



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill

We want your views on our proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill.

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## Ministerial foreword

1. The results of the 2021 Census have highlighted the need for us to act purposefully in order to tackle the twofold challenge of growing numbers who can speak Welsh across Wales and protecting Welsh-speaking communities with high percentages of Welsh speakers but which have shown a decline.
2. The education system has an integral role as we respond to these challenges. Cymraeg belongs to all of us in Wales wherever we are on the language continuum. Every pupil in Wales therefore deserves to become a Welsh speaker, and there is a responsibility on each one of us that works in the education system to work towards that goal.
3. The proposals in this paper reflect this new aim and ambition for our education system. Achieving this will mean increasing the number of Welsh medium schools, but also increasing the Welsh language provision in schools that are not already designated Welsh medium schools. Put simply, we want every pupil to become a confident Welsh speaker through the statutory education system.
4. We are committed to ensuring over time that all children receive a portion of their education provision through the medium of Welsh beyond Welsh as a subject, in order to nurture Welsh language skills across the curriculum.
5. The current trajectory set by Cymraeg 2050 in 2017 sets a goal that at least 40% of all learners will receive Welsh medium education by 2050.
6. As part of the co-operation agreement between the Government and Plaid Cymru, the Government will also carry out a full technical study on the trajectory with expert input to match the new ambition that will be central to the Bill. The study will consider a steeper trajectory for 2050 and beyond which models for 50% of pupils in Welsh medium education by 2050. Stakeholders will be asked to share their views on this work after it has been completed.
7. Cymraeg belongs to us all, and as such we'd like to encourage everyone to consider the proposals in this paper. The consultation will last for 12 weeks,

until 16 June 2023. We are looking forward to hearing the views of a wide range of people on our proposals.

**Jeremy Miles MS**

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

## **Introduction**

**The proposals in this White Paper for a Welsh Language Education Bill are presented in the context of the significant challenge posed by the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, and the target of one million speakers. This calls for transformational changes to the way we think about the Welsh language and the role of education in this context.**

8. We aim to introduce an ambitious programme of change that requires action at many levels. Legislation has an important role to play in laying the groundwork for making change a reality. But it is important to note that legislation is one part of the picture only, and other activities and interventions such as policies across education, funding, engagement and behaviour change will have a key role to play.
9. In this context, we must also face the reality of the challenges that exist in terms of:
  - the need to grow an education workforce with the necessary language skills to enable us to expand Welsh-medium education and improve the linguistic outcomes of learners in all schools
  - child population projections over the coming decades that are likely to remain static
  - local factors including linguistically diverse areas, population density, geography and different starting points in terms of availability and scales of growth in Welsh-medium education

- the Welsh language skills of learners not in Welsh-medium education

## Focusing on linguistic outcomes

10. In order to succeed, we are proposing ambitious and sustainable steps in response to the above challenges in a single-system approach, which recognises that today's pupils will be tomorrow's Welsh speakers, teachers and Welsh-speaking workforce. We recognise that the current education system leads to vastly different linguistic outcomes, depending on the medium of education. We want the education system to embrace Welsh as a language that belongs to all pupils in Wales. We therefore propose in this paper steps that will reduce the gap in linguistic outcomes.
11. We therefore propose that there needs to be a clear and decisive focus on pupils' linguistic outcomes and that this should be the main organising principle for this programme of work and the proposals for a Bill. This will send a clear message to the whole education system, and schools in all language categories, regarding the need to improve the linguistic outcomes of all pupils.
12. As such, we propose that the linguistic outcome at the heart of our ambition for the education system by 2050 is that all pupils leaving statutory education are able to speak Welsh with confidence. We propose that the aim will be to ensure a level that is at least synonymous with level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). (The CEFR is an international language skills continuum. Proposals are presented in this Paper about creating a skills continuum for Welsh that emulates the CEFR).
13. We propose that this linguistic outcome will be a minimum for 2050, and a goal for all learners, regardless of the language category of their schools.
14. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 already requires all pupils to learn Welsh. The key for language learning is the contact hours the learner receives in learning and using it, along with high quality learning or teaching and clear leadership.

15. Welsh-medium education is, and will continue to be, the best opportunity and the fastest route to becoming a Welsh speaker. We therefore include proposals in this paper to strengthen the system for planning growth in the number of Welsh-medium schools, and therefore, the number of pupils attending those schools.
16. But in order to allow every pupil, in every school, to become a Welsh speaker, and to close the gap between linguistic outcomes depending on the medium of education, we include proposals in the paper to increase over time the requirements in terms of the portion of each week devoted to Welsh language provision by language category.
17. We believe that setting reasonable but challenging expectations that increase over time is a sustainable means of achieving the goal, while providing an opportunity for planning in relation to several key aspects at the same time. Integral to this will be planning to increase our Welsh language workforce in the education sector.

## The proposals in this White Paper

18. We have committed in the Programme for Government, and in the Co-operation Agreement between the Government and Plaid Cymru, to introduce a Welsh Language Education Bill during the current Senedd term.
19. The proposals in this White Paper are intended to seek views on proposals for a Bill. In some places, proposals are made that can be realised without legislating. They are included in this Paper because they are integral to the legislative proposals.
20. The chapters that follow relate to the following themes. With some exceptions, the main proposals relate to the statutory education system (3 to 16 year olds), but it is important to note that our vision for learning and acquiring the Welsh language is a lifelong one:
  - Chapter 1: Making the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 a statutory

target and making provision for a linguistic outcome for learners through the education system.

- Chapter 2: Lifelong Welsh language skills continuum.
- Chapter 3: Establishing a statutory system to categorise schools by medium of language and creating a mechanism to move schools to a higher category.
- Chapter 4: Statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh.
- Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities.
- Chapter 6: Duties on local authorities to proactively promote Welsh-medium education.
- Chapter 7: Support to realise the objectives of the Bill.

## **Chapter 1: Making the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 a statutory target and making provision for a linguistic outcome for learners through the education system**

**In this section we propose to make a provision in the Bill about the number of Welsh speakers target.**

**The education system will play a crucial role in achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers. Therefore, we propose that the target be put on the face of the Bill so that it has a statutory basis. This will provide a steer for national and local decisions made in relation to the planning of education.**

**We also propose that the education system should be aiming for all learners to reach a specific linguistic outcome by the time they leave**



**school, that being, as a minimum, a level synonymous with level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.**

21. Cymraeg 2050 is a long-term strategy, and achieving the target of one million Welsh speakers will require purposeful action from a number of organisations. Given the importance of education in creating new Welsh speakers, we want to ensure that there is a clear link between the target of one million Welsh speakers and the planning processes involved in growing Welsh-medium education and reaching the linguistic outcomes that the Bill seeks to achieve.
22. In the 2021 guidance for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, it was recognised that "improving the planning of Welsh-medium education will also support our long-term national ambition for the Welsh language as set out in our Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers strategy".
23. The results of the latest census have highlighted this yet again, and the Bill offers an opportunity to further embed this target and its status. The policy proposal is that the ambitious target will not only be reflected in a strategy, a document that can be changed at any time, but that it will also be incorporated in primary legislation. That will reflect the importance placed on achieving the target, and that the target steers key decisions made in educational planning.
24. We propose that the inclusion of a provision in the Bill about the target would provide context and clarity to what the Bill seeks to achieve. The inclusion of targets or outcomes in specific policy areas in legislation is a method of attempting to ensure that the aspiration of long-term policy receives the necessary attention from relevant bodies. What these types of provisions in legislation have in common is that they are intended to have a positive and long-term impact on behaviour, that is, an effect that is more far-reaching than the legal effect alone.
25. As regards the target of one million Welsh speakers, and in the specific context of the education system, the long-term behaviour that we want to

see becoming widespread is clear leadership, planning with intent and appropriate action in relation to all the necessary elements that need to be developed to increase and improve the Welsh language in education. That includes the medium of learning as well as lifelong language learning and acquisition. (The linguistic outcome we propose the education system should be working towards by 2050 is detailed in the section below).

