

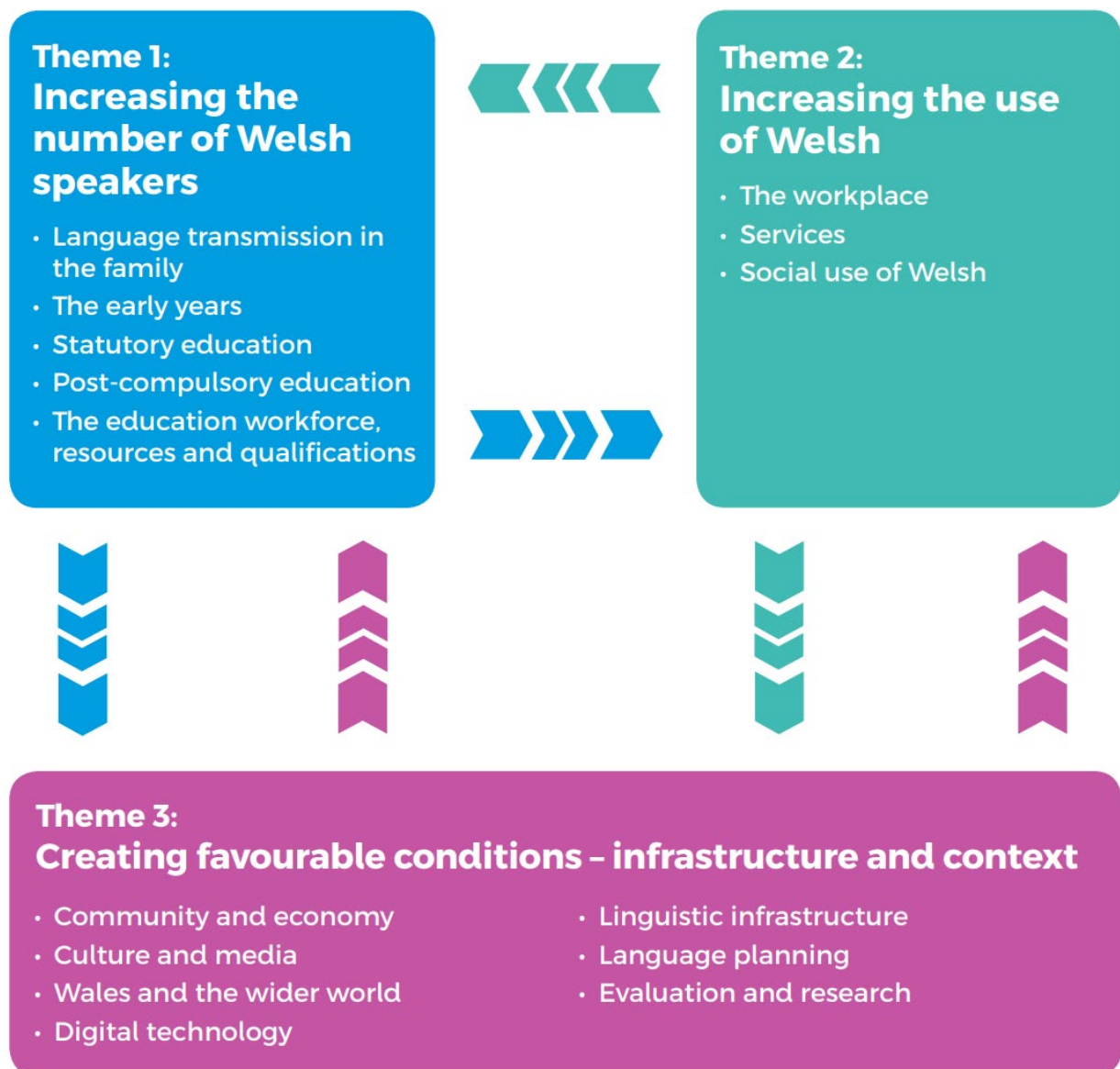
Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Cymraeg 2050 is our national strategy for increasing the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050.

