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Dear *Ministers,*

Standards and the Welsh language: What are your views?
Non-statutory consultation: An overview of the responses

I present my report for your attention giving an overview of the responses received to a recent non-statutory consultation on standards in relation to the Welsh language:
Standards and the Welsh language: What are your views?

I also provide a body of standards which have been revised following the consultation. As it is Welsh Ministers who will ultimately set the standards I must emphasize that these are my recommendations. In my opinion, they are requirements which are appropriate to place on organizations in the form of statutory duties. This letter outlines some of the main changes which were made to the standards following the consultation. The recommendations in my letter are made in accordance with section 4 (2) (h) of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Modifications made to the five categories of standards relate to the following matters:

The service delivery standards and the related record keeping standards were revised in a way which places the user at the heart of those standards. In order to ensure a positive experience for users, I recommend revisions to the standards which strengthen the concept of the "proactive offer."

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There was widespread support for policy making standards and the revisions made have not substantially changed the standards which were subject to consultation. By virtue of the fact that the Welsh Government is the main policy making body in Wales I am of the opinion that Welsh Ministers should implement the principles of the policy making standards as soon as possible and before those standards are placed on a statutory footing. The Government is expected to demonstrate leadership by ensuring due consideration is given to the Welsh language in the range of policies it develops now and in the future.

The operational standards which were subject to consultation have been revised in order to lessen the responsibility on employees to instigate the use of Welsh within organisations. The proposed standards now place a responsibility on the organization to develop enhanced opportunities to use Welsh at work. It is acknowledged that these standards introduce a statutory requirement relating to the use of Welsh within the internal administration of organizations for the first time. I am of the opinion that the Government should implement the related commitments of its national language strategies in order to strengthen bilingual practice within the workforce of the future.

The promotion standards were widely welcomed and many respondents across the public sector asked to be included within the scope of these standards. Welsh Ministers should consider widening the scope of organizations subject to these standards by utilizing section 38 (3) of the Measure.

Record keeping standards were revised in order to enable analysis of organisational compliance as well as securing evidence relating to the implementation of specified standards. I will write to you in due course in order to consider appropriate monitoring arrangements and the supplementary provisions of section 27(4) (a – f).

I am proposing a total of 37 revised standards for your consideration, of these 15 standards (12 service delivery standards and 3 record keeping standards) relate to persons contained in Schedules 7 & 8 of the Measure. In most other instances, as specified in Schedules 5 & 6 of the Measure, persons may be required to implement up to a maximum of 33 standards. All 37 standards relate to local authorities, national parks and the Welsh Government.

In order to give organizations which are subject to standards the best possible opportunity to plan and prepare for their implementation it will be important to know with certainty what those standards will be. I recommend therefore that Welsh Ministers should consider my report and proceed to set the five classes of standards which are referred to in the Measure on a statutory basis as soon as possible. I would clarify that my recommendation is not an expectation that standards are made specifically applicable at the same time.



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A number of other matters arose during the consultations which were relevant to the work of introducing standards relating to the Welsh language and I would be glad of the opportunity to meet and discuss those matters with you.

Yours sincerely,

Meri Huws
Welsh Language Commissioner