26. We propose that the Welsh Ministers and local authorities should have a duty to give due regard to the target of one million Welsh speakers when exercising their education functions. That would be a way of embedding the target in all aspects of educational planning in Wales.
27. A provision in a Bill about a target would need to be measurable and clear. As set out in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, we regard the census as the authoritative source on the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, and it is the basis for our aspiration of a million Welsh speakers. However, the Welsh Government is in ongoing dialogue with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) regarding the future of statistics relating to the Welsh language.
28. The intention in creating provisions regarding the target of a million Welsh speakers in the Bill would be to set a clear context for the contribution of the education system towards achieving the target, to change behaviour and to normalise the concept that the whole education system is key to achieving the target.

**Consultation question 1: Do you agree that a provision on the national target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 should be included in a Bill?**

## **Linguistic outcome of learners at the end of statutory education**

29. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy includes several references to the contribution of the education system to increasing the number of Welsh speakers.
30. As previously stated in the introduction, the linguistic outcome we are trying

to achieve, and which is an organising principle of the proposals in this paper, is to ensure that, by 2050, all pupils leaving statutory education can confidently speak Welsh. We define this as at least a level that is synonymous with level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Our intention is to link the expected level to a level on the Welsh language skills continuum.

31. We believe that the contribution of local authorities in working towards this outcome in terms of the expected level of learners is an important part of the picture. We are considering how best to achieve this. Our aim is to ensure that the outcome steers decisions taken by the local authorities in planning their education provision. We want local authorities to proactively promote opportunities to use the Welsh language with the aim that learners become confident in speaking Welsh by the time they leave school.
32. We also propose that the outcome be fully adopted by the Welsh Ministers in the area of education, and communicated in the National Plan (see Chapter 4: Statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh).

**Consultation question 2: Do you think there should be a clear role for local authorities to work towards the outcome that's synonymous to level B2 by 2050? If so, what should that role be?**

**Consultation question 3: Do you think there should be a clear role for Welsh Ministers to work towards the outcome that's synonymous to level B2 by 2050? If so, what should that role be?**

## **Chapter 2: Lifelong Welsh language skills continuum**

**We have a wide-ranging programme of work to turn the concept of a**

## **Welsh language skills continuum into a reality. In this section we propose making provision in the Bill about the continuum.**

33. Our intention is to establish and implement a single continuum of Welsh language skills so that learners, teachers, parents and employers have a common understanding of the journey towards learning Welsh and the expected linguistic outcomes at each stage of that journey. In this context, we see the continuum as a single line of linguistic skills, and it will be possible to map all learners and speakers (regardless of age and proficiency) onto that line. As the learner or speaker skills increase they will move along the line.

## **Welsh Ministers to have a duty to publish the Welsh language skills continuum**

34. In order to ensure that Wales and the Welsh language have a common framework and that the terminology used is suitable, we propose that the Bill should impose a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish the Welsh language skills continuum, by describing different levels of proficiency. The policy intent behind this proposal is that the continuum would emulate the concept of the international standards that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (known as CEFR) proposes. The Welsh language continuum would stand on its own as a continuum that meets the requirements of Wales and the Welsh language.
35. We have been exploring with stakeholders the benefits of having clarity in describing language levels. The CEFR offers comprehensive, coherent and transparent descriptions of language proficiency and language use and that is something we propose should be replicated in Wales. It is already used in certain sectors in Wales. For example, the language learning levels of the National Centre for Learning Welsh are based on CEFR levels.
36. While it is a useful tool for providing guidance to us in Wales, we propose

that there would be a benefit in developing a specific skills continuum for the Welsh language that would be used as the basis for designing and improving the provision of lifelong Welsh language learning. After all, there is no guarantee that the CEFR (that is the responsibility of the Council of Europe) will continue as it is in the long term. It would be more beneficial for planning to be based on documentation created in Wales specifically for the Welsh language.

37. Given that learners' linguistic outcomes are central to the Bill and the wider Cymraeg 2050 programme, we propose that it is important for the continuum to have a firm legal basis. That will enable referring to the continuum with authority in relation to future policies and actions.
38. This will be a reference document that can be used as the basis for planning Welsh language learning provision, whether in statutory education or in stages and settings beyond that, which will help to develop textbooks and other teaching or learning materials, tests and other forms of assessment. Our intention is that the continuum will be used to ensure regular discussions across Wales and across sectors, including, for example, with regard to designing interventions to improve the Welsh language skills of the education workforce.
39. In order to ensure a flexible process for reviewing the continuum in the future, we propose that the Bill also gives the Welsh Ministers the power to review and amend the document. Before the document is published, whether for the first time or before it is amended, Ministers would have to consult with experts in language acquisition and learning.
40. The document will sit alongside the Curriculum for Wales principles of progression, and will offer more detailed descriptions to describe a learner's language journey along a lifelong Welsh language skills continuum. These levels can be used as a reference point for Welsh language learners and educators at every stage (statutory, further, higher and workforce). We cannot foresee all the possible developments based on the continuum document, but if prepared and published, it will be ready for future use and modification as a clear reference point, and we envisage this would facilitate

Welsh language provision and learning.

**Consultation question 4: Do you agree with the proposal that the Welsh Ministers should have a duty to publish the Welsh language skills continuum?**

## **Chapter 3: Categorising schools according to language-medium**

**We commit to increasing the Welsh language education provided by each school not already a designated Welsh-medium school, while increasing the proportion of pupils in Welsh-medium schools.**

**In this section we propose establishing a statutory system to categorise schools according to language-medium. This will tie in with proposals for:**

- giving the Welsh Ministers powers to specify statutory descriptions for each category, including the minimum time for Welsh language provision**
  - allowing Ministers to increase the minimum over time as factors such as workforce availability change**
  - steps to stimulate local authorities and schools to move schools to a higher language category over time**
  - arrangements to monitor that schools are providing Welsh language education in line with their category**
  - a method of increasing over time the requirements for devoting a portion of each week for Welsh language provision according to language category**
41. School language categories were first introduced in 2007 in an attempt to provide a coherent picture of how Welsh-medium education was being

implemented, as well as ensuring consistency by grouping schools that were using similar immersion methods.

42. In December 2021, new non-statutory guidance was introduced reducing the number of school categories to three in the primary sector and three in the secondary sector. This took into account the analysis of PLASC (The PLASC, or the pupil level annual school census, is conducted every January by all nursery, primary, secondary, middle and special maintained schools in Wales. All pupils on roll must be included in the PLASC return, and apart from other data it includes information about the schools' Welsh language provision) data undertaken as part of the review of current category arrangements, which suggested that schools in Wales broadly fall into three groups. Transitional sub-categories have also been created for schools who are committed to moving to the next language category. This guidance also established the principle that a school should not offer less Welsh-medium provision in the future than has been offered in the past.
43. However, it was recognised when this non-statutory guidance was published in 2021 that publishing the guidance was the first step and that there was a need to continue to add to the details so that a robust delivery infrastructure could be created. The landscape has changed significantly since 2007 when the categorisation system was first introduced, and the existing infrastructure has already made a considerable impact. Nevertheless, and as mentioned in the foreword to the 2021 guidance, it is appropriate to consider the benefits of providing a statutory basis for the categorisation system and reinforcing the infrastructure to achieve the education goals of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
44. As has already been noted at the beginning of the White Paper, Welsh language contact hours are key to ensure the best conditions for learners to become Welsh speakers. We therefore want to see two things happen to make that a reality. First, there must continue to be an increase in the number of learners receiving Welsh-medium education. And secondly, the provision must be improved and the Welsh language contact hours that learners in all schools receive must be increased to ensure the best linguistic



outcome for learners at the end of statutory education (see Chapter 1: Making the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 a statutory target and making provision for a linguistic outcome for learners through the education system).

