



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WELSH LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION (WALES) ACT

Integrated Impact Assessment

July 2025

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1. What action is the Welsh Government considering and why?

1.1. Long term

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies across Wales named in that Act to work towards fulfilling seven well-being goals, one of which is 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. The Welsh Government has a duty to work towards achieving the well-being goals, including promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh. Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 also requires the Welsh Ministers to adopt a strategy that sets out how they intend to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. The 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers' strategy was developed in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy states that the education system has a key role in realising the targets of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and increasing the percentage of the population who speak Welsh daily, and who can speak more than a few words of Welsh, to 20% by 2050. One of the strategy's goals is to 'create a statutory education system which increases the number of confident Welsh speakers.' The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act (hereafter 'the Act') seeks to contribute to the realisation of these targets by widening access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales, regardless of the language category of the school they attend, or the community in which they live. The current education system leads to vastly different linguistic outcomes, depending on the language medium of education. We want the education system to embrace Welsh as a language that belongs to all pupils in Wales, thereby reducing the gap in linguistic outcomes. The Act seeks to ensure that the Welsh language education provision in all schools provides opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and become confident and independent Welsh speakers by the end of compulsory school age. In the long term, this would contribute to upskilling the workforce, including the education workforce, with more pupils entering the workplace with better Welsh language skills.

Specifically:

- Giving a statutory basis to the target of a million Welsh speakers, and the statutory education system's contribution towards realising that target, will lay a strong foundation as we widen access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales.
- Introducing a Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability will underpin a shared understanding among learners, teachers, parents, and employers of an individual's journey as they learn the Welsh language.
- Establishing a statutory system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided will give schools a framework to make progress, whether that is to increase the Welsh language education provision within a category or move to a higher language category. Categorising

schools will also offer clarity and consistency to learners and parents/guardians in relation to their Welsh language learning goals.

- A National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh will, amongst other things, set out steps in relation to increasing and improving Welsh language education; promoting Welsh language education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools; ensuring training, professional development and support for education practitioners; and providing opportunities to learn Welsh at all ages.
- Each local authority’s local Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (local WESP) will set out how it will promote and facilitate Welsh language education and the use of Welsh in schools in its area, as well as develop its Welsh language education workforce. The WESP will respond to targets set for the local authority in the National Framework and take account of factors relevant to the local area. This will lay the foundations for facilitating the language journey for all maintained schools in Wales.
- Promoting Welsh language education provided in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools and promoting and providing late immersion education in Welsh will lay a strong foundation for a local authority to widen access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales, including pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium education after the end of foundation learning.
- The aim in establishing a new national body, the National Institute for Learning Welsh, is to support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills, so that more people are learning the language.

1.2. Prevention

The Act’s provisions will widen the access of children and young people in Wales to the Welsh language and increase and improve Welsh language education provision in schools across Wales over time, contributing to the objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*. This will lead to more pupils in statutory education, the length and breadth of Wales, having greater Welsh language ability, contributing to the promotion of the Welsh language in all parts of Wales. The Act’s provisions will create opportunities for education planners to better understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified.

Promoting Welsh-medium education and late immersion education in Welsh will help parents and carers to understand the options available to them in terms of the language of their children’s education, allowing them to make informed decisions. In turn, this will contribute to the percentage of learners receiving Welsh language education in schools in the “Primarily Welsh Language” category.

1.3. Integration

The links of specific Act provisions to public policy agendas are outlined below:

- Provision and promotion of late immersion education in Welsh: The Welsh Government's Programme for Government refers to 'Expanding the immersion programme'.
- The Code to describe Welsh language ability: The Programme for Government refers to 'Establishing and implementing a single continuum of Welsh language learning.'
- The Welsh language is a mandatory element of the Curriculum for Wales, and the Progression Code notes how a school's curriculum must make provision for all pupils to make progress in their learning.

1.4. Collaboration

For specific provisions of the Act, the main partners with a common interest in these provisions are identified below, as well as how they have been involved in their development:

- The Code to describe Welsh language ability: The National Centre for Learning Welsh, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, universities and local authorities. Delegates have contributed through being members of a Task Group.
- Categorisation of schools based on the amount of Welsh language education provided: Local authorities, headteachers, school governing bodies, parents and learners. There has been engagement with schools about the categorisation system in the context of the non-statutory guidelines, and the idea of producing more detailed guidance was welcomed. Initial discussions were also held with Estyn about their proposed role.
- A National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh: Discussions with local authorities have taken place in local authority education forums, and local authorities largely welcomed the idea of the Welsh Government setting a strategic direction for them. The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, in its report into 'The legislative framework that supports Welsh-medium education provision', May 2023, recommended the Welsh Government develop 'a national framework to ensure a consistent national approach to Welsh language education planning and delivery' (recommendation 4). To inform its report, the committee received oral and written evidence from the following organisations: ESTYN, Education Workforce Council, Children's Commissioner for Wales, Welsh Language Commissioner, Colleges Wales, regional consortia, Qualifications Wales, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Dyfodol i'r Iaith, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG), Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC), Mudiad Meithrin, NASUWT, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW).
- Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (local WESPs): Local authorities have contributed by developing and implementing the existing WESPs and providing feedback on that system. Each local authority was invited to contribute to

developing guidance on analysing data about the education workforce, and four took up this opportunity. Initial discussions were held with Estyn about its monitoring role.

- Support for learning Welsh: Discussions have been held with practitioners in the statutory and post-statutory education sector, local authorities, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner, universities in their role as Welsh language learning providers for adults and as centres for language research and acquisition, Further Education institutions.

1.5. Involvement

For specific provisions in the Act, the main partners affected by the provisions, and how they have been involved in their development, are identified below. There was engagement with these partners during the consultation period.

- The Code to describe Welsh language ability: Practitioners, learners, the National Centre for Learning Welsh.
- Categorisation of schools based on the amount of Welsh language education provided: There has been regular engagement with schools, particularly via the National Categorisation Group, which welcomed the proposal to publish more detailed guidance regarding categorisation. Initial discussions were also held with Estyn about their proposed role.
- National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh: The National Framework will have relevance to the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, local authorities, Estyn, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Further Education institutions, Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research), the Education Workforce Council, Initial Teacher Education providers and universities. Evidence from several of these bodies informed a report by the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, which recommended that the Welsh Government develop a national framework to ensure a consistent national approach to Welsh language education planning and delivery.
- Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (local WESPs): Local authorities and Estyn. The provisions will also impact regional consortia, headteachers and school governing bodies.
- Support for learning Welsh: Initial discussions were held with the National Centre for Learning Welsh regarding how support for achieving the Act's objectives could be delivered.

In addition to the engagement described above, an engagement exercise was commissioned by the Welsh Government to support the development of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). As part of the engagement, a series of workshops was conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government with a range of external stakeholders and key potential delivery partners.

Two online workshops were conducted with local authorities to explain the proposed changes and to gather feedback regarding the anticipated costs and benefits. At the same time, all local authorities were invited to provide input by completing a series of questions on costs and benefits in a survey format. Feedback was received from 13 local authorities.

Feedback on costs and benefits was also received from 23 schools that completed a survey. Initial contact was made with 295 schools, stratified by primary and secondary provision, geographic area and language category. The 23 responses included a range of schools across the stratified categories.

Stakeholder engagement extended beyond local authorities and schools to encompass organisations identified in the white paper, as well as those likely to be impacted by the proposed changes. A discussion was held with the Policy Development & Implementation Working Group (which has representation from education unions alongside the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and a local authority representative). Interviews were conducted with representatives from Estyn, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, the Education Workforce Council, and four Initial Teacher Education providers.

The IIA also drew on data available on the education system in Wales, including the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and GCSE data.

The Welsh Government issued a consultation on the proposals for a Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill on 27 March 2023, which closed on 16 June 2023. There were 538 responses, 366 of which were unique.

The Welsh Government engaged with children and young people through workshops undertaken on its behalf by Urdd Gobaith Cymru in February 2024. Over 66 participants aged 11-18 took part in the workshops. The workshops were held in Welsh- and English-medium schools and youth clubs in Cardiff, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Bridgend, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Wrexham, the Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly. The workshops explored the broad principles and aims underpinning the Act.

A qualitative survey was also conducted by Children in Wales' Young Wales team during its residential course in February 2024. Ten young people participated, with one doing so in Welsh.

1.6. Impact

The RIA details the main arguments for the Act's provisions, alongside the range of options.

1.7. Costs and Savings

The RIA explores the estimated costs and potential savings associated with the Act's provisions.

1.8. Mechanism

Primary legislation is necessary to achieve the Act's aims.

2. What will be the effect on social well-being?

2.1. People and Communities

The Act aims to ensure that all children, no matter where they live in Wales and regardless of linguistic or other background, have the opportunity to become confident and independent Welsh speakers. The Children's Rights, Equalities and Rural Proofing Impact Assessments detail the potential impact and mitigations for specific groups of children and young people.

The Act may have some positive impact upon communities and social opportunities in time. Increased Welsh language skills may offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people. More people may be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces and to engage with social and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh.