The Welsh Government is fully committed to the new strategy, with the target of a million speakers included in its Programme for Government. A thriving Welsh language is also included in one of the 7 well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We also have a statutory obligation to fully consider the effects of our work on the Welsh Language. This means that any Welsh Government policy should consider how our policies affect the language and those who speak it.

The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy has three interrelated themes:



The headings under each theme outline the scope of activities that can affect the language.

As a general rule, if your policy has the potential to impact on people, it will impact in some way on Welsh speakers and therefore on the Welsh language.

1. Welsh Language Impact Assessment reference number (completed by the Welsh Language Standards Team, email: Safonau.Standards@gov.wales):

02/12/2023

2. Does the proposal demonstrate a clear link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language? – Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers and the related Work Programme for 2021-2026? Cymraeg 2050 work programme 2021-2026

We have ensured the strategy is supporting delivery of the **More than just words Five Year Plan (2022-2027)** which is the Welsh Government's strategic framework for promoting the Welsh language in health and social care and which identified mental health service users as one of the priority groups. Our vision for "More than just words" is for Welsh to belong and be embedded in health and social care services across Wales so that individuals receive care that meets their language needs without having to ask for it, leading to better outcomes. The More than just words Framework seeks to drive progress through a focus on the three themes of Welsh language planning and policies including data; supporting and developing the Welsh language skills of the current and future workforce; and sharing best practice and an enabling approach. At the core of the strategy is the principle of the Active Offer which places a responsibility on health and social care providers to offer services in Welsh, rather than on the patient or service user to have to request them.

Receiving treatment in one's own language can be particularly important for people experiencing self-harm or suicidal thoughts – and those around them. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gives the Welsh language official status in Wales and reinforces the principle that the Welsh language should not be treated less favourably than the English language when providing services. Ensuring that suicide and self-harm services are provided through the medium of Welsh, and that this is actively offered to people receiving support, is crucial.

The objective(s) within the draft strategy are to reduce suicide and self-harm. This will be delivered through the collection and analysis of evidence and working with partner organisations/commissioned services to provide services for those at risk of, or affected by suicide and self-harm. All health organisations involved in the delivery of services must have regard to the Welsh Language Standards and services commissioned by the Welsh Government will be required to abide by them also.

In the context of the above, it is considered that the proposal will have an overall positive effect in terms of contributing to Cymraeg 2050 in the respect that the draft strategy, alongside the draft Mental Health Strategy for Wales aim to expand and improve service delivery. With the Welsh Language duties accompanying these improvements we can expect to see more services in Welsh, more policies in Welsh and more promotional material in Welsh. As such this is consistent with the

ambitions to *increase the use of Welsh and create favourable conditions – infrastructure and context.*

Note: This impact assessment solely focusses on Suicide and Self Harm, wider Mental Health has been considered in the Mental Health Welsh language Impact Assessment as part of the new Mental Health strategy.

3. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and explain how you will address these impacts in order to improve outcomes for the Welsh language. How will the proposal affect Welsh speakers of all ages (both positive and/or adverse effects)? You should note your responses to the following in your answer to this question, along with any other relevant information:

Aims of the Strategy – in relation to Welsh Language

- How will the proposal affect the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities¹ (both positive and/or adverse effects)?
- How will the proposal affect Welsh medium education and Welsh learners of all ages, including adults (both positive and/or adverse effects)?
- How will the proposal affect services² available in Welsh (both positive and/or adverse effects)? (e.g. health and social services, transport, housing, digital, youth, infrastructure, environment, local government etc.)

The policies and programmes underpinning the draft Strategy will have a positive impact on the Welsh Language. For example, there will be positive impacts on the Welsh Language and Welsh speakers as we will ensure that suicide and self-harm services in Wales are bilingual and support the principles of More than Just Words through an active offer, with language choice recorded and shared between services. Resources and training will be available in Welsh, and the availability and publication of bi-lingual information campaigns and communications will increase the visibility of the Welsh language and also make the issues/services more accessible to Welsh speakers.

