at work.
- 3.19. Some respondents questioned whether the child's voice was central enough within the actions in the draft Policy and that actions were needed which

focussed on the role of children and young people and their *'potential to change the linguistic practices of their family.'*

- 3.20. Some respondents would like more of a focus on technology, i.e. investment in digital content and resources for parents and children to support language transmission in the home. Also noted was the need to consider the *'role of the media, and social media specifically, in sharing messages'* to increase the use of Welsh in the household.
- 3.21. Similar to responses to question 1a, respondents emphasised the importance of detailed research, sufficient funding as well as marketing.

Question 1c: Should we take a different approach to some of these actions?

- 3.22. 35 respondents answered this question.
- 3.23. Many respondents share the view that actions relating to research need to be considered in various ways. References to research include understanding the reasons for not transmitting the language; Welsh language development and best practice for supporting Welsh language learning and use; and, what respondents referred to as 'the benefits' of Welsh immersion and bilingualism. Some respondents also included general comments on the need for research on some of the draft Policy's actions. They also emphasised the importance of striking the appropriate balance between research, cooperation and developing plans and interventions.
- 3.24. Also seen as important was including links to other strategies that support the general aims of the policy. This would also include specific references to maintaining and developing the projects and programmes which already contribute to the objectives of the Policy.
- 3.25. Some respondents emphasised the need to follow the consultation with more robust action points and clearer targets within the policy.
- 3.26. Respondents also emphasised their opinion that pre-natal awareness of bilingualism should be fostered to ensure effective intervention in order to promote family language transmission from an early age.
- 3.27. Respondents also raised the following:
- Discussing language transmission with children in school;
 - partnership working and cooperation; and,
 - national awareness raising campaigns.

Question 2: This draft policy is intended to inform a ten-year programme of work. Are there any actions which should be implemented before others?

- 3.28. 37 respondents answered this question.
- 3.29. The majority of the respondents to this question were supportive of the policy as a whole. However, some respondents did respond negatively, stating that they didn't want the policy implemented as they believed that it wasn't representative of the 80% of Wales who don't currently speak Welsh.
- 3.30. At the same time, several responses considered the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic with some suggesting that best practice could be used from the lessons learnt from this period, for example using technology effectively to run sessions and projects that are usually done face to face.
- 3.31. Several respondents agreed with the need to prioritise research as well as setting up a Programme Board to oversee the implementation of the policy. Others supported this aim by setting out the needs for regular monitoring. *'Bydd angen pennu cerrig milltir ar gyfer y cyfnod hwn yn ogystal â monitro, asesu ac adolygu rheolaidd.'* (*'Milestones will need to be set for this period as well as regular monitoring, assessment and review.'*)
- 3.32. Some respondents highlighted learning lessons from other countries, in particular the Euskaraldia example from the Basque Country (which the draft Policy noted as a project which could be emulated here in Wales). They felt that this should be implemented before other actions.
- 3.33. Many respondents stated that they would like to see investment in groups that exist already such as Cymraeg for Kids groups and Welsh-medium playgroups.
- 3.34. One respondent notes that *'importance of the role played by the early years sector in the successful implementation of the policy by developing Welsh language skills with children from birth and supporting parents through various strategies providing support to them to use the language at home'* and others agreed with this by suggesting that working with the pre-natal care sector should be a priority. Children with additional needs should also be considered.
- 3.35. Some respondents would like a national campaign to get people involved in interventions to implement the policy while others felt a more hyperlocal campaign would be beneficial. Some suggested that focusing on one aim at a time would be prudent while it was also suggested that the 'easiest' aim should be focused on first.

- 3.36. A strong online presence to interact with parents was one of the key actions that respondents wanted prioritised. General comments noted that they wanted to see further reviews into current interventions, as well as the use of educational resources to further support the aims of the policy.

Question 3: This draft policy is based on how we want to:

- i. Inspire today's generation of children and young people to speak Welsh to their children in the future.
- ii. Reignite the Welsh language skills of those who may not have used Welsh since their school days, or who have lost confidence in their language skills, to speak Welsh with their own children.
- iii. Support and encourage use of Welsh within families where not everybody speaks Welsh.
- iv. Support Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children.

Question 3a: Does this policy give sufficient attention to each of these four aims?

- 3.37. 36 respondents answered this question
- 3.38. Most respondents agreed that the policy did give sufficient attention to these four aims. Some respondents noted their agreement with no further comment while others asked for further clarification on some points. A small number of responses didn't want the policy to be implemented at all.
- 3.39. Many respondents stated that more attention should be given to aim *ii* and that emphasis be given to initiatives aimed at encouraging those aged 14-19 to continue to use their Welsh once they have left school. Other responses included suggestions that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the community and early years.
- 3.40. Some respondents called for a national approach, and that existing initiatives should be used to extend support (subject to additional funding). Others wanted to see a more local approach. One respondent suggested that their organisation could host pilot projects, stating that they felt that currently their local provision wasn't sufficient.
- 3.41. Other respondents agreed with the draft Policy's aims but suggested further ideas such as making better use of resources currently available as well as making better use of technology.

Question 3b: Are there any other aims which should be addressed in the policy?

