

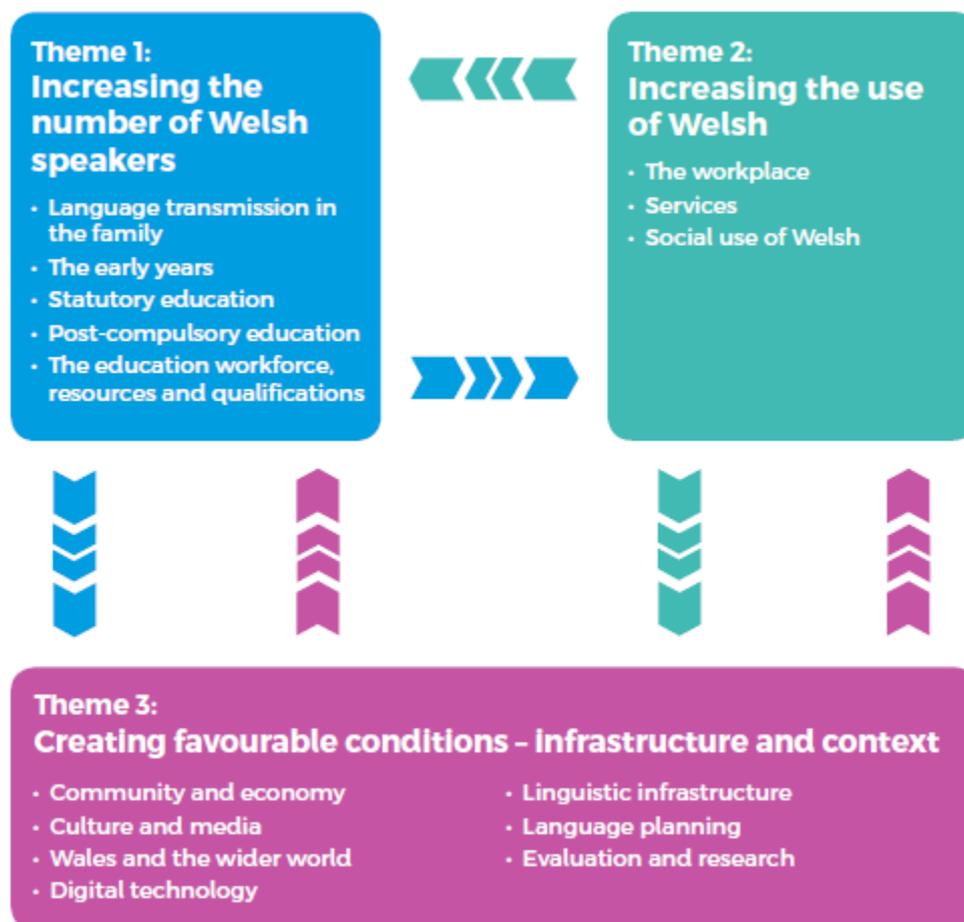
## WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

*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 the *Taking Wales Forward* Programme for Government and *Prosperity for All: the national strategy*. 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 three themes:



The headings under each theme outline the scope of activities that can affect the language.

As a general rule, if your policy has the potential to impact on people, it will impact in some way on Welsh speakers and therefore on the Welsh language.

1. Welsh Language Impact Assessment reference number (completed by the Welsh Language Standards Team, email: Safonau.Standards@gov.wales):

**06/02/2021**

2. Does the proposal demonstrate a clear link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language? – *Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers* and the related Work Programme for 2017-2021?

Language standards for local authorities (and therefore its social services function) came into force on 30 March 2016 and standards for the health sector came into force on 30 May 2019. The standards require organisations to develop the Welsh language skills of their staff, to provide language awareness training and to assess the need for Welsh skills when advertising posts.

The Code of Practice and supporting guidance reinforces the requirements of the Welsh Language standards in that local health boards, NHS trusts and local authorities should make sure Welsh language services are built into planning and delivery and that Welsh language services are actively offered to autistic Welsh speakers without them having to request it.

The Welsh Government has established a Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care (*More than just words*)  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/guidance/words/?lang=en>.

More than just words states that language is a need, and in specifying the detail of what is required in an assessment, the requirements in relation to the identification of language need will be specified in Regulations.

In the framework there is recognition that receiving Welsh language services is a clinical need and necessity for people in certain groups, including those with learning disabilities and autism. Practitioners need to acknowledge that some children may speak only Welsh and this will impact on assessment outcomes undertaken through the medium of English - the framework includes actions that must be taken in relevant areas to ensure services are provided in Welsh to those who wish to receive them and without having to ask.

3. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language, and explain how you will address these impacts in order to improve outcomes for the Welsh language. How will the proposal affect Welsh speakers of all ages (both positive and/or adverse effects)? You should note your responses to the following in your answer to this question, along with any other relevant information:

**How will the proposal affect the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities<sup>1</sup> (both positive and/or adverse effects)?**

The policy will not provide opportunities to promote the Welsh language, however, individuals with autism who communicate in Welsh as their first language will have access to bilingual information, services and support.

The Welsh Language Standards will apply in relation to service delivery in the medium of Welsh. The policy should not affect the use of the Welsh Language, numbers of Welsh Speakers or the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities.

**How will the proposal affect Welsh medium education and Welsh learners of all ages, including adults (both positive and/or adverse effects)?**

This is outside the remit of the Code of Practice. The ALN Code protects the right of learners to be offered and to receive their additional provision through the medium of Welsh.

The proposed policy should not affect Welsh medium education.

**How will the proposal affect services<sup>2</sup> available in Welsh (both positive and/or adverse effects)? (e.g. health and social services, transport, housing, digital, youth, infrastructure, environment, local government etc.)**

The Code ensures that individuals with autism who communicate in Welsh as their first language have access to bilingual information, services and support. All materials and resources are and will continue to be available bilingually.

