



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan

This plan tackles the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities with a high concentration of second homes.

**First published:** 11 October 2022

**Last updated:** 11 October 2022

**This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.**

Go to <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

# Contents

**Ministerial Foreword**

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

**Affordability, Second Homes and the Welsh Language – The Context**

**Economy, Housing and Welsh Language**

**Community-led social enterprises and co-operatives**

**Working with estate agents and relevant stakeholders**

**A ‘fair chance’ for local buyers and renters**

**Cultural Ambassadors**

**A Commission for Welsh-speaking communities**

**Place Names**

**This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.**

Go to <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

# Ministerial Foreword

The large numbers of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation that exist in parts of Wales have provoked strong feelings for some years. In these communities, there is often a sense of injustice that people can be priced out of their local housing market by those purchasing second homes or homes bought to let as short-term holiday accommodation.

Through the Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru we are committed to taking immediate and radical action using the planning, property and taxation systems to address the negative impact that second homes and short-term holiday lets can have on the availability and affordability of housing for local people; many aspects of that package of measures are also referred to in this Plan.

Wales is and has always been a welcoming nation, and we always want that to be the case. Tourism is an important industry for Wales, but too much holiday accommodation and too many second homes that are empty for much of the year can have a negative effect on the health and sense of community in the affected areas.

Second homes are often concentrated in and around Welsh-speaking communities. This can lead to patterns of home occupation that can have a detrimental effect on the vibrancy of the language in these areas

When young people in particular are unable to live and work in their Welsh-speaking communities this clearly has an effect on both Cymraeg as a community language and on the sustainability of these communities.

As is often the case, it is easier to describe the problem and the need for action than it is to solve it. We have already started work to ease the pressure on communities where there are large numbers of second homes.

We **consulted on a draft version** of this current Welsh Language Community Housing Plan, to which we received nearly 800 responses. Diolch o galon to all those who responded. Alongside the final version of the Plan, we've published a **summary of the responses** which fed into it.

Last August, we launched the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities at the Eisteddfod in Ceredigion. The Commission will help us develop policies to sustain our language in those communities traditionally considered its heartlands.

We want the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan to play a central part in our response in tackling the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities that have high densities of second homes. But it is just one part of a series of policies that the Welsh Government has announced.

This plan is not about imposing solutions on communities. But rather it seeks to empower communities to create and develop schemes for themselves. This is done by bringing together economic, housing, community development and language planning interventions to ensure that Welsh-speaking communities can continue to be economically and linguistically viable.

This plan sets out some of the tools that are available to communities affected by housing challenges and the support that we are providing in this area.

Cymraeg belongs to us all, as does the responsibility for its future.

**Jeremy Miles MS**  
**Minister for Education and the Welsh Language**

## **Executive Summary**

The Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan includes:

## **Economy, Housing and Welsh Language**

The remit of the Economy and Welsh Language Roundtable will be extended to include housing and it will oversee the implementation of the Welsh Language Community Housing Plan. The Economy, Housing and Welsh Language Roundtable will continue to consider issues facing our rural economy within the context of the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Community Housing Plan will work closely with the Arfor 2 programme - which will provide a package of different economic interventions aimed at safeguarding our Welsh-speaking communities.

## **Social enterprises and community led co-operatives**

Social enterprises and co-operatives have an important role in supporting the economic and social infrastructure of our communities. We have examples of communities coming together to safeguard local services and develop new community-led co-operatives (eg. shops, public houses and rural bus services). There is also a role for such enterprises and co-operatives in creating and securing Welsh-speaking spaces where people can work and use the language in both a formal and informal capacity.

We have provided funding to Cwmpas so that they can establish an advice and support service to help communities to identify opportunities for community-led social enterprises and co-operatives.

## **Co-operative and community led housing**

Co-operative and community-led housing is not a new model of housing tenure. Nevertheless, it currently exists on a relatively small scale in Wales. Co-operative and community-led housing can help communities, registered social

landlords and local authorities to develop bespoke solutions that meet their needs. These models can create affordable homes in line with the specific needs of the community and more importantly they are owned by the community.

Funding has also been provided over the next three years for Cwmpas to continue supporting community groups to develop their housing ambitions. Work is being undertaken to ensure that this support is aligned with the funding package noted above, supporting communities to develop community-led co-operative housing in collaboration with our Communities Creating Homes programme.

## **Estate agents and stakeholder steering group**

The estate agents and stakeholder steering group will include estate agents, solicitors, local authorities, financial advisers and mortgage providers. Their experience, knowledge and understanding of the local housing market gained over the years is key to understanding the current state of the property market and the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities.

## **Local housing Campaign - 'A Fair Chance'**

We will work to raise awareness among communities, property sellers and prospective property sellers of the choices and steps they can make to support local people and their communities. We will create specific guidance on actions that property sellers can take to support the housing needs of their local areas, to give local people a fair chance in the local housing market.