- 3.42. 31 respondents answered this question
- 3.43. Many felt that the wording of the policy needed to be simplified in order to resonate with the target audience as well as ensuring strong messaging to the public when implemented.
- 3.44. Several responses emphasised the importance of ensuring that the policy is aligned with other related existing strategies and policies.
- 3.45. Various respondents suggested a need to focus on working with families, by reinforcing established networks of groups that already exist. One organisation for example noted it was important to work with families where Welsh and English is used at home. Others wanted to see a specific aim to supporting incomers to Wales.
- 3.46. A number of respondents concentrated on the need for the policy, and wanted to see research undertaken to find out why Welsh isn't being transmitted. Other respondents wanted a clear timetable for the aims to be implemented.
- 3.47. Some responses highlighted best practice examples from other countries.

Conversations with Parents

- 4.1. In addition to the public consultation analysed above, we commissioned Arad Research to hold conversations with parents. This work involved conversations with 12 members of the public who are parents. The purpose of these conversations was to seek the views of parents on the actions within the Policy.
- 4.2. Ideas to encourage people to start chats in Welsh received a mixed response with some of the parents not seeing this idea as being relevant to their situation and more suited to those learning Welsh. Some also noted that the desire needed to come from within the family rather than encouragement from government.
- 4.3. One parent felt that the idea to encourage people to pledge to start every conversation in Welsh for a week or two would benefit from being carried out in schools.
'Tie it in with the schools, it would be a massive help for the schools. Even though I work in a Welsh school the pupils speak English constantly so a week like this would be good.'

- 4.4. This was echoed in the positive response from parents to the idea of providing teachers with skills and materials to help them encourage children to use more Welsh together at school, particularly for parents who are learning Welsh.
- 4.5. The idea of providing practical advice and ideas for families to help them use more Welsh in all types of family situations was well received. It was seen as the most practical and natural idea with the usefulness of songs, keywords and phrases being highlighted. Fun activities and games for the whole family were seen as good ways to use more Welsh, particularly with younger children.
‘When my two were little they’d struggle with Welsh reading so we’d have a competition with reading Welsh road signs and that really helped, and it was the same with us playing darts in Welsh. I think that if there’s a fun activity that’s where they pick it up the most.’
- 4.6. Five parents suggested that Welsh Government needed to communicate using a wider variety of channels in order to help Families to use more Welsh. Some parents weren’t aware of the support available to them, particularly at a local level. Whilst respondents saw the use of social media and television as effective communication channels, they acknowledged that not all parents use them. In addition, they emphasised the effectiveness of face-to-face communication.
- 4.7. In terms of what else Welsh Government could do to encourage the use of Welsh within families, a number of parents suggested a need for more resources. These suggestions included the need for more modern high quality Welsh resources including books and digital resources, particularly for older children;
‘Mae bwlch mawr yn y ddarpariaeth digidol i blant ar ôl oedran Cyw. Does dim byd ar gael iddyn nhw yn y Gymraeg.’
(‘There’s a big gap in digital provision for children above ‘Cyw’ age. There’s nothing is available to them in Welsh.’)
Parents also highlighted the need for more promotion of current materials and apps for learning Welsh.
- 4.8. Welsh courses were emphasised, particularly the need for free classes in the evening, including classes that parents and their children could attend to learn together. Respondents also felt that there was a lack of Welsh language courses.

Conclusion and next steps

The Welsh Government is grateful to everyone who responded to the consultation and gave up their time to do so. We've used the responses to help to inform the final version of the Policy which you can read on our website.

Annex A - List of respondents

Ref.	Respondent	Organisation
001	Gwyn Jones	
002	Duplicate response	
003	Meilyr Rowlands	Estyn
004	Danielle Gazi	The National Deaf Children's Society
005	Anonymous response	
006	Anonymous response	
007	Andrew Jenkins	
008	Michael Miles	
009	Anonymous response	
010	Anonymous response	
011	Myfanwy Jones	Carmarthenshire County Council
012	Efa Gruffudd Jones	National Centre for Learning Welsh
013	Ruth Richards	Dyfodol i'r Iaith
014	Sian Eirug	Gwynedd Council
015	David Goodger	Early Years Wales
016	Angharad Morgan / Eleri Griffiths	Mudiad Meithrin
017	Gemma Halliday	Social Care Wales
018	Fiona Mocko	Flintshire County Council
019	Iñaki Arruti Landa	Lasarte-Oria's Town council
020	Gwenllian Mair Williams	Gwynedd Council's Language Unit
021	Jane O'Toole	Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
022	Manon Humphreys	National Museum Wales
023	Dr Ifor Gruffydd	Dysgu Cymraeg y Gogledd-Orllewin
024	Anonymous response	
025	Anonymous response	

Ref.	Respondent	Organisation
026	Anonymous response	
027	Carys Morgan / Non Davies	Ceredigion County Council
028	Peter Minett	
029	Michael John Miles	
030	Eifion M Jones	
031	Anonymous response	
032	Anonymous response	
033	Lisa Newall	North Wales Training
034	Beñat Garaio Mendizabal	University of the Basque Country
035	Nia Angharad	
036	Bethan Dixon / Kathryn Seeney	Flying Start - Ynys Môn
037	Aled Davies	Welsh Language Commissioner
038	Nia Thomas	Partneriaeth Cymraeg i Deuluoedd Môn
039	Hanna Huws	Menter Iaith Môn
040	Wanted to keep response anonymous	
041	Iwan Hywel	Mentrau Iaith Cymru
042	Mabli Jones	Cymdeithas yr Iaith