Throughout the Code, when referring to information, assessments and support, these should be available in both English and Welsh. The local authority, local health board and NHS trusts must take all reasonable steps to secure provision in Welsh. The Code states that practitioners must be proactive in their approach and the autistic individual should be asked which language or communication form they would prefer at the beginning of the process. However, the availability of assessment diagnostic and support being available in Welsh will be determined by the skills of professionals undertaking this work and the skills of work force.

The positive effects of the code on the Welsh Language includes training, resources and materials being available bilingually. It is likely that there should be no negative

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<sup>1</sup> These can be close-knit rural communities, dispersed social networks in urban settings, and in virtual communities reaching across geographical spaces.

<sup>2</sup> The Welsh Language Strategy aims to increase the range of services offered to Welsh speakers, and to see an increase in use of Welsh-language services.

impact on the language as the code is designed to create a fairer and more equitable system for all people eligible for care and support and opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language in service provision are clearly stated.

**How will you ensure that people know about services that are available in Welsh and are able to access and use them as easily as they can in English? What evidence / data have you used to inform your assessment, including evidence from Welsh speakers or Welsh language interest groups?**

The Code of Practice highlights the importance that any information must be accessible to autistic people with additional needs such as physical, sensory or learning disabilities.

The Code ensures that autistic people and their family or carers should receive signposting to relevant support and further information and where appropriate, services must inform individuals where they can access further care and support. All services, particularly first contact teams, such as the Information Advice and Assistance service, must know how to refer autistic people to specialist organisations to assist them in accessing support. Information must be suitable for the intended audience so that people are able to understand how to get help and advice and information is available in alternative formats, including language.

The Welsh Government provides funding to the National Autism Team, and the main aim of their work is to ensure that people with autism in Wales and their carers and families can access information, services and support which meet their needs bilingually. They have an established presence on social media platforms and have recently re-designed their website to make information more accessible to all autistic people. The National Autism Team record visits to their website, which can inform what information has been requested and in what language.

The Welsh government website is bilingual, and all resources are available bilingually.

As described below, evidence was sought in the context of the consultation on the Code of Practice.

**What other evidence would help you to conduct a better assessment?**

The Welsh Government has continued to listen to autistic people through direct engagement at events and meetings across Wales. To inform the development of the Code of Practice, technical groups and stakeholder events were held throughout Wales providing opportunities for a wide range of key stakeholders including autistic people to have their say on the priorities and actions in the Code.

Every engagement session was bilingual with presentations and discussions offered in English and Welsh. Prior to the events delegates were asked if they required Welsh translation facilities but no one requested this service.

Our engagement events provided an excellent opportunity to engage directly with families and parents and autistic individuals as well as local authorities, local health boards, the Integrated Autism Services and education. At these events we discussed their experiences and sought their views on where service improvements should be made.

As a result of these events, there was consideration on how autism services will be delivered taking into consideration population, culture and language and with specific reference to the Welsh language in the population needs assessments carried out by local authorities and Local Health Boards.

During the consultation on the Code of Practice we asked for people's views on the effects that the Code would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. Our questions also asked about what effects the Code would have on the Welsh Language and if these were positive or negative.

Of the 56 people that responded online to the consultation, a maximum of 29 people provided a response to either one or both of the questions on the Welsh language. No responses were received in Welsh.

There were 48 responses received via e-mail, with 4 responses provided in Welsh.

The consultation responses highlighted:

- that dealing with individuals in their language of choice will enhance their experience. Sharing of information, however, should be in a common language readable by all individuals involved or potentially involved in the care of the patient.
- All services and especially ASD assessments need to be available through the medium of Welsh across the whole of Wales. If this is not possible it will have negative and discriminatory impact on individuals and their families - children and adults
- All services should be provided through the Medium of Welsh or English from Psychiatry, Psychology SALT, OT etc. to individual support workers, or there will be a negative impact on the experience of Welsh Speakers across Wales.
- Many comments focussed on services that are signposted through this Code should be available in Welsh and English.
- Respondents commented that all autistic people should be able to communicate, for example, in assessments through their first and most

comfortable form of communication, be that Welsh or sign language if preferred

All of the comments received are currently addressed within the Code of Practice, this includes:

- Throughout the Code, when referring to information, assessments and support these should be offered in both English and Welsh. The local authority, local health board and NHS trusts LA, HB and LHB must take all reasonable steps to secure these provisions in Welsh.
- We have made clearer reference in the Code on the importance of the Welsh language in assessments.
- The Code recognises that it is vitally important that autistic people have access to services in the language that is most comfortable to them, especially as communication is such a central part of provision and effective assessment, reaching an accurate diagnosis and providing the highest quality, tailored service.
- The Welsh Government's vision in its Strategic Framework *More than just words* is that Welsh speakers will receive health services that meet their needs as a natural part of their care, with an increased emphasis on implementing a 'proactive offer' of Welsh language services.
- Practitioners offer information (in an appropriate format and language), to the child, young person or adult and family or carer which explains the referral process and that it does not mean a diagnosis of autism will always be made.
- Practitioners must be proactive in their approach and the autistic individual should be asked which language or communication form they would prefer at the beginning of the process.

### **How will you know if your policy is a success?**

There will be an evaluation of the Code of Practice within 2 years of the issue. This will help inform the Welsh Government on whether or not the policy is a success in terms of Welsh Language.

Work is currently underway on the demand and capacity of neurodevelopmental services. This work aims to develop recommendations and evidence-informed options for improvements to services. This will also look at Welsh Language provision.