2.2. Children's Rights

The Act aims to effect changes that will ensure that more children and young people will have the opportunity to leave the education system with Welsh language skills. This supports the rights of children to an education; their right to learn and use the language of their families; and their right to relax, play and engage with a wide range of activities.

The Act will have a positive impact on Welsh learners in schools in every language category by increasing and improving Welsh language education. It will do this by setting new Welsh language learning goals for each school language category, enabling more children to become confident and independent Welsh speakers, regardless of the language category of the school they attend, or the community in which they live. Amendments to the scope of WESPs will also ensure that children of compulsory school age who are not pupils in maintained schools also benefit from the increase and improvement in Welsh language education.

Enabling more children to become confident and independent Welsh speakers could lead to a wider range of lifelong opportunities for individuals, both in employment and in their daily lives. This fits in with the tackling poverty agenda by empowering children and young people, who will have an additional skill when they leave the education system.

The Children's Rights Impact Assessment acknowledges potential negative impacts upon some groups of children and young people, alongside the mitigations already in place or planned.

The full Children's Rights Impact Assessment is available in Annex A.

2.3. Equality

The Act will widen the access of all pupils in Wales to the Welsh language over time, so that they have the opportunity to become confident and independent Welsh speakers.

The full Equality Impact Assessment is available at Annex B.

2.4. Rural Proofing

The full

Annex E – Rural Proofing Impact Assessment is available at Annex E.

2.5. Health

The Act's provisions concern education planning, with impacts upon children's education evolving over an extended period. No significant impact is expected on health as a result of the provisions.

The Act may have a minimal positive impact upon communities and social opportunities in time. Increased Welsh language skills may offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people. More people may be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces and to engage with social and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers may also support children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities. This may contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people.

2.6. Privacy

Will the proposal involve processing information that could be used to identify individuals?

No.

3. What will be the effect on cultural well-being and the Welsh language?

3.1. Cultural Well-being

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015's goal for culture is 'A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and which encourages people to participate in the arts and sports and recreation'. Culture includes museums, archives, libraries and the arts; heritage includes the built historic environment as well as intangible heritage such as traditions; arts encompass performance and creative sectors including music, literature, theatre and art, whilst sports and recreation include both elite and community sports as well as opportunities to participate in wider outdoor recreation.

3.1.1. How can the proposal actively contribute to the goal to promote and protect culture and heritage and encourage people to participate in the arts, sports and recreation?

The Act relates primarily to the education system and specifically to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within all maintained schools. The secondary impacts, however, may contribute to the goal of promoting and protecting culture and heritage. Specifically, the Welsh Government believes that increased Welsh language skills may enable children and young people to access more Welsh-medium arts, cultural and heritage opportunities.

3.1.2. Is it possible that the proposal might have a negative effect on the promotion and protection of culture and heritage, or the ability of people to participate in arts, sports and recreation? If so, what action can you take to avoid or reduce that effect (for example by providing alternative opportunities)?

The Welsh Government does not believe the Act will have any negative effect on the promotion and protection of culture and heritage, or the ability of people to participate in arts, sports and recreation.

3.1.3. Welsh Language

The full Welsh Language Impact Assessment is available at Annex C.

4. What will be the effect on economic well-being?

4.1. Business, the general public and individuals

The Act may have a minimal to moderate positive impact on business and the public. Specifically, the Code will establish a standard and clear method for describing Welsh language ability. Upon entry into the labour market, the Code will enable all learners to better define their skills to employers, regardless of location and cultural-linguistic context of the employer. Likewise, employers will be better placed to understand a candidate's ability in the language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice.

The increase in Welsh language skills over time will enable more businesses to offer more and better-quality services through the medium of Welsh.

The Act is not expected to incur any costs upon businesses. Some opportunities may be generated from the demand for more and more varied Welsh language education resources.

4.2. Public Sector including local government and other public bodies

The Act will likely have a minimal to moderate positive impact upon the public sector. Specifically, the increase in Welsh language skills over time of pupils entering the workforce may support public bodies to comply with Welsh language Standards and improve Welsh language services. As with businesses, the Code to describe Welsh language ability will enable entrants to the labour market to better define their skills to employers and for employers to understand a candidate's ability in the Welsh language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice. The Act is expected to result in costs for some public sector institutions, particularly local authorities and schools. More detail on costs is provided in the RIA.

4.3. Third Sector

The Act may have a minimal to moderate positive impact on the third sector. Specifically, the Code will establish a standard and clear method for describing Welsh language ability. Upon entry into the labour market, this Code will enable all learners to better define their skills to employers, regardless of location and

cultural-linguistic context of the employer. Likewise, employers will be better placed to understand a candidate's ability in the Welsh language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice.

The increase in