## **Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities**

The Commission for Welsh-Speaking Communities has been established and will consider the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities. The Commission aims to gain a better understanding of the nature of the linguistic, socio-economic and social restructuring challenges post COVID-19 and the decision of United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

The Commission will consider a wide range of policy areas that will provide a better understanding of the current situation of the Welsh language within communities. The Commission will then make recommendations to the Welsh Government.

## **Cultural Ambassadors**

We will establish a network of Cultural Ambassadors to actively promote our culture, heritage and the Welsh language. We aim to work and learn from the experiences of the Ambassador Wales Scheme, Ecomuseums and Menter Iaith Môn's Welsh Language Champions scheme. We will develop a series of modules that will include relevant information to support the Cultural Ambassadors in their work.

## **Welsh place names**

Statutory guidance requires local authorities to take account of the List of Historic Place Names when dealing with formal requests to rename properties with historic names. However, it is possible for homeowners to change Welsh names in more informal ways and this has an impact on the visible presence of the language in our communities. No evidence base currently exists on the scale of this problem. We will therefore commission specific research to examine the

number of names that are changing and how and where they are changing. This research will inform further action in this area.

## Introduction

This Plan considers the challenges associated with affordability and high densities of second homes through the perspective of the Welsh language and considers what further action is needed.

Our *Cymraeg 2050* targets reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and doubling the daily use of Welsh, set a clear narrative about the direction of travel for Welsh language policy in Wales. It also gives context to the national wellbeing goal in the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** of *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*. For the strategy to succeed, we need to work together across government—both national and local—to take a holistic approach to tackling policy issues that are of strategic importance to the language, namely:

- The importance of maintaining Welsh as the primary language spoken in our Welsh-speaking communities,
- More opportunities for children and adults to learn and, for those who are learning or are already speakers, to become habitual users of the language wherever they live in Wales.

We understand issues relating to affordability and second homes are not restricted to Welsh-speaking communities: these issues are familiar across Wales and beyond. But without maintaining linguistically vibrant geographical Welsh-speaking communities, there will be fewer opportunities for people to use the language in everyday social situations. That in turn risks undermining our goal of creating new speakers across Wales. We therefore need to focus on maintaining the social fabric of these Welsh-speaking communities and avoid

creating an imbalance leading to an acceleration of community language shift from Welsh to English.

We are awaiting the 2021 Census results in relation to the Welsh language, which will provide us with a better understanding of the linguistic nature and challenges facing our communities.

This Plan aims to empower communities to create and develop schemes for themselves by working collectively on a package of interventions. This includes working with the pilot in Dwyfor on a number of policies to support and protect the Welsh language on a community level. We want to ensure the right conditions for people, especially young people, to afford to live and work in our Welsh-speaking communities, as well as supporting people who wish to return to the communities where they were brought up. The interventions are framed within the context of social justice, to promote fair and balanced communities, with a thriving population living and working within the community to ensure they are sustainable for future generations.

## **Affordability, Second Homes and the Welsh Language – The Context**

There has been significant coverage, in Wales, the UK and beyond, on the difficulties experienced by people, particularly young people in accessing affordable, quality housing, to buy or rent in their local areas. Often, those difficulties are connected to the issue of second homes.

As noted in a recent [Welsh Government commissioned review](#), second homes can contribute to house price inflation and a reduction of the stock available for local people.

In his report, commissioned by Academi Hywel Teifi, [Second Homes:](#)

*Developing new policies in Wales*, Dr Simon Brooks provided an analysis of the possible effects that large concentrations of second homes can have on our communities. The report also outlined the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities and the need to sustain these communities.

In seeking to resolve these issues, we do not wish inadvertently to create fresh challenges. We have established a pilot area to test a number of interventions and to assess their effectiveness in managing second homes and their impact on affordability. Working with Gwynedd Council, Grŵp Cynefin and Snowdonia National Park, the pilot is currently running in Dwyfor.

We acknowledge the important contribution made by second homeowners and short-term holiday accommodation businesses on local economies. We also understand the benefits of short-term holiday accommodation as a source of supplementary income within our rural and farming communities. This in turn can help to sustain many family farms and other businesses and help people to live and work in their communities. Maintaining and identifying the appropriate balance of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation will be a key principle as we deliver our interventions.

We have a reputation as a welcoming country which values its tourism industry. When taking action in this area, we need to find a healthy balance so that communities can continue to thrive and prosper.

## Our Response

In the Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, we set out how housing market failures have an impact on communities across Wales, but that this impact varies according to local circumstances. An effective policy response therefore requires a combination of Wales-wide and locally-delivered interventions. We committed to drawing on a range of possible legislative and financial measures, encompassing the use of the planning, property and taxation systems. The First

Minister and Leader of Plaid Cymru set out the package of actions that would be taken forward in their joint statement in July.

Working with local authorities and in keeping with the Cooperation Agreement commitment, we have taken an approach that seeks to address core issues affecting affordability in coastal and rural communities.

We have extended powers for local authorities to charge a discretionary premium rate of council tax on second homes and empty homes from 1 April 2023, the maximum that they can choose to apply will rise from 100% to 300%. We have also changed the rules around short-term holiday accommodation, which means that to be liable for non-domestic rates (rather than council tax) short-term holiday let operators must be available to let for at least 252 days in any 12-month period and actually let for a minimum of 182 days within that period. This will ensure that owners and their guests make a fair contribution to host communities.

