



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Minister for Education and Welsh Language meeting with Voluntary Sector (WCVA): 20 June 2023

The agenda and minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023.

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Attendees

- Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language (MfEWL)
- Owain Lloyd, Welsh Government
- Tom Woodward, Welsh Government
- Matthew Mithan, Welsh Government
- Janine Downing, WCVA (JD)
- Sara Sellek, WCVA
- Gethin Rhys (GR)
- Paul Glaze, The Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (PG)
- Loren Nadin, Governors for Schools
- Bethan Williams, Prince's Trust Cymru (BW)
- Amanda Smith, Centre for Alternative Technology (AS)
- Eleanor Jones, WCVA
- Kelly Chamberlain
- Hannah Jones, Prince's Trust Cymru
- Lowri Jones, Mentrau Iaith Cymru (LJ)
- Kofoworola Oladunjoye, Race Council Cymru
- Francesca Wright
- Nathan Sadler, Interfaith Council for Wales
- Sean O'Neill, Children in Wales

Address by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language

MfEWL opened the meeting by outlining some of the challenges currently being experienced and the work underway to address these. This includes the cost-of-living crises and how this has an impact on the educational outcomes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Minister stressed the importance of

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ensuring the educational system is as fair as possible for all. The Welsh Government's ambitions for education in Wales have not changed.

Cost of living crises – impact on education

LJ reflected on the points raised in the paper provided by the voluntary sector ahead of the meeting and outlined the concerns currently being experienced by the sector in Wales. More and more vulnerable families are turning to the voluntary sector in response to the cost-of-living crises, and the demand for services has increased significantly.

AS welcomed the sharing of best practise referred to by the Minister in his opening remarks. Highlighted the increased costs of transportation for schools to access centres outside of their usual school setting and how this can have an impact on a young person's education.

LJ explained the voluntary sector want to see how they can collaborate with the Welsh Government to assist schools in their everyday costs in terms of issues like school trips. This includes grants available from the Arts Council for Wales for schools to benefit the learning experiences of their pupils.

BW asked if they could work with Welsh Government to arrange a showcase event where the options on offer can be explained to schools and education settings properly.

GR spoke about the importance of local schools knowing how to engage with local organisations and the community with the assistance of local authorities, and what role the Welsh Government could play in making sure that schools know how to engage with the third sector in their cynefin, which is central to the new curriculum.

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MfEWL highlighted the need for a conversation to take place looking at making the available budget work more effectively. Important to think together on how everyone can work together next year in terms of collaboration and would be very happy for Welsh Government officials to work with the voluntary sector on this. Acknowledged the need to support schools in having that constructive relationship with the voluntary sector. The focus should be on the curriculum to see how everyone can support schools together in delivering the best possible learning experiences for young people in Wales. The Minister also reiterated the importance to focus on the mechanisms that allow schools to bring the discussion forward.

Welsh Language

JD invited the Minister to address the three questions already raised by the voluntary sector following their paper submitted ahead of the meeting. The three questions were focused on the recent census results and looking at ways of growing the Welsh language.

MfEWL acknowledged the disappointing results of the census, however in the year leading up to the census a lot of new initiatives were introduced. There is a need to think about what is happening on the ground in terms of the census. Even though the figures show a reduction in Welsh speakers, the context is much more positive. The Welsh Government are asking statisticians to look at all the data to ascertain which set of results give us the fairer view, stressing the importance of remembering the wider context. In terms of a forum, the Welsh Language Commissioner works with organisations to increase the provision of the Welsh language from the sector. The voice of the voluntary sector is represented on these forums through the Menter Iaith.

LJ welcomed the Minister's reflections. Believes there is a positive context that can be seen through the voluntary sector. People are thinking about innovative

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ways of increasing the use of the Welsh language and that contribution is essential. The use of the Welsh language on a local level is very much tied to volunteering positions and the sector can tie this in with the ongoing conversations with the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Any Other Business

PG raised ways in which the voluntary sector can assist with the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales and asked the Minister for further details on the role of Adnodd.

MfEWL confirmed this was in the early stages of development at this point. The resource guide is the best way for the voluntary sector to engage.

JD opened a quick discussion amongst the voluntary sector on the recently published 'Review of the Welsh Government Grant Scheme to Promote and Facilitate the Use of the Welsh language'. The review presents a series of recommendations for the future development of the Welsh language.

LJ commented that as a sector, they welcome the opportunity to consider the review and the recommendations included in it.

JD thanked the Minister for his time and the opportunity to discuss further with Welsh Government officials over the coming months.

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