45. The essence of the proposals in this section, therefore, is:
- to place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to determine what the language categories are, including setting a minimum time in terms of Welsh language contact hours that learners are expected to receive in accordance with the category
  - for local authorities to approve the language category of maintained schools in their county, and to monitor whether the requirements of that category are met
  - to place a duty on maintained schools to publish a plan detailing how they will increase Welsh language provision, and the relevant timeline
46. One of the advantages of creating a statutory categorisation system compared to the current non-statutory system is that there will be a specific requirement for all maintained schools in Wales to be categorised. This will provide a sound basis for monitoring schools' performance in meeting their category requirements, and will provide a clear context for the progress targets that will be set out in the proposed Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (see Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities).

## **Welsh Ministers to determine statutory language categories of schools**

47. We believe that the Bill should establish a statutory system for categorising maintained schools according to language-medium. The statutory system would replace the non-statutory categorisation guidance published in December 2021. One option might be to use the categories in the non-

statutory guidance as a starting point for our consideration when developing the statutory categories. The non-statutory categories are:

- Category 1: English-medium schools
  - Transitional sub-category T2: English-medium schools that are on a transitional path to becoming dual language schools
  - Category 2: Dual language schools
  - Transitional sub-category T3: dual language schools that are on a transitional path to becoming Welsh-medium schools
  - Category 3: Welsh-medium schools
  - Sub-category 3P: designated Welsh-medium schools
48. We propose that the Bill will create a framework that would place a duty on Ministers to determine the specific descriptions of categories in regulations, including the minimum amount of Welsh language provision. We propose that doing this through secondary legislation is appropriate as it allows Ministers to change the descriptions and increase the minimum amount of Welsh language provision over time, while factors such as workforce availability change.
49. The exact description of the categories would be subject to further consultation when formulating the regulations, and so for now we are not in this consultation seeking views on what those descriptions might be. In creating the category descriptions, we will consider how the categories interact with the public consultation requirements for regulated alterations under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
50. We are keen, however, to gather views on the principle that the Bill should create a statutory system for the categorisation of maintained schools, whilst giving Ministers a duty to determine category descriptions through regulations.

**Consultation question 5: Do you agree that a statutory system should be created for categorising maintained schools according to language-medium?**

**Consultation question 6: Do you agree that a duty should be placed on the Welsh Ministers to define the category descriptions in regulations?**

**Consultation question 7: What are your views about including a minimum amount of Welsh language provision? What are your views on the effects of setting a minimum amount of provision on schools, learners and staff? Do you foresee any other effects?**

## **Placing schools in a language category**

51. The current statutory position regarding setting a school category is that the governing body of a school identifies in the PLASC which category best describes the school. We propose that the Bill should make a provision for maintained schools to state their language category, and in addition that local authorities are given a role in approving that statement. The statement should reflect the reality of the school, and each maintained school must place itself in a category.
52. We propose that a local authority will work to achieve the targets set by the Welsh Ministers (see Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities) and that it works towards realising the 2050 linguistic outcome (see Chapter 1: Making the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 a statutory target and making provision for a linguistic outcome for learners through the education system). To do this, the above structure is crucial in creating a clear picture of the linguistic situation of each school in the local authority area. We consider, therefore, that this step would be an important one to ensure that the authority has a thorough understanding of the position

of each school and has ownership of this agenda. Also, the fact that each school category needs to be checked and approved by a local authority will mean that the authority will have a more robust overview, and this will ensure greater uniformity of school categories across the local authority area.

53. By imposing this approval role on local authorities, the intention is to create a clear line of accountability in terms of what is the responsibility of the Welsh Ministers, what is the responsibility of local authorities and what is the responsibility of schools. This means a local authority can monitor against a category it has approved. The local authority and the school would have to work together in deciding on the category that is an appropriate description for the school. However, if there is still disagreement, the local authority will have the final say, and will have to show the evidence and data used in setting the school category, as well as explain why that category is most appropriate.
54. We propose that a duty should be placed on the Welsh Ministers to publish guidance to schools and local authorities on how to go about setting categories, whilst providing clarity on the data to be used to do this, any considerations that should be given, and any processes and timescales that must be followed.
55. We propose that each school's language category must be included in the school prospectus and in the local authority's composite prospectus, as well as be included in the PLASC dataset as is currently the case. There will be an opportunity to review that the category is still an accurate description of the Welsh language provision each year when completing the PLASC, and this is important to ensure that the Welsh in Education Implementation Plan and the National Plan are based on an accurate picture of the situation on the ground.
56. We are keen for all maintained schools in Wales to be placed into a language category, and we are therefore interested in seeking views on this. In particular, we would like to hear from the point of view of voluntary and foundation schools. We welcome comments to this effect.

**Consultation question 8: What is your opinion about the proposals in paragraphs 51 to 56 in relation to placing schools in a language category, and giving the local authority an approval role in the process?**

## **Increasing Welsh language provision and moving towards a higher language category**

57. As well as a school being placed in a category that reflects its provision at the start of the journey, it is intended that all schools that are not already designated Welsh-medium schools increase their Welsh language provision over time. Accomplishing this will require a process, and in the case of many schools, they will move from one category to a higher category. Moving towards more Welsh language provision will be the aim. The pace of the journey towards an increase in Welsh language provision will be linked to a number of local factors.
58. We propose that the authority's proposed Welsh in Education Implementation Plan, which will be prepared in order to achieve the local authority targets set by the Welsh Ministers in the National Plan, will set out how the authority aims to see an increase in Welsh language provision across its area.
59. As part of the authority's considerations in determining in which catchment areas it wants to see an increase in Welsh-medium provision, we propose that the authority will have to consider the demographics of the Welsh language in those catchment areas. In practice, evidence from the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, tasked with making recommendations regarding areas of linguistic sensitivity, will form part of what Ministers will need to consider when setting targets for local authorities.
60. We propose that a duty should be placed on all schools to set out in a delivery plan how they will go about increasing their Welsh language provision in practice, responding to the expectation in the proposed Welsh in

Education Implementation Plan of its local authority. The plan should provide details such as:

- the lessons that have been designated to be held through the medium of Welsh
- the frequency of those lessons
- the linguistic nature of the lessons, in terms of teaching approach and methodology
- the percentage of Welsh language provision within a school year
- the timetable for increasing Welsh language provision
- any support that the local authority has promised to the school for the purpose of increasing provision

**Consultation question 9: Do you agree with the principle that all schools should increase their Welsh language provision over time?**

**Consultation question 10: What are your views on the proposals in paragraphs 57 to 60 on the process of increasing Welsh language provision in schools?**

61. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 already provides a local authority with the power to introduce regulated alterations to community schools, but not to voluntary and foundation schools. One of the regulated alterations that an authority could propose is to increase Welsh language provision. This would result in undertaking a specific consultation process before implementing the change. We will consider the extent to which this power could be used as local authorities plan any increase in the Welsh language provision of their community schools. In the meantime, we're keen to hear about the merits of this paper's proposals for all types of maintained schools.