We are also committed to making major changes to the planning system. Regulations will introduce three new planning use classes: primary residence, secondary home and short-term holiday accommodation. Local planning authorities, where they have evidence and put in place an Article 4 Direction, could then be able to require property owners to seek planning permission in order to change use between these classes. We will also introduce changes to national planning policy which will allow local authorities to better manage the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets in local communities.

We have committed to introducing a statutory licensing scheme for all visitor accommodation. The scheme will make it a requirement to obtain a licence to operate visitor accommodation, including short-term holiday lets and will help raise standards across the tourism industry and improve data to support future planning decisions. We will be undertaking a consultation exercise later this year on proposals for a licensing scheme.

We have also consulted on making changes to land transaction tax. There are two sets of rates for residential properties, the main rates and the higher rates. The higher rates are charged, when following the purchase the buyer will have more than one residential property, and they are 4 percentage points higher than the main rates. These are the highest rates for additional residential properties in the UK. Following the consultation, we are now also working with local authorities to develop a national framework in which they can request increased land transaction tax rates for second homes and holiday lets to be applied in their local area.

We will also explore the feasibility of introducing Local Authority Mortgages.

We also committed to further measures to bring a higher proportion of existing homes, and especially empty homes, into common ownership at local level. One such action is introducing a national Empty Homes Scheme underpinned by £60m in funding which will be available to local authorities and housing associations to facilitate the fulfilment of this objective.

We will deliver 20,000 new low carbon, social homes for rent over the course of this Senedd term.

In addition to the package of immediate measures on second homes, we are committed through the Cooperation Agreement to publishing a White Paper to include proposals for a right to adequate housing including fair rents and new approaches to making homes affordable for those on local incomes.

## **Economy, Housing and Welsh Language**

Sustaining a strong economy as well as a sufficient supply of affordable homes is necessary to creating vibrant communities where the Welsh language can thrive. One of the main challenges facing rural, coastal, and Welsh-speaking

communities is the constant outmigration of young people. The Arfor Interim Report reflects that migration is complex, not every young person will want to stay locally, but we need to ensure that the choice to stay is available and that the opportunities to return are also available for those who have left for university or to gain job experience.

The greater emphasis on remote working that has occurred in recent years as a result to the pandemic presents an opportunity in this area in the form of Welsh-medium and bilingual work hubs. These can support people to work closer to their homes and create the right conditions and opportunities for people who wish to return to live in the areas where they were brought up.

The Arfor pilot programme trialled numerous interventions for example the Llwyddo'n Lleol programme which supported young people to gain the necessary skills and confidence to start businesses in their communities. Business grant schemes in Ceredigion saw a particularly high level of interest from young people who had faced challenges in accessing capital to start their own ventures. In the same way the Enterprising Communities scheme empowered local social enterprises to develop new and innovative approaches to make communities more sustainable. The Arfor funding helped turn ideas into projects that ensured the money was circulated locally as well as creating new job opportunities.

As part of the Cooperation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, a three year funding package of £11m will be available to support an Arfor 2 programme.

The main focus of Arfor 2 will be on building on the experience of the Arfor pilot programme and responding to the findings of the independent evaluation of the programme. Ongoing evaluation, sharing good practice and developing a lessons learned log is a central component of the Arfor 2 proposal.

The four local authorities have presented their proposals to the Welsh

Government and the Minister for Economy has approved the funding for Arfor 2 to coincide with the publication of this plan.

## **Economy, Housing and Welsh Language Roundtable**

The Minister for Education and Welsh Language will chair the Economy, Housing and Welsh Language Roundtable which will be the vehicle to oversee the implementation of the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan. It includes leaders of local authorities and their heads of economic development, economic development practitioners and experts, and language planners. The Roundtable will be an important forum to discuss local issues with local authority representatives. In addition, the Roundtable will provide an important platform to ensure that the interventions in both the Arfor 2 programme and the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan work together in order to improve the economic sustainability and long-term prospects for all citizens living in these communities.

The Roundtable will focus especially on the following aspects of Arfor 2 and the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan:

- Supporting the establishment of new social enterprises and co-operatives as Welsh-speaking spaces where people work and undertake formal and informal discussions.
- Actively engaging with communities to see how they can benefit from the numerous schemes of Arfor.
- Encourage young people in particular to take advantage of the support available from schemes such as Llwyddo'n Lleol to help them make a positive contribution to the local economy.
- Supporting communities to consider innovative ideas and approaches based on their natural resources and community assets.
- Sharing good practices and lessons learned across the communities within the Arfor region.

# Community-led social enterprises and co-operatives

## Communities Creating Social Enterprises

In the December 2020, we published a social research report on [The effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups](#). The findings of the survey highlighted the positive way in which many groups adapted their work to ensure that their activities continued during the pandemic. However, it also noted the challenges faced by some organisations as a result of the public health restrictions.