Objective 1 within the draft strategy is to strengthen the evidence base related to suicide and self-harm which provide an opportunity to access information which might identify links between the Welsh language, self-harm and suicide allowing mitigating policies and actions to be introduced.

Objective 3 aims to *deliver rapid and impactful prevention, intervention, and support to those groups in society who are the most vulnerable to suicide and self-harm through the settings with which they are most engaged.* This will include engaging with hard to reach groups and adapt policies and services to ensure equivalent

¹ These can be close-knit rural communities, dispersed social networks in urban settings, and in virtual communities reaching across geographical spaces.

² The Welsh Language Strategy aims to increase the range of services offered to Welsh speakers, and to see an increase in use of Welsh-language services.

support is provided; including rural communities and those where the predominant language is Welsh.

As part of objective 4 in the draft strategy, where we will aim to *heighten skills, awareness, knowledge and understanding of suicide and self harm and its causes amongst the public, professionals and agencies who may come into contact with people at risk of suicide and self-harm*, we will ensure all training and support is provided in multiple languages, including the Welsh language.

It is unlikely that Welsh Language groups will have a particular interest in the draft strategy above any other group. Health boards, local authorities and the third sector are responsible for providing services in Welsh and English and nothing proposed in this guidance would undermine this or require English only services or prevent people from using Welsh. All health boards and local authorities in Wales must operate in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) and enable everyone who receives or uses their services to do so through the medium of Welsh or English, according to personal choice.

How will you ensure that people know about services that are available in Welsh and are able to access and use them as easily as they can in English?

We will ensure that all policies, actions, services and governance arrangements related to self-harm and suicide in Wales are consistent with the Welsh Language Standards and Cymraeg 2050 which sets out our long term approach to achieving a million Welsh speakers.

There is also a duty on health services to deliver on their Welsh language duties. The new More than just words plan is set in the context that Cymraeg belongs to us all and should be embedded in health and social care services across Wales so that individuals receive care that meets their language needs without having to ask for it (Active Offer). Supporting and developing the Welsh language skills of the current and future workforce is a key theme in the new More than just words plan. In the short term a lot can be achieved by focussing on those who already have some Welsh language skills but lack the confidence to use them. We are therefore working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to further develop Welsh language learning and provide an enabling environment to increase the use of Welsh in health and social care workplaces.

What evidence / data have you used to inform your assessment, including evidence from Welsh speakers or Welsh language interest groups?

Officials in Knowledge and Analytical Services undertook a review of the Welsh language and any links to suicide and self-harm, with no links being identified.

Officials have also reviewed the summary of responses on Responding to people bereaved, exposed, or affected by suicide, in which, most respondents provided positive feedback that the guidance was available bilingually. Some respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that service provision and resources should also be provided bilingually and the importance of ensuring that the national liaison service was provided bilingually.

Officials have also looked at examples of good practice in Welsh language provision and have highlighted that NYTH/NEST provides a good example of the Welsh Language being given equal status. Officials will use NYTH/NEST as an example of best practice when implementing all policies, actions, services and governance arrangements related to self-harm and suicide in Wales.

What other evidence would help you to conduct a better assessment?

Standard questions regarding the impact of the policy on the Welsh Language will be asked as part of the formal consultation process. The Welsh Language Standards placed on the Welsh Government requires it to give full consideration when making policy decisions to any potential impact on the Welsh language, in all policy areas, in order to ensure more robust policies which are in line with the aspiration of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It also ensures that there are no unintentional consequences to the Welsh Government's policies and no harmful impacts on the Welsh language.

How will you know if your policy is a success?

To ensure that we are delivering a strategy that builds upon the work in this area to date, we will focus on the six key objectives listed in the strategy. Accompanying these, we will develop an action plan (outlining detailed activities that will take place as part of the objectives) and an evaluation framework, which will set out how progress against our objectives will be achieved.