## Monitoring progress

62. We propose that the authority monitors that a school provides education in accordance with the set category, as well as monitor that a school is making progress, whether that is progress within a category or moving to a higher category.
63. This monitoring process will be based on the delivery plan that each school will prepare as noted above. We would expect the school and the authority to discuss the plan regularly, and we propose that Estyn will also have an opportunity to consider that plan when inspecting schools in line with the normal inspection cycle.
64. Chapter 5 also proposes that Estyn should be given the function to undertake a rapid review of a local authority if it is thought that the authority is not on track to achieve the targets set under the National Plan. They can then make recommendations on the action that should be taken to rectify the situation.

**Consultation question 11: Do you agree with the proposals in paragraphs 62 to 64 about monitoring school progress?**

## Placing a new school in a category

65. The opening of a new school is a valuable opportunity to increase Welsh-medium provision in a local authority. We are keen to seek initial views on how a local authority should decide if a new school is to be a Welsh-medium school. A new school in this context would be a new school that expands the education provision within a local authority area. For example, in a situation where a new school is opened in response to new housing developments or in response to the reorganising of existing provision.
66. On the one hand, a specific language impact assessment could be required

before specifying the language medium of the new school. This, along with a consideration of the targets that are to be achieved through their Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (see Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities), would provide the local authority with evidence to consider in taking a decision.

67. On the other hand, a presumption could be established that any new school within a designated area, for example, would be Welsh-medium. (Such a presumption would mean that the authority would have to identify the school as Welsh-medium unless it had sound reasons for deciding that this would not be reasonable). In situations where it is intended to reorganise existing provision (for example, amalgamating schools), the presumption would be that priority would be given to the higher language category. Where it is intended to amalgamate two English-medium schools, the authority would be required to plan to increase the Welsh language provision of the new school, in the context of moving the school along the continuum to be a higher category school.

**Consultation question 12: What are your thoughts on how a local authority should decide whether a new school is to be a Welsh-medium school?**

## **Chapter 4: Statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh**

**In this section we propose to place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to produce a National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh, and to review it in each Senedd term. The National Plan will create a link between the national and local targets for Welsh in education.**

68. The shift we want to achieve is to move from a situation where Welsh language acquisition and learning activities happen in an uncoordinated



manner in different sectors and at different stages of life towards a concept of a single joined-up system, with specific targets and guidance set by Welsh Ministers. The types of activities involved here include learning and teaching Welsh in schools, language immersion in schools and post-16 Welsh skills development. All the components must work together to ensure that a learner, regardless of age, can continue to learn and improve their lifelong language skills. That requires meticulous planning and ongoing monitoring to ensure that all the pieces of the jigsaw fit together and that there is linguistic continuity throughout the education system.

69. As such, we propose that the Welsh Ministers produce a statutory national plan for the acquisition and learning of the Welsh language with a 10-year vision and a duty to review and publish it in each Senedd term.

## **Creating a link between national and local Welsh in education targets**

70. One of the main purposes of the plan would be to create a link between the target of a million Welsh speakers and the local authorities' Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (for example, the plans that would replace the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans). Chapter 5 outlines the proposal that a Welsh in Education Implementation Plan must explain how a local authority will work to achieve a statutory target set by the Welsh Ministers. We propose that that local target would be set in the National Plan on a statutory basis. Ministers would have to consider a number of factors when setting the local targets, including the linguistic demographics of the local authority in question.
71. We envisage that the plan would provide guidance to those who support the education system in the acquisition and learning of the Welsh language to realise the objectives of this programme of change (see Chapter 7: Support to realise the objectives of the Bill). Another important part of the plan would be to set out all the targets that stakeholders in the education system would

be expected to work to achieve. That includes the statutory targets that will be placed on the local authorities in terms of increasing the number of learners receiving Welsh-medium education (category 3 under the current non-statutory categories). This will create a link between the national plan and the local authority plans, which will provide all local authorities with a clear picture of how the targets they are expected to achieve are contributing to the National Plan.

72. In placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Plan with a 10-year vision and to review the plan in each Senedd term, the aspiration is to provide assurance for the future that there is a robust mechanism in place to strengthen the planning of Welsh language education and provide a more robust and unambiguous basis for such planning. As a result, it would give a focus to different stakeholders (within Government, the National Centre for Learning Welsh (see also Chapter 7: Support to realise the objectives of the Bill), the local authorities, the education consortia, Estyn, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Further Education Colleges, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research and others) to work together to create better continuity, experience and outcomes for the learner as they begin to speak the language.

**Consultation question 13: Do you agree with the proposal in this section about placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to produce a statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of the Welsh language (providing direction for statutory local implementation plans)?**

## **Inclusion of national targets for the number of teachers needed as part of the National Plan**

73. As part of the National Plan, we propose that the Welsh Ministers will be expected to continue to set national targets for the forecasted number of teachers needed to facilitate the growth in Welsh language education. The

national targets are currently set in 'Cymraeg 2050', and continuing to set targets as part of the National Plan would be a way of ensuring that the Welsh Ministers have a clear intention to increase the number of teachers.

74. As part of their Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (see Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities) local authorities would be expected to set local targets for increasing the number of Welsh teachers and Welsh-medium teachers, and increasing the number of teachers and assistants with language skills at an appropriate level to teach and lead Welsh language provision across all school categories. In addition, there would be a role for a number of stakeholders to work together to achieve these targets for the education workforce. Therefore, as part of this proposal we are considering how the Education Workforce Council, initial teacher education or university providers, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, local authorities, and regional consortia would be expected to address the targets in planning initial teacher education and professional learning.

**Consultation question 14: Do you agree with the proposals in paragraphs 73 and 74 to set national targets for the education workforce and to include them in the National Plan?**

## **Chapter 5: Welsh in education planning within local authorities**

**In this section we discuss proposals to reform the system of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans prepared by local authorities. We propose that the focus should be shifted towards implementation plans aiming to meet targets set by the Welsh Ministers with regard to increasing the Welsh language provision in the schools of local authorities.**

**We propose that Estyn has a role in undertaking a rapid review of these implementation plans, and propose duties on local authorities relating to planning the education workforce in response to increasing the Welsh language provision.**

75. Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), to include:
- a local authority's proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
    - improve the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in its area
    - improve the standards of Welsh-medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area
  - the local authority's targets for improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area
  - report on the progress made to meet the targets contained in the previous plan or the previously revised plan
76. Section 85 of the 2013 Act requires each local authority to submit its WESP to Welsh Ministers for approval. Welsh Ministers may approve the WESP as submitted, approve it with modifications, or reject it and formulate another WESP that is to be treated as the authority's approved WESP. Local authorities must take all reasonable steps to implement its approved WESP.

77. There has been considerable scrutiny of the development, form, implementation and impact of WESPs from various directions since the first ones were approved in 2014, up to the approval of the latest WESPs in 2022. During this period in 2017 the publication of Cymraeg 2050 provided a clear indication of the Welsh Government's aspiration for the Welsh language. Cymraeg 2050 unequivocally stated the Government's intention to see the Welsh language thrive by setting a target to reach one million Welsh speakers. It is noted that the Welsh-medium education system is vital in creating more Welsh speakers. The varying scrutiny led to the commissioning of an **Independent Review of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans** by Aled Roberts in August 2017. The conclusion of this activity was to highlight the need to strengthen the planning procedure.
78. An independent Advisory Board was established to consider amendments to the WESP system between May 2018 and March 2019. The Board's priority was to advise on amendments to the secondary legislation under the 2013 Act and that led to revised regulations in 2019, which introduced the following changes to the WESP system:
- Removal of the duty to carry out an assessment of parental demand for Welsh language education
  - Replacement of that duty with an expectation for local authorities to plan a target in line with Cymraeg 2050, namely an increase in the percentage of year 1 learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh, and giving regard to Welsh Ministers' guidance on calculating the target
  - Extensions of the period of the WESP from a 3 year cycle to 10 years so that it corresponds with Cymraeg 2050 milestones
79. Despite these reforms following the Board's recommendations, the Board concluded that the current legislative structure no longer supported Welsh in education planning by local authorities to the extent necessary to respond to the long-term national ambition for the Welsh language to reach one million speakers by 2050.
80. Our vision of a Welsh in education planning structure is:

- that Welsh Ministers are responsible for planning the progress they wish to see in Welsh-medium education nationally at a strategic level, as set out in the National Plan
  - that the role of local authorities is to achieve the local targets set upon them in the National Plan
  - that the education workforce needs to be planned locally in the context of the planning of provision, with national strategic leadership by the Government (as noted in Chapter 4: Statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh)
  - that transparency is improved in the process of setting targets, collecting data and agreeing plans
  - that scrutiny, monitoring and accountability methods for achieving the targets are improved
81. The section below discusses the proposal of giving Welsh Ministers a specific power to set targets for local authorities under the National Plan. This signals a shift in mindset. Welsh Ministers would set the local authority's strategic aim for planning Welsh in education. The function of the local authority will be to plan and implement. Therefore, we propose changing the title of the WESPs to reflect that shift in the mindset. We suggest that Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs) would be a suitable title for the plans under the revised system, and for the remainder of this chapter we will refer to these plans as 'proposed WEIPs'.
82. The statutory guidance on WESPs provides that WESPs should be organised around 7 outcomes. The 7 outcomes were reviewed in 2019 to ensure they continue to reflect a learner's educational journey and align with the Cymraeg 2050 policy areas and the Curriculum for Wales. We believe that the outcomes below continue to provide a clear focus for the national and local planning, and the proposals in this White Paper support this:
- Outcome 1: More nursery children or three-year-olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh
  - Outcome 2: More reception class children or five-year-olds receiving their

education through the medium of Welsh

- Outcome 3: More children continuing to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
- Outcome 4: More learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- Outcome 7: An increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

**Consultation question 15: Do you agree that the above set out in paragraph 82 continue to provide a clear focus for both national and local planning?**

83. Our priority is to ensure that the process supports progress, and that that progress is made in a timely manner, effectively and supports learners' linguistic progression throughout their statutory education and beyond. In terms of the proposed WEIP therefore, we are keen for local authorities to continue to plan and act in line with the above outcomes. The proposed WEIP will remain a 10-year plan, but we propose that it will have to be reviewed after 5 years to align with the National Plan's 5-year progress report. This will not detract from the ability of local authorities to amend their proposed WEIP before then. The requirement for local authorities to consult and submit plans to Welsh Ministers for approval would continue as with the current WESP system, as well as Ministers' powers to approve, reject or modify the plans. The duty on local authorities to take all reasonable steps to implement their plan would also continue.
84. We propose that local authorities must draw up and prepare their first proposed WEIP after the first National Plan is published. This new plan will

replace the current WESP. We are considering the impact of this on timing and when the next WEIP will need to be formulated to ensure consistency of all planning at national and local authority levels.

**Consultation question 16: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a duty for local authorities to review their Welsh in Education Implementation Plan (WEIP) after 5 years to align with the National Plan's 5-year progress report?**

## **The Welsh Ministers to set Welsh in education targets for all local authorities**

85. We propose to include provisions in the Bill that would give the Welsh Ministers a specific power to set targets for proposed WEIPs regarding Welsh-medium education. The purpose of doing so is that the authorities will have to draw up their proposed WEIPs based on those statutory targets. This would mean that the Welsh Ministers have the direct ability to impose targets on local authorities in order to realise national policy. This would differ to the current situation where an authority must plan on the basis of a target that they themselves adopt, having regard to the Welsh Ministers' guidance.
86. During consultation on the draft WESP regulations, it was noted that a local authority, if it decided there was a good reason to do so, could set a different target to a 10-year target in the Welsh Ministers' guidance. In order to enforce the adoption of a target within a local authority, set by the Welsh Ministers, the Ministers could exercise their legislative powers (Section 85, School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to approve, approve with modifications or reject a Plan and to prepare another Plan which is to be treated as the authority's approved Plan) to approve a plan with modifications, or to reject it and draw up a new one for the local authority. This could lead to a long and complicated process, something we would want to avoid. We believe that it would be appropriate for the Welsh



Ministers, who lead on the policy of growing Welsh in education, to also have the power to set firm expectations for local authorities to play their role in realising that national ambition.

87. It is our intention that specific targets for proposed local authority WEIPs would be included in the National Plan. We consider this a neater, clearer and more transparent approach to presenting to local authorities and the public the increase that the Welsh Ministers expect in terms of the percentage of learners learning (partly and wholly) through the medium of Welsh in each local authority.
88. As part of this proposal of giving the Welsh Ministers the power to set targets for proposed local authority WEIPs, we propose that the Welsh Ministers must consider a number of factors. Among them would be the linguistic demographics of the local authority concerned. In other words, the linguistic demographics of Wales, and the diverse nature of our communities in terms of socio-economic factors, mean that the local challenge and objectives in terms of the Welsh language differ across the country.
89. In some local authorities, where the density of Welsh speakers is generally high and the Welsh language is an integral part of the social fabric of the area, the challenge is to protect these areas from language shift and to stabilise the density of speakers so that they remain Welsh-speaking communities. The evidence of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities in relation to areas of linguistic significance will provide a basis for setting higher expectations in such areas. In other local authorities, where there is a lower density of Welsh speakers, the challenge is to grow the number of Welsh speakers through the education system.
90. The challenges for other local authorities will include a combination of the above factors. It will therefore be important to ensure that the targets set by the Welsh Ministers are suitable in terms of local circumstances, while acknowledging the ambition to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and create an education system where all children become Welsh speakers.

### **Consultation question 17: Do you agree with the principle that Welsh in**

**education targets should be imposed on local authorities by the Welsh Ministers?**

## **Welsh Ministers to commission review of draft proposed WEIP**

91. The ultimate purpose of preparing a WESP under the current system is that Ministers exercise their powers under section 85 of the 2013 Act to approve the plan as submitted, approve the plan with modifications, or reject the plan and produce an alternative to be treated as the authority's approved plan.
92. In light of the Welsh Ministers' experience of exercising these functions over the past decade, we are considering whether it would be appropriate for Welsh Ministers to commission an external independent review of a draft proposed WEIP in particular circumstances, where Welsh Ministers consider, following assessment of the plan, that it would be beneficial to receive an independent external opinion before deciding whether to approve, to approve with modifications or reject the plan. The aim would be to gather relevant evidence to enable Welsh Ministers to come to an appropriate decision. This step would also contribute to improving the transparency of such decisions made by the Welsh Ministers, giving credibility to the assessment process.

**Consultation question 18: Do you agree with the proposal for the Welsh Ministers to commission an external review of the content of a draft Welsh in Education Implementation Plan (WEIP) when appropriate?**

**Duties on local authorities to plan their workforce on the basis of the proposed WEIP**

93. To realise the vision of having more learners in Welsh-medium education, and to improve the linguistic outcomes for learners in all schools, there must be an adequate workforce to educate them. At the moment, we are failing to attract enough people to pursue a career in the profession. There could be several reasons for this, including:
- people's perception of the profession in terms of work pressures and salaries
  - opportunities in other professions
  - lack of linguistic continuity after leaving school, and therefore lost confidence in their Welsh language skills to be able to teach through the medium of Welsh
94. As part of the National Plan, we intend to set national targets for increasing the number of teachers who can teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh. However, legislation is already in place to accredit and monitor the provision of initial teacher education and to promote the profession, and there are limits to what legislation can accomplish in terms of attracting new recruits to the profession. Consideration must therefore be given to the levers that are available to us to increase the number of teachers and improve the approach to forward planning. The **Welsh in Education Workforce Plan** highlights the many interventions and projects we have in place to address the challenge of increasing the number of practitioners who can teach through the medium of Welsh, and to develop the Welsh language skills of the school workforce. Financial investment, incentives and ongoing

monitoring are key to improving the situation, and these actions do not require provisions in law.