One of the recommendations of the report was to support the establishment of community-based social enterprises and co-operatives, with the aim of creating Welsh language spaces where people work and undertake formal and informal discussions. Welsh language spaces could also be places where people can visit on a social basis to use the language in an informal setting.

Social enterprises and co-operatives are already an important part of the social and economic landscape in Wales. There is a strong tradition of communities coming together to safeguard local amenities and local services, as well as benefiting from the natural resources in providing economic benefits to local communities. There are examples of community-based social enterprises: Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog, Partneriaeth Ogwen and Galeri in Caernarfon, for instance, illustrate how social enterprises and co-operatives can support and provide a valuable service to a local area. The Welsh language is the language of work – both formally and informally within their organisations and the organisations provide good quality job opportunities, in relation to pay and fair work policies, supporting the local economy and safeguarding vital community services.

We will encourage other communities to follow their example by providing support and guidance to help establish community-based social enterprises and co-operatives, creating Welsh language spaces where people can use the Welsh language both on a formal and informal basis.

## **Case Study 1 – Community Social Enterprise**

Partneriaeth Ogwen was established as a social enterprise in 2013 following the decision by Llanllechid, Llandygai and Bethesda community councils to work together more closely. The work of the partnership includes:

- Providing a clerical service to the area's community councils.
- Development of community, economic and environmental regeneration projects.
- Property management and development of community asset transfer projects.
- Supporting projects that create a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community.

During this time Partneriaeth Ogwen has increased their portfolio of refurbished properties providing fixed rental income. Partneriaeth Ogwen has also been responsible for developing the innovative Ynni Ogwen scheme – a community hydro scheme that generates 500MWh of renewable electricity annually. Since the development of the Ynni Ogwen scheme in 2017, the Partnership has gone on to develop a number of environmental projects.

Serving and benefiting the community is at the core of all the work undertaken and this has been highlighted during the pandemic by prioritising projects to help vulnerable people in the area. The initiative's staff has grown from 2 to 24 officers in 2022. Its portfolio of properties benefits local residents and secures key services. All of these are important contributions to the local economy. A central part of Partneriaeth Ogwen's work is to ensure the prosperity of the

Welsh language – it is a space where people can use and work through the medium of Welsh and creates a firm foundation for the language through their ambitious economic and community plans.

## **Case Study 2 – Supporting Entrepreneurship within Communities**

Congl Meinciau Enterprise Centre is the result of the effort of several individuals and organisations over a period of many years to try to secure a resource on the Llŷn Peninsula to mobilise, support and facilitate enterprise locally. The development was funded by Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, the then Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund. The centre is located in Botwnnog which is a rural area which is dependent mainly on tourism and the agriculture industry.

The centre provides office space and resources for local Llŷn businesses. Since it was established in 2010 the centre has:

- Offered tailor-made support to 30 businesses
- Hired their units for 25 tenants
- Provided 50 training courses to local businesses
- Offered training opportunities to 235 individuals

An important element of Congl Meinciau is to provide unique opportunities for people to continue working in their local community. It is also part of the Gwynedd People's Support Hubs network.

## **Co-operative, Community-led housing and Community Land Trusts**

Co-operative and community-led housing is not a new model of housing tenure. There are extensive examples across Europe and America of co-operative

housing providing affordable homes for the local community. Nevertheless, the movement in Wales remains on a relatively small scale at present.

The co-operative and community-led housing model can help communities, registered social landlords and local authorities to work together to develop solutions for their communities. These models can create affordable homes in line with the specific needs of the community and more importantly they are owned by the community. The co-operative and community-led housing model can create new housing developments as well as a means to purchase and develop properties within the current housing stock—particularly empty properties or housing for which there is little demand. We already provide support for community-led housing groups through the Communities Creating Homes programme, delivered by Cwmpas, and we are committed to supporting co-operative housing, community-led initiatives and community land trusts as set out in our Programme for Government.

Our aim is to build on this work by providing additional resources to help realise the delivery of these initiatives within Welsh-speaking communities. In many cases, the need for affordable housing may be relatively small and therefore unviable for many private developers to consider. We will therefore work with local housing associations to explore co-operative or community-led housing models to meet local housing needs that cannot otherwise be fulfilled. Whilst the interventions are focused on Welsh-speaking communities, some of the interventions particularly in relation to community-led housing may work in wider communities across Wales.

### **Case Study 3 – Community-led Housing co-operative**

Bryn Tyrnol near Machynlleth, is a five bedrooomed property and a home for many people over the years, including activists, musicians, and poets. For decades it has been hosting environmental and social justice campaigns, workshops, choirs, folk sessions and storytelling, with a special role as the

birthplace of El Sueño Existe Festival. The property which had six residents was owned by a private landlord. In 2019, the landlord decided to sell the property and, in order to keep the ethos of Bryn Tyrnol alive - and in the hands of the community, he decided to give the existing community of tenants the first chance to buy at a reduced cost.

The six existing residents decided to set up a housing co-operative to ensure that the property remained affordable for local residents for generations to come and to ensure that the community and co-operative values within the property continued.

