



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill: Welsh language impact assessment

Welsh language impact assessment on the impact of the bill for reform of Senedd electoral candidate lists.

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

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

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

The **Cymraeg 2050 strategy** has interrelated themes:

Theme 1: Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

- Language transmission in the family
- The early years
- Statutory education
- Post-compulsory education
- The education workforce, resources and qualifications

Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh

- The workplace
- Services
- Social use of Welsh

Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions - infrastructure and context

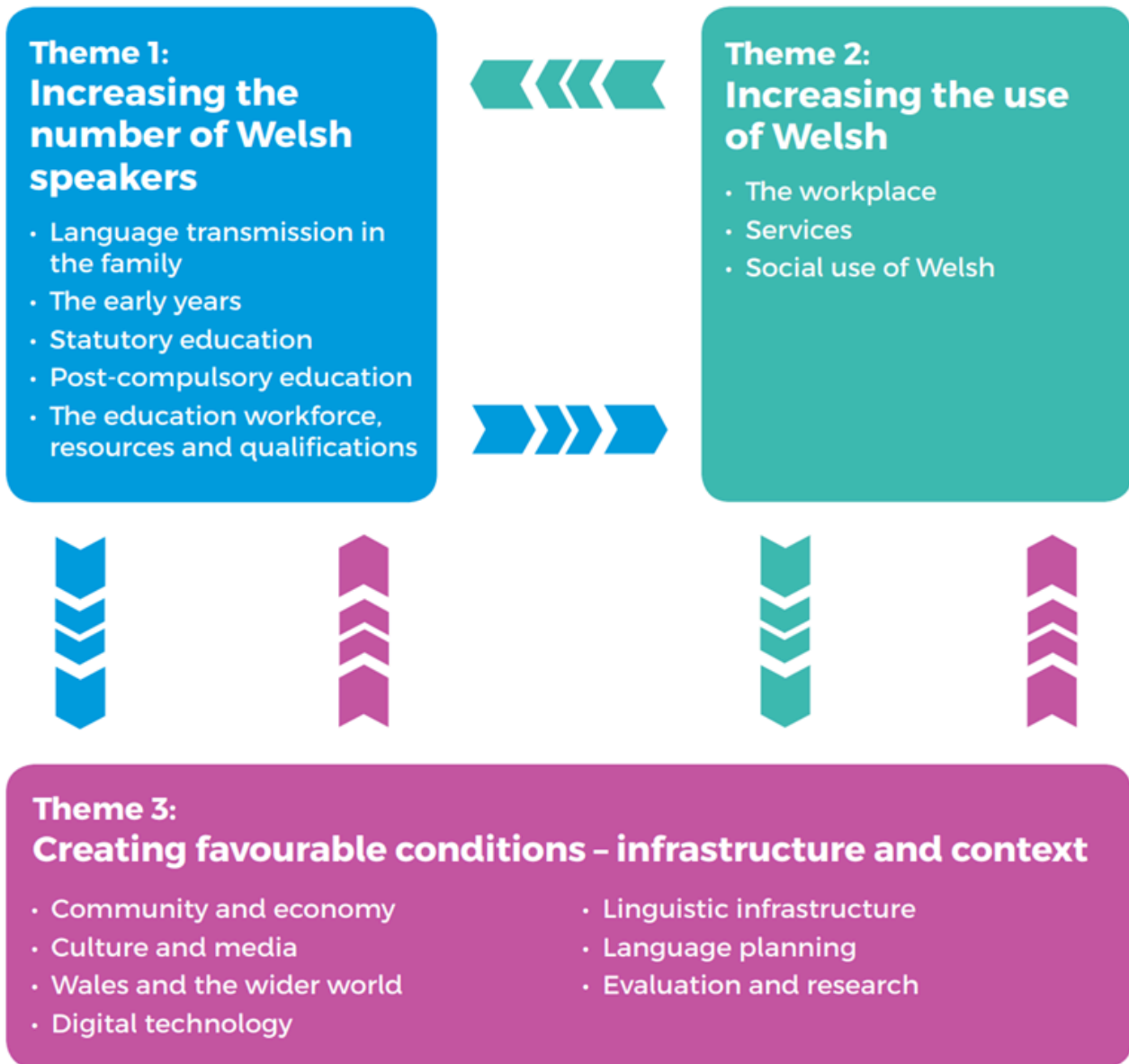
- Community and economy
- Culture and media
- Wales and the wider world
- Digital technology

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- Linguistic infrastructure
- Language planning
- Evaluation and research



The introduction of candidate quotas for Senedd elections is not considered to impact directly on the 3 themes in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

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However, increasing the representation of women in the Senedd may have an indirect positive impact on the Welsh Language due to the potential for the language to feature more prominently in public debate - for example, in terms of its use in education, the provision of services and social and cultural contexts. Research would suggest that women elected representatives give a greater focus to policies relating to civil society, children and families (**Clayton 2021**). Therefore, as a result of the overall aim of the quota policy, which is to make the Senedd a more effective legislature, by ensuring it broadly reflects the gender make-up of the population, there may be an increase in focused attention and debates on topics related to the Welsh language. This might include Welsh medium education and Welsh language cultural events (**Welsh language households and transmission 2013**).

Another potential positive effect of the quota proposals has been identified. If, as a result of quotas, a higher number of younger women MSs are elected, this could result in an increase in the number of those women who speak Welsh. This is indicated from research that shows:

“ “the age profile of Welsh speakers is younger than that of the general population. Of those who reported as being able to speak Welsh in 2021, more than half were younger than 33 years old and three quarters were younger than 57 years old.” ”

Also, research shows that:

“ “the percentage of females aged three years or older who are able to speak Welsh remains higher than the equivalent percentage for males.” ”

(**Welsh language by population characteristics (Census 2021) 2024**)

This could lead to the creation of positive role models for the Welsh language as

a result of prominent public figures being seen to use the language both in the Senedd as a workplace and when interacting with the constituents or on social media.

The legislation includes placing requirements on candidates, political parties and Constituency Returning Officers (CROs) and the creation of a new role of the National Nominations Compliance Officer, to ensure compliance with the quota rules. In the context of Senedd elections, the Welsh Language Standards currently apply to the Electoral Commission which provides guidance to parties, candidates and CROs on the application of electoral law for Senedd Elections.

The standards do not apply to CROs for Senedd elections. The electoral administration services departments within local authorities provide nomination forms for electoral candidates and political parties. These forms are set out in both Welsh and English (the National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007 provides for the forms in both languages in Schedule 10). Therefore, changes made to the electoral system for Senedd elections as a result of the proposals for quotas will not have any adverse effect on the ability of those involved in the election to engage in the democratic process through the medium of Welsh.

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