95. We propose, however, that workforce planning can be improved, and that this should be done in the context of the proposed WEIP, in order to create a clear link between Welsh-medium provision planning and workforce planning. One of the current WESP outcomes is an “increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh”, and local authorities are already expected to identify the workforce they need. However, the analysis and planning is not being carried out in a consistent way across Wales, and we therefore consider that expectations need to be strengthened and that duties should be placed on local authorities.
96. The first duty would be for local authorities to set 10-year targets in their proposed WEIP, and review them every 5 years, to increase the number of practitioners able to teach through the medium of Welsh. This would require them to understand the number of Welsh-medium practitioners that are needed, in line with the local authority's plan to grow Welsh-medium education or to move schools along the language categories in their areas, alongside the current staffing situation in their schools. It would also enable local authorities to feed information back to Welsh Government and other stakeholders in order to develop or refine national policies and interventions to expand or develop the workforce.
97. The second duty will be for local authorities to set 10-year targets in their proposed WEIP, and review them every 5 years, to increase the number of practitioners with Welsh language skills, based on analysis of the relevant data in the Annual Census of the School Workforce. Understanding the development needs of practitioners in terms of language skills within each local authority would facilitate collaboration with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and other stakeholders in ensuring language training to meet the target.
98. The third duty would be for local authorities to undertake an annual process of analysing progress against the targets and reporting in their review

reports.

99. To assist local authorities in undertaking the above, we propose that the Welsh Ministers may publish guidance to ensure consistency across all authorities. Those guidelines could give detail on how to analyse:

- language skill level of practitioners (teachers, headteachers, assistants)
- patterns of practitioners who succeed in acquiring the Welsh language or improving their language skills
- age and retirement age patterns
- patterns among those leaving the sector
- patterns of practitioners moving from one area to another
- number of Welsh-medium practitioners and the increase based on the forecasted number of children and young people in Welsh-medium education

**Consultation question 19: Do you agree with the proposals to impose duties on local authorities in planning their workforce?**

## **Reports on the implementation of proposed WEIPs**

100. As well as producing WESPs, the 2013 Act places a duty on local authorities in taking all reasonable steps to implement and review their WESPs. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 placed an additional duty on local authorities to present an annual review report to the Welsh Ministers, outlining the progress made since the Plan was approved or since the previous review period. They are not required to publish the review report. Nor are the Welsh Ministers required to publish the annual review reports they receive.
101. We consider that these annual review reports should be published and should continue to include an annual summary of progress against the targets given to the authority by Welsh Ministers and the targets in the

proposed WEIP, including priority areas for the local authority to develop further. This will give the public confidence that the proposed WEIPs are being delivered, and will increase transparency and accountability.

102. Similarly, we propose that Welsh Ministers should be under a duty to publish a national report of progress against the targets in the National Plan every year. Among other sources, information provided by local authorities in their annual reports could be used. Annual reports would provide a basis for planning the National Plan for the next 5-year period.

**Consultation question 20: Do you agree with the proposals paragraphs 100 to 102 about publishing reports on the implementation of the Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs), and the progress made against National Plan targets?**

## **Reviews and recommendations by Estyn**

103. Under the current WESP system, we expect the annual review reports to show us how the local authority is acting on their commitments, in line with the 7 outcomes of the current WESP, and what impact this has on the attainment of their main 10-year target.
104. Where there is no progress in relation to a particular element or more than one element of planning, and there is room to question whether the local authority has taken all reasonable steps to act, then there is an opportunity under the current system for Welsh Government officials to ask the local authority for more information, to ask them to consider specific steps in terms of planning, or other mitigation measures to enable progress. Similarly, if there is no progress in relation to a particular element of planning, but there is good reason for that, the Government may then identify what support the local authority needs in order to deliver, and put those measures in place, if possible.
105. However, if a pattern of underachievement becomes evident over a period of

time, and therefore a risk that the local authority will not meet its target, depending on the circumstances, Ministers may not have the power to compel the local authority to implement any steps in terms of planning or to receive Welsh Government support. Under the current WESP system, Welsh Ministers have no power to compel local authorities to amend their plan, although one of the proposals of this White Paper will be to introduce a duty for local authorities to review their WEIP after 5 years to align with the National Plan.

106. We propose, therefore, that the Bill gives Welsh Ministers the power to require local authorities to submit a new plan for approval. In order to facilitate this, it would be useful to be given recommendations by an independent body about the steps the local authority should take to ensure that they are able to meet their targets. We propose that Estyn be given the role of conducting a rapid review of the local authority and making recommendations to the authority and/or the Welsh Ministers as to the actions that should be taken. This review could be prompted by the Welsh Ministers or Estyn. The expectation would be for the review to be published, as are reviews of local authority education services, for example.
107. The advantage to providing Estyn with the role of conducting a rapid review is that it has the credibility and experience in relation to inspecting local authorities, and that it recognises the many factors a local authority faces in undertaking their educational roles.
108. Where a local authority fails, or is likely to fail, to take reasonable steps to implement its plan, the Welsh Ministers have powers under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to intervene.

**Consultation question 21: Do you agree with the proposal to give Estyn a role to conduct a rapid review and provide recommendations in situations where it appears there is a risk that an authority will not meet its targets?**

**Consultation question 22: Do you have any other suggestions as to how to**

ensure that local authorities take reasonable steps to implement their Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs)?

## **Chapter 6: Duties on local authorities to proactively promote Welsh-medium education**

In this section we propose imposing a duty on local authorities to take steps to promote Welsh-medium education. The aim of the duty would be to endeavour to ensure:

- that the benefits of Welsh-medium education, along with the expected linguistic outcomes for children as a result of receiving Welsh-medium education, are proactively promoted among parents and carers, including parents and carers moving to an area of Wales
- that late immersion provision is available in all local authorities and is proactively promoted as a method of building Welsh language skills in a short time so that Welsh-medium education can be provided at different access points

### **Welsh-medium education**

109. The 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy sets out a number of long-term objectives to increase the number of Welsh speakers, and one of the main ways to do this will be through the education system. In particular, the strategy states that the most effective way of creating new Welsh speakers is through the



Welsh-medium education system, that is, through schools that fall within categories 3 and 3P in the current non-statutory system. The need for 'local authorities to expand their current Welsh-medium education provision, as well as improve progression rates between different stages of education' is outlined in the 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy in order to support its objectives.

110. We propose that that expectation should become incumbent on local authorities, and the statutory categorisation guidance proposed to be published could steer local authorities on how this can be done. Not only by strengthening existing Welsh-medium provision, but by moving schools along the category continuum so that they too become Welsh-medium schools over time, if circumstances allow.
111. The need to increase Welsh-medium provision across all school settings is detailed above. In parallel, it must be ensured that parents and carers understand what the expected linguistic outcomes would be for learners choosing a school with lower or higher rates of education provision delivered through the medium of Welsh. To that end, we consider it appropriate to expect local authorities to pay particular attention to promoting and raising awareness of Welsh-medium education among parents and carers who will be choosing a school for their children.
112. As a Welsh-medium model of education is not one that is familiar to all, we consider it reasonable to expect the local authority, in partnership with key bodies such as Mudiad Meithrin, to take specific action such as proactively providing information so that parents and carers can make informed decisions about their children's education. The aim is to proactively promote Welsh-medium education in offering it to parents of all backgrounds, highlighting the relevance of the language to modern Wales and the benefits of learning more than one language from a young age.
113. Again, the 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy mentions this expectation:

“ We will also need to ensure that parents or carers and learners understand the linguistic outcomes of the various models of provision to enable them to make informed choices about education pathways based

on an understanding of the relevance of the language to everyday life and to the workplace. ”

114. We therefore propose that local authorities should have a duty to proactively provide information and offer Welsh-medium education in an effort to ensure that parents and carers are aware, from the outset, of the different models and expected linguistic outcomes.