The residents reached out to the Communities Creating Homes team at Cwmpas to help them to navigate through the process of setting up as a co-operative and purchasing the house. As well as helping them set a vision and establish a legal framework, Cwmpas supported with promotion of the group's Loanstock drive brought in consultants to model their finances and submitted funding bids on the group's behalf. The total cost of the project included £240,000 to purchase the house (with a discount of £35,000 from the market value), £7,200 Land transaction tax, £3,000 legal fees and £31,000 for a garage conversion to add two additional living units. The project was funded by £142,000 mortgage from Ecology Building Society and £140,000 from Loanstock (a loan in the form of an unsecured fixed-term, fixed-interest bond), plus an ICF Capital grant from the Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations, (PAVO) to insulate floors and external walls.

Tir Cyffredin housing co-op will now be able to provide seven secure rentals and a community hub for generations. The existing tenants, who faced homelessness if the property could not be saved, now have a safe and secure roof over their heads.

## **Our Aims:**

- To help communities to establish new social enterprises and co-operatives.
- To help communities to develop solutions to support local affordable housing.
- To help communities engage with and benefit from wider Welsh Government support for Welsh-speaking communities.

## **What we will do:**

- We will work with Cwmpas (formerly the Welsh Co-operative Centre), to establish an advice and support service to help communities identify opportunities to establish community led social enterprises or co-operatives. The extensive expertise and knowledge which has been gained by Cwmpas and their key partners over many years will be a valuable asset to help new social enterprises and co-operatives.
- Cwmpas will actively engage with communities to help them realise the social, economic and local housing development potential available within our communities which can be owned and which benefits the local community.
- In situations, where community assets are to be sold (such as public houses, shops and former places of worship), we will work with local communities to seek opportunities so that communities can take ownership of these assets for the benefit of the community.
- Where possible, we will encourage communities to engage fully with the strategic priorities of the Arfor 2 programme.

## **We believe that this will:**

- Help communities to safeguard local assets and services.

- Create new jobs by encouraging new social enterprises and co-operatives.
- Create affordable community-led homes for people to rent or buy.
- Bring a higher proportion of existing homes, and especially empty homes, into common ownership at a local level.

## Working with estate agents and relevant stakeholders

Many of the responses to our draft Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan sought greater clarification on the aims of the proposed estate agents and stakeholders steering group and its remit. Estate agents, solicitors, local authorities, financial advisers and mortgage providers all play a key role in the housing market. Between them, there is substantial expertise and knowledge, and they all provide a valuable service to house sellers and purchasers, as well as the communities they serve.

Property listings are a valuable source of information, not only to describe the property being sold but also to provide information about the local community, local services, transport links, education provision and local amenities. This information provides useful context for potential buyers as they are not only buying a new home they are becoming new members of their communities. By working closely with local stakeholders, we can ensure that the Welsh language is also acknowledged as central to activities and services within the community.

By working closely with estate agents and key stakeholders, we can also better understand the trends in the local housing market. In addition, by working together we can identify opportunities to influence the selling and buying process to support buyers who want to live and work locally. The Welsh Government and local authorities also have schemes such as **HomeBuy-Wales** that can help people buy a property. Establishing a steering group will provide a platform to share information about specific schemes and the support available to help

people purchase or rent properties.

There are also examples of how estate agents and relevant stakeholders have in recent years supported numerous initiatives to raise awareness of the Welsh language and local communities in which properties are listed. For example, estate agents, local authorities and the mentrau iaith have co-operated with us by creating and distributing local information packs. These provide important and useful information to people wishing to purchase a property in the area. One key element of such packs is to better inform people about the linguistic profile of communities.

## **Case Study 4 - Working with stakeholders**

The welcome pack concept was created around 20 years ago by the mentrau iaith in north-west Wales in co-operation with estate agents and local authorities. The main aim of the package was to raise awareness of the Welsh language amongst people moving to the area and to emphasise the importance of people fully integrating into their new communities. The packs contain information about:

- The current situation and history of the Welsh language in our communities
- Education policies of our local authorities
- Access to Welsh language activities locally
- The services provided by Welsh language partners
- Benefits and support for learning Welsh

Very recently new packs have been developed in Carmarthenshire, Gwynedd and Anglesey and many of the packs are now available digitally. Menter Iaith Môn, in partnership with Anglesey County Council developed a new pack and distributed it free of charge to every household on the island. In this way, there has been an opportunity to ensure that all households receive information about the benefits of using and becoming new Welsh speakers.

It was an opportunity to highlight businesses, venues and organisations that will be able to offer a service and/or support to practise, use, hear or see the Welsh language. This information is also beneficial to Welsh-speakers. Having delivered the package to every home on the island, it is hoped that it will create opportunities for Menter Iaith Môn to continue the conversation with diverse audiences. It is also a resource that can be used as a directory. Anglesey residents can refer newcomers, friends from afar, visitors, new neighbours etc to the welcome pack as an introduction to the area, and of course to the Welsh language.

A link to the package can be found here; [Croeso Dwyieithog](#). The pack was produced by Menter Iaith Môn in partnership with Anglesey County Council with Welsh Government financial support through the Arfor programme. It was printed and distributed with the support of the UK Government through the UK Community Regeneration Fund.

