

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	ESOL Policy for Wales
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Department:	SHELL
Head of Division/SRO (name):	Andrew Clark
Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning
Start Date:	20 November 2018

SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

The Welsh Government intends to publish a revised English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy for Wales.

The first policy was published in 2014 and gave ESOL equal status, in terms of funding, as other Essential Skills – including numeracy and literacy. As a result learners in Wales are entitled to free ESOL classes up to and including Level1.

In April 2017, the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee published a report on Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Wales entitled "*I used to be Someone*". In this document, the Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers had access to ESOL provision, and recommended that the Welsh Government should publish an Action Plan setting out how it intended to address the needs of ESOL learners in Wales. In response, the Welsh Government agreed to update the ESOL Policy for Wales reflecting the many changes that have taken place within the sector, during the past few years.

The revised ESOL Policy for Wales reiterates the Welsh Government's commitment to providing ESOL. It reflects on the changes that are continually happening in this area, and includes a number of case studies to showcase the different types of ESOL available and the various learners whose lives are enhanced through their access to ESOL provision.

The policy also addresses the ways in which we are working to support ESOL learners into work, to integrate into their communities and to support their long-term health and well-being. Improving communication skills is essential to supporting community cohesion and integration.

This policy is very closely linked with wider Welsh Government policy and proposals for a Nation of Sanctuary for Refugees and Asylum seekers in Wales.

In addition, the policy reflects on what the Welsh Government is doing to increase access to the Welsh Language for refugees and asylum seekers and highlights both the benefits and challenges faced by migrants in settling into a bilingual country.

The Welsh Government has worked closely with stakeholders from across the sector in drafting this policy and is grateful for their support in providing case studies that illustrate the true impact of this provision; and in compiling actions to ensure we take forward this invaluable provision in a positive and sustainable manner.

SECTION 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

Officials have worked closely with stakeholders from across the sector in developing this policy update. These providers work directly with ESOL learners either as providers or support. This has involved a combination of 1-2-1 meetings, group discussions, and an email steering group.

Organisations directly involved in the production of this policy include:

- Further Education Institutions
- Local Authorities
- REACH (Regional ESOL Assessment Central Hub) Cardiff
- Third Sector Organisations (Including Wales Refugee Council, Oasis, and ACE)
- Job Centre Plus
- Home Office
- National Centre for Learning Welsh

7.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The most significant impact of this policy is that it reinforces the Welsh Government's commitment to providing ESOL for free to learners who need the support to learn English. This policy means that all learners, including refugees and asylum seekers, have free access to ESOL provision to help them to integrate and settle in Wales.

The policy also addresses issues relating to support for Welsh Language provision, and acknowledges that more needs to be done in this area to improve access to Welsh Language classes for learners.

7.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The policy focuses on supporting vulnerable people to gain the skills necessary for them to integrate, settle and work in our communities. Access to language skills has a recognised

and vital impact on an individual's health and well-being – it enables a greater level of independence and confidence, and improves access to work.

The economic and social benefits of providing ESOL are widely evidenced.

7.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

All Welsh Government funded provision of ESOL is quality assured and monitored through the standard monitoring processes in operation for all Further Education delivery.