**Consultation question 23: Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to promote Welsh-medium education among parents and carers?**

**Consultation question 24: What support should the Welsh Ministers offer in terms of promoting Welsh-medium education?**

## **Late immersion provision**

115. If learners have embarked on an educational pathway with lower Welsh language provision, it is important that they and their parents or carers are aware that they may move to a school offering higher Welsh language provision if desired. This process is currently facilitated by a late immersion model for learners, a model that is becoming increasingly popular as local authority provision becomes established. As long as they have a place in a Welsh-medium school, late immersion is a great opportunity to immerse learners in the language as they gradually settle into their new school.
116. Late immersion education has existed in Wales since the 1980s with the first language centre opening in Caernarfon in 1984. In using the term 'late immersion education', we are referring to immersion education which targets 'latecomers' (or 'newcomers') to Welsh-medium education. 'Latecomers' are defined as 'children (aged 7 years or over) who do not speak Welsh but wish

to access Welsh-medium education after the end of the foundation phase’.

117. The centres (or units as they are sometimes called) are not schools. Rather, they are language centres. However, the main objective of the centres is to immerse learners in Welsh for an intensive period of time, so that those learners are able to continue their education through the medium of Welsh. The provision can be an option for all types of learners, but specifically:
- Learners transferring from the English-medium sector (after age 7)
  - Learners moving to the area from outside Wales who need to be immersed in Welsh in order to receive their education in accordance with the area's language policy
  - Learners moving to the area from outside of Wales who choose Welsh language education, even though English-medium education is available
  - Learners who have not been given a place in an English-medium school and are offered a Welsh-medium school instead
118. Under the current secondary legislation, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019, local authorities must state whether late immersion provision is offered within their area, as well as how and when information is provided to parents and carers. Since 2021, Welsh Government has been providing a £2.2 million revenue grant to support late immersion provision in all authorities across Wales. This funding is enabling 8 local authorities that did not previously have late immersion provision to establish such a provision for the first time. For the rest of the local authorities, the funding contributes to the continuation of existing late immersion provision and its expansion, whether in a centre, a unit within a school or peripatetic provision.
119. We propose that more needs to be done to further promote late immersion provision, and that local authorities should have a duty to do this. In practice, a local authority would be expected to proactively offer late immersion places if there is space in Welsh-medium schools to admit pupils. The local authority would also be required to strive to ensure that parents and carers are aware of the option, and the different linguistic outcomes, as detailed in

the above paragraphs.

**Consultation question 25: Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to promote late immersion provision among parents, carers and learners?**

**Consultation question 26: Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to provide late immersion for learners?**

## **Chapter 7: Support to realise the objectives of the Bill**

**We have made a number of proposals in this White Paper that, if realised, will transform learners' linguistic outcomes in our schools. This is a significant programme of change.**

**To make it a reality, schools and the wider education system will need support. We are keen to bridge the support for schools with Welsh language learning provision for all ages. We outline in this section proposals to develop that support.**

**The proposals concerning centralising support for learning Welsh have been formulated with the intention that they be realised outside the scope of the Bill. We include them in this White Paper as they are integral to the realisation of the Bill.**

120. As previously set out in this White Paper in the context of the Welsh

language skills continuum, creating new speakers is absolutely key to the success of the 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy. It follows, therefore, that the Government needs to ensure there are suitable structures in place to support implementation for all ages.

121. A number of bodies and partnerships are supporting individuals on their journey along the Welsh language skills continuum, from the initial provision by Mudiad Meithrin to the continuity of learning through the medium of Welsh within further and higher education, with the support and guidance of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The role of the Coleg Cymraeg, in relation to higher education, further education and apprenticeships is crucial to linguistic continuity. It is essential that any central support for learning Welsh continues to be in partnership with the Coleg Cymraeg in order to ensure that more learners who are confident in Welsh take advantage of the opportunities provided under the supervision of the Coleg through the medium of Welsh.
122. The other proposals in this White Paper are primarily concerned with improving the linguistic outcomes of learners aged 3-16. To support schools to make this a reality, it is necessary to increase the specialist support available in learning the Welsh language. In particular we think it is important:
- to establish a mechanism where there is ownership centrally in relation to the development of the Welsh language skills continuum, and to the provision of support to schools as they move along the language categories in terms of medium of provision
  - to provide professional support or specialist training to learn Welsh, doing so centrally at a national level, to schools, individuals and workplaces
  - to suggest resources or develop resources to support learning and teaching
123. Supporting schools is only part of the picture. In order to meet our targets in 'Cymraeg 2050' we need to develop and improve the Welsh language learning offer across all ages and ensure that quality support and resources are available to all practitioners and learners, regardless of age.

124. In this section, we consider how best to realise the above policy objectives. In particular, we propose to centralise Welsh language learning support for all ages within a single body, and seek views on how the Welsh Ministers can guarantee that sufficient Welsh language learning provision is available in the future to support Welsh language learning for all ages in Wales. We anticipate that the body in question would work with education institutions and educators in general who want to learn Welsh, and that everyone will have access to expertise and resources.

## Centralising support for learning Welsh

125. The Welsh Government believes that attention should be given to centralising Welsh language learning support within a single visible body. A body specialising in the learning of Welsh, supporting individuals and workplaces (including schools) on their language journey would be an important asset to the language policy landscape.

126. We propose that the body would provide strategic leadership within the area of language learning, and would be able to innovate and create local and national solutions. The body would also own responsibility for ensuring the Welsh language skills continuum is given due attention within the education system, including the 3 to 16 sector.

127. Firstly, it is proposed that the body be given the following functions:

- owning the Welsh language skills continuum
- providing language training corresponding to the levels of the Welsh language skills continuum for those that are 16 years of age and over
- providing specialist language training to a range of workforces, including to education practitioners
- co-operating with stakeholders to develop resources to support Welsh language learning and teaching
- being a one-stop-shop for supporting all aspects of Welsh language learning

128. Further consideration will need to be given to the functions it would be desirable for the body to exercise going forward, ensuring that the functions are clearly identified. Consideration also needs to be given to whether a new body needs to be established to provide the proposed functions or, alternatively, whether the policy objectives can be realised by other means, for example by redefining and expanding the role of an existing body.
129. In terms of Welsh learning for adults and expertise in acquiring and learning the language, one well-established institution is the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Centre has extensive experience and expertise in adult language learning, and the work of the Centre is a good example of a body delivering for a specific group of learners and the world of work.

## **The National Centre for Learning Welsh**

130. The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established in 2015 after a tendering process to establish and maintain a centre to strategically lead the Welsh for Adults sector (as it was then known) at a national level. This was in response to one of the recommendations of the Raising Our Sights report (a review of Welsh for Adults) in 2015.
131. The Centre's main outputs are:
  - to be a visible body that sets the national strategic direction for the Welsh learning sector (for adults) and to operate alongside partners across the whole of Wales
  - to provide leadership and strategic direction to all Welsh learning providers
  - to raise standards within the Welsh learning sector (for adults) and to increase the numbers able to speak and use Welsh
  - to develop a high quality, engaging and appropriate Welsh for Adults national curriculum and to produce resources suitable for learners and practitioners
  - to run a Work Welsh project which provides Welsh language learning training in the workplace with the aim of increasing Welsh language capacity

and skills in workplaces, thereby improving Welsh language services for consumers

132. Recent reports (by Estyn and a Rapid Review of the Centre by Steve Morris (2021) for example) evidence the success of the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the need for the work at a national level to set direction. Steve Morris' report concludes that the Centre has fulfilled its purpose since its inception, and that the recommendations of the Raising Our Sights report have been achieved.
133. Estyn has a programme in place which includes inspections of the National Centre for Learning Welsh centrally, and of individual providers. [Estyn's Review of the Centre](#) praised its leadership, and recommended that the Centre share its expertise in acquiring and learning the language with schools as well.

## **Expanding the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to include support for 3 to 16 age group**

134. The Welsh Government agrees that the National Centre for Learning Welsh has expertise in acquiring and learning the language that could be shared with schools. We also believe that expanding the role of the Centre to include supporting schools over the coming decades would be necessary to the success of 'Cymraeg 2050' and an important cornerstone in realising the Bill's objectives.
135. We propose, therefore, that one option would be to redefine the remit of the National Centre for Learning Welsh and expand its role to become a specialist body that supports lifelong Welsh language learning, including supporting schools. This is, in our view, the most expedient and straightforward option, as it builds on the expertise of the Centre in terms of learning Welsh.
136. There is further work to be done to consider which model would be best



suited in terms of the type of body that could be established. However, we are keen to hear stakeholders' views on this proposal to expand the Centre's role to support lifelong Welsh language learning.

**Consultation question 27: Do you agree with the principle that specialist support for lifelong Welsh language learning, including schools, should be centralised within a single body?**

**Consultation question 28: Do you agree that the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh should be expanded to undertake the role or is there another model that should be considered?**

## **Providing stability for Welsh language learning going forward**

137. We are keen to ensure long-term stability for Welsh language learning. Therefore, we are looking at how the Welsh Ministers can guarantee that sufficient Welsh language learning provision is available in the future to support Welsh language learning for all ages in Wales. Welsh Ministers currently have extensive powers to provide support for educational purposes and in relation to the Welsh language under various laws.
138. As the National Centre for Learning Welsh has been established by a tendering process, its remit cannot be expanded without carrying out another tendering process with different requirements. The current focus of the Centre's work is Welsh for Adults and Work Welsh. To expand its work, therefore, a further tendering process would need to take place. At present, the Centre is run on an annual funding basis, and the constant need for re-tendering creates instability. As a result, we believe a better basis is needed for the Welsh language learning sector in the future.
139. One option to consider is whether a new duty needs to be placed on the

Welsh Ministers to ensure there is sufficient Welsh language learning provision available to support Welsh language learning for all ages in Wales. And alongside this, perhaps a duty could be imposed to ensure suitable structures are put in place to support the learning of Welsh.

140. There is further work to be done to consider the full extent of any ministerial duties. Part of the work would be to identify which public bodies have duties in this area to ensure that there is no inadvertent duplication of work. Meanwhile we are keen to hear the views of stakeholders in regard to this proposal.

**Consultation question 29: Do you agree with the principle that sufficient Welsh language learning provision should be guaranteed, and that suitable structures should be in place to support learners of all ages?**

## Consultation questions

1. Do you agree that a provision on the national target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 should be included in a Bill?
2. Do you think there should be a clear role for local authorities to work towards the outcome that's synonymous to level B2 by 2050? If so, what should that role be?
3. Do you think there should be a clear role for Welsh Ministers to work towards the outcome that's synonymous to level B2 by 2050? If so, what should that role be?
4. Do you agree with the proposal that the Welsh Ministers should have a duty to publish the Welsh language skills continuum?
5. Do you agree that a statutory system should be created for categorising maintained schools according to language medium?
6. Do you agree that a duty should be placed on the Welsh Ministers to define the category descriptions in regulations?

7. What are your views about including a minimum amount of Welsh language provision? What are your views on the effects of setting a minimum amount of provision on schools, learners and staff? Do you foresee any other effects?
8. What is your opinion about the proposals in paragraphs 51 to 56 in relation to placing schools in a language category, and giving the local authority an approval role in the process?
9. Do you agree with the principle that all schools should increase their Welsh language provision over time?
10. What are your views on the proposals in paragraphs 57 to 60 on the process of increasing Welsh language provision in schools?
11. Do you agree with the proposals in paragraphs 62 to 64 about monitoring school progress?
12. What are your thoughts on how a local authority should decide whether a new school is to be a Welsh-medium school?
13. Do you agree with the proposal in this section about placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to produce a statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of the Welsh language (providing direction for statutory local implementation plans)?
14. Do you agree with the proposals in paragraphs 73 and 74 to set national targets for the education workforce and to include them in the National Plan?
15. Do you agree that the outcomes set out in paragraph 82 continue to provide a clear focus for both national and local planning?
16. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a duty for local authorities to review their Welsh in Education Implementation Plan (WEIP) after 5 years to align with the National Plan's 5-year progress report?
17. Do you agree with the principle that Welsh in education targets should be imposed on local authorities by the Welsh Ministers?
18. Do you agree with the proposal for the Welsh Ministers to commission an external review of the content of a draft Welsh in Education Implementation Plan (WEIP) when appropriate?
19. Do you agree with the proposals to impose duties on local authorities in

planning their workforce?

20. Do you agree with the proposals in paragraphs 100 to 102 about publishing reports on the implementation of the Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs), and the progress made against National Plan targets?
21. Do you agree with the proposal to give Estyn a role to conduct a rapid review and provide recommendations in situations where it appears there is a risk that an authority will not meet its targets?
22. Do you have any other suggestions as to how to ensure that local authorities take reasonable steps to implement their Welsh in Education Implementation Plans (WEIPs)?
23. Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to promote Welsh-medium education among parents and carers?
24. What support should the Welsh Ministers offer in terms of promoting Welsh-medium education?
25. Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to promote late immersion provision among parents, carers and learners?
26. Do you think a duty should be placed on local authorities to provide late immersion for learners?
27. Do you agree with the principle that specialist support for lifelong Welsh language learning, including schools, should be centralised within a single body?
28. Do you agree that the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh should be expanded to undertake the role or is there another model that should be considered?
29. Do you agree with the principle that sufficient Welsh language learning provision should be guaranteed, and that suitable structures should be in place to support learners of all ages?

We have published a separate document '**An outline of costs and impacts that will form the basis of a Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Welsh Language Education Bill**' and ask your views on the following questions:

30. Do you agree with our interpretation of the groups and bodies affected by the

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changes? Are there any other groups or bodies that fall within the scope of the changes apart from those identified in the outline of costs and impacts that will form the basis of a Regulatory Impact Assessment for a Welsh Language Education Bill?

31. Apart from the groups and bodies identified in the outline of costs and impacts that will form the basis of a Regulatory Impact Assessment for a Welsh Language Education Bill, which groups or bodies would have to pick up the costs?
32. What other impacts (both financial and non-financial) are there relating to the proposed legislation that are not outlined in the outline of costs and impacts that will form the basis of a Regulatory Impact Assessment for a Welsh Language Education Bill?
33. Are there any other comments on the outline of costs and impacts that will form the basis of a Regulatory Impact Assessment for a Welsh Language Education Bill?

Please use the consultation response form to respond to the above questions.

## **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (for example, a research organisation or a consultancy

company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing. You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

## Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the UK GDPR, please see

contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:

Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF  
CF10 3NQ

Email: [dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
K9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113

Website: [Information Commissioner's Office](#)

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