### **Aims:**

- Establish an estate agents and stakeholders steering group to better understand the local housing market and to share information about numerous schemes that are available to help people buy or rent properties.

### **What we will do:**

- As a priority, we will work with the pilot in Dwyfor to set up an estate agents and stakeholders steering group.
- We will agree terms of reference for the steering group and identify opportunities to co-operate to explore the potential for creating innovative approaches to support local buyers to gain fair access to local housing.
- We will provide regular updates to the steering group on the priorities of the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan and the pilot in Dwyfor.

- Following the establishment of the steering group in Dwyfor, we will evaluate its effectiveness before establishing steering groups in other Welsh-speaking communities.
- We will work with the mentrau iaith and local authorities to ensure that welcome packs cover all of our Welsh-speaking communities.
- We will co-operate with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and other grant partners alongside the steering group to ensure that people who move into Welsh-speaking communities can access Welsh language lessons and opportunities to access the language within the community.

### **We believe that this will:**

- Provide a better understanding of local housing markets.
- Provide more support for local people to gain access to housing.
- Provide better opportunities for people to learn about our language and culture

## **A ‘fair chance’ for local buyers and renters**

In the current housing market, we understand concerns that some properties are sold or let before they are even listed on the market. This has been highlighted in areas where the demand for properties is high. Local people may not find out that potential properties are due to come on the market.

We will work with relevant stakeholders to raise the awareness of property sellers and prospective property sellers of the choices and decisions they can make that benefit their local communities. This will include creating specific guidance on the steps that property sellers can take to support the housing needs of their local areas.

This guidance will include advice on the instructions that can be provided to estate and letting agents to enable them to market properties within a defined local area for a specific time. This includes sellers of homes and commercial properties as well as community assets. This would allow people from a clearly defined area to have an opportunity to view and arrange the necessary finance to purchase/rent the property. In the same way, if a local co-operative would wish to purchase a property, a few weeks would allow them sufficient time to prepare a financial package. This would be a voluntary scheme and we will pilot it within a specific area and evaluate its effectiveness before expanding to other areas. We also acknowledge that some properties, in some locations, will be beyond the purchase powers of some local people and therefore a short period of local marketing may be ineffective.

The guidance will also provide support for individuals that want to sell their properties to local people or who are willing to reduce the price so that their home can continue to be a family home. In many cases, sellers want to ensure that these properties will continue to be available to local people or to be a primary residence. We will look at the opportunities that placing covenants could have in ensuring that these properties can continue to fulfil the wishes of the original seller for future generations. We will trial this scheme within the Dwyfor pilot area initially with the aim of extending to other areas after we have evaluated its effectiveness.

## **Case Study 5 - Fair chance for a local family**

In 2020, Angharad Blythe decided to sell her house in Gwynedd. She intended to sell the property to local people.

Angharad had been worried that the pandemic had caused a crisis in the housing market in Wales, with house prices rising faster than local salaries. Although she understood that it is a tough decision to sell a property for less than is offered by people from outside the area, Angharad wanted to do what

she felt was right for community sustainability and to protect the Welsh language.

She worked with local estate agents to prepare the house listing with information about the local community, ensuring that the details were available in Welsh. She also used the Facebook account Rhwydwaith Menywod Cymru (“Welsh Women’s Network”), to try to attract local buyers or people looking to return to the area where they grew up.

Angharad said, “Several people came to view the house intending to make it a second home, but I would never have been able to agree to that.

The Fair Chance scheme helps people like me who want to sell to local people. I got great advice from the local estate agent, and if more people had access to similar advice it would help a lot. Especially little things like asking the estate agents to market the property locally for a specific period”.

As a result, the house is now a home for a local family, after Angharad decided to sell her house to local people for less than the asking price and for much less than was offered by people from outside the area.

### **Aims:**

- Support local people to rent or buy properties.

### **What we will do:**

- We will work with house sellers and relevant stakeholders, to establish a voluntary scheme that could support local people to have a first chance to buy or rent a property.
- We will look further at how covenants on properties can ensure that properties continue to be the main residence of their owners and that

properties are available for local people.

- In partnership with local estate agents and stakeholders, we will share information on the wide range of affordable packages available that can support people to purchase or rent a property in their local areas.

### **We believe that this will:**

- Enable more people to have a fair chance to purchase or rent a property in their locality.

## **Cultural Ambassadors**

Wales is and always has been a welcoming country and we encourage people who visit or decide to move to Wales to actively engage with our unique language and culture. Although there are welcome packs available to help people learn about the Welsh language and the local community and its history and culture, we believe that establishing a network of Cultural Ambassadors would add value to this work. The Ambassadors would welcome and meet new residents to inform them of our unique culture, heritage and Welsh language so that they feel part of the community.

The **ecomuseums LIVE** project is a programme which aims to support coastal communities in the Llŷn Peninsula and Iveragh Peninsula, Ireland to promote their natural and cultural assets, creating opportunities for sustainable tourism. We will learn from the knowledge gained through the EcoMuseums project and draw on their extensive experiences.

The **Wales Ambassador Scheme** developed by Cadwyn Clwyd and delivered by numerous local authorities and Snowdonia National Park, provides the necessary tools to enable individuals to enrol and undertake specific modules

that provide valuable information and knowledge about Wales and its attractions. The aim of the modules is to help others to understand and get the most of their experience of visiting Wales.

Menter Iaith Môn have also established a Welsh Language Champion Scheme, in collaboration with Community and Town Councils across Anglesey, supporting individual councils to actively promote the use of the language within the local community.

Our aim is to work with the Wales Ambassador Scheme, Eco Museums and Menter Iaith Môn to deliver a network of Cultural Ambassadors. This will be a voluntary role ensuring that there is no duplication of the work already being undertaken by local organisations such as the mentrau iaith and the Urdd.

We aim to work collaboratively with the existing partners of the Wales Ambassadors scheme by drawing on their extensive experience. We will also work with our existing Welsh language partners, such as the mentrau iaith, the Urdd, Merched y Wawr and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. In addition, we will actively seek support from community-based organisations including community and town councils to help create a network of Cultural Ambassadors within our communities.

We will develop a series of relevant modules that will provide volunteers with the necessary information and knowledge about the Welsh language, culture and heritage. We will undertake a local campaign to encourage local people to enrol as voluntary Cultural Ambassadors and provide on-going support and advice to the network.

We will encourage our Welsh language partners to work alongside the Cultural Ambassadors and to share information about their work.

## Case Study 6 - Wales Ambassador Scheme

The Wales Ambassador Scheme was originally established by Cadwyn Clwyd and partners to strengthen the link between organisations working within the tourism industry. Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham businesses were invited to attend a number of training events and workshops. Attendees were encouraged to use local produce, provided facts and statistics of tourism's impact on the local economy as well as providing general information about the area.

Having researched other Ambassador Schemes across the UK and beyond, it was decided to develop the scheme further by offering online and face-to-face activities. LEADER funding and officer support was provided by Cadwyn Clwyd through the Rural Development Programme (funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government) and Denbighshire County Council. The Denbighshire Tourism Ambassador Scheme was re-established in 2017.

The current scheme provides training for people by sharing information about what Denbighshire's tourism industry offers. It is intended to provide basic information about the natural, cultural and historical resources of the area. Central to all this is improving and expanding experience and knowledge both locally and for visitors.

The Ambassador scheme offers a range of online training modules on various themes along with useful and relevant resources.

The scheme continues to expand and there is now a wide range of Ambassadors which include local people, accommodation and attraction providers, shops, pubs, students, library staff, tourism information staff, guides and volunteers.

## **Aims:**

- Promote culture, heritage and the Welsh language with new residents in our communities.
- Set up a network of Cultural Ambassadors.

## **What we will do:**

- In partnership with the Wales Ambassadors scheme, we will establish an online course which will include a series of relevant modules for individuals that wish to undertake the voluntary role to promote and raise awareness of culture, heritage and the Welsh language.
- We will pilot the Cultural Ambassador scheme in Dwyfor before expanding it to other Welsh-speaking communities.
- We will continue to work with the current members of the Wales Ambassadors scheme to learn from their experiences in recruiting and supporting their ambassadors.
- We will encourage our Welsh language partners, the mentrau iaith and the National Centre for Learning Welsh in particular to work closely with the network of Cultural Ambassadors to explore how the Ambassadors can complement their work.
- We will ensure that the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan is a standing item on the agenda of the Welsh Language Promotion Group. The Group consists of the main organisations that promote the use of the language and will be able to support the community initiatives included in the plan.
- We will work with local authorities to ensure that the Cultural Ambassadors are aware of the priorities of local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, in particular the late language immersion provision available in each area.
- If successful, we will consider expanding the Cultural Ambassadors scheme beyond Welsh-speaking communities.

## **We believe that this will:**

- Enable more people living in and visiting our communities to gain a better understanding of the importance of culture, heritage and the Welsh language.
- Enable more people to take steps towards learning Welsh and become new Welsh speakers and therefore fully integrating in their new communities.

## **A Commission for Welsh-speaking communities**

Following the publication of the report, *Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales*, we confirmed that we would establish a Commission to make recommendations to Government in order to safeguard the future of the Welsh language as a community language. The Commission will lead on a socio-linguistic analysis of the health of the language in our communities. This will enable the Commission to consider the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities and gain a better understanding of the linguistic, socio-economic and social restructuring challenges post COVID-19 and the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

For half a century and more, there has been a decline in the strength of the Welsh language in many of our Welsh-speaking communities. The reasons for this are both complex and multi-faceted, but key issues have included economic restructuring in post-industrial and rural communities, challenges within the housing market, and subsequent out-migration of young people. We are determined to tackle these challenges, and the work of the Commission for Welsh-speaking communities will help us do so.

Societal changes may help to reverse some of these long-term trends. For example, moving workplaces online reduces the distance between our traditional

Welsh-speaking communities and employment markets in at least some sectors of the economy. This could help keep more young people in these communities in the future.

But this will also bring language planning challenges. Hybrid workplaces may mean that more people move to our Welsh-speaking communities. This raises important questions about the ability of the education system to support a growing number of children coming from non-Welsh speaking households.

By taking a holistic approach to issues like these, the Commission for Welsh-speaking communities will make recommendations across a number of policy areas which will help protect and develop the Welsh language in these communities.

As part of this work, the Commission will analyse the 2021 Census results as well as other statistical evidence. This will help the Commission to decide how collective approaches from a language planning perspective can be developed. The Commission will focus on community sustainability from a Welsh language perspective. Part of this work will include identifying areas of particular linguistic sensitivity where it might be appropriate to make tailored public policy recommendations or take particular action.

The Commission has already been established and has started its work. The Commission will prepare a comprehensive report that will make recommendations to the Welsh Government.

### **Aims:**

- Develop policy recommendations across a number of areas which will help protect and develop the Welsh language in our Welsh-speaking communities.

## What we have done:

- The Minister for Education and Welsh Language launched the **Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities** at the National Eisteddfod in Ceredigion.
- The Minister for Education and Welsh Language has appointed experts with experience and expertise in a wide arrange of relevant areas to be members of the Commission.
- The Commission held its first meeting in September to make arrangements to gather evidence within key policy areas.
- The Commission has agreed to prepare a comprehensive report within two years.

## We believe that this will:

- Enable a better understanding of the socio-linguistic challenges facing our Welsh-speaking communities.
- Make recommendations to shape future policy interventions across Welsh Government based on this evidence.

## Place Names

It is widely acknowledged that place names are integral features of the cultural and historic landscape of Wales, both on a local and a national level. They are particularly important to the visual and aural character of Welsh-speaking areas and communities, and we recognise the special need to value and retain the rich legacy of our Welsh place names.

There are many types of names, and the challenges that apply to each are slightly different. The names of settlements (for example, towns, villages and

cities), for example, are standardised by the Welsh Language Commissioner, and these well-established names are rarely subject to change. At the community level, however, there is a rich stock of names of geographical features, land holdings and properties, including farms and houses. Many of these are historical, but they remain more fluid than settlement names.

In our Programme for Government, we've committed to working to protect Welsh place names, and this has been reinforced by the Cooperation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. We have already established a [List of Historic Place Names of Wales](#), which is the only statutory record of historic place names in the UK. One of its main objectives is to raise awareness of the wealth of historic names in Wales and their importance as part of our cultural heritage. The list was created in 2017, and last year the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales established a task and finish group to review the work to date and to formulate recommendations for the future. The group's [Five Year Report, The List of Historic Place Names of Wales](#) was published in July 2022, and included several positive recommendations for different public bodies to take forward.

Changes to house names are currently a topic of concern. Statutory guidance requires local authorities to take account of the List of Historic Place Names when dealing with formal requests to rename properties with historic names. Some formal changes do take place, but often a plaque can be placed on a house without officially altering its name, or a business name can simply be added to an existing address. One of the first actions we need to undertake and this is one of the Royal Commission's most important recommendations is to commission research to establish the exact scale of the problem. There are currently large gaps in the knowledge we have across Wales, and we need more evidence not only about the number of names that are changing, but also how, why and where they're changing. We are therefore prioritising research in these areas in order to lay the foundation to take further steps to safeguard Welsh names.

The starting point in the short term is also to highlight initiatives that have worked on a local level to safeguard place names. These include interventions such as welcome packs, local authority processes for naming new properties and campaigns by local interest groups. In addition, we will explore how the value and importance of Welsh names can be promoted through other means, for example, exploring how various local authorities interpret their role in this area of work and gaining greater consistency of approaches between local authorities, how to better promote the List of Historic Place Names of Wales and improved information packs for property buyers across Wales.

### **Aims:**

- To protect the Welsh language inheritance of our built environment and topography.

### **What we will do:**

- We will commission research to learn more about how, why and where place names are changing, to enable us to develop targeted policy interventions.
- In terms of geographic names, as well as the aforementioned research to better understand the processes behind changes, we will work with partners and businesses, as well as prominent cartographers, to better safeguard geographic names in the natural environment.
- We will explore how local authorities discharge their role in this area of work to ensure that all possible steps to safeguard place names are being taken.
- We will consider the recent use of covenants to protect house and field names and explore how these might be used more widely in the future.
- We will explore the use of conveyancing packages as a way of raising awareness of the value of a particular property's name.
- We will explore new ways of raising awareness of and promoting the List of Historic Place Names of Wales.

## **We believe that this will:**

- Enable us to have a better understanding of the roles of different agencies and authorities in safeguarding Welsh place and house names.
- Enable us to formulate appropriate interventions to better safeguard Welsh names.
- Increase awareness of Welsh and historic place names of all types, and a greater appreciation of their value.
- Safeguard place names for future generations, both as part of our historic heritage and as visual manifestations of our living, breathing communities.

**This document may not be fully accessible.**

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

**This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.**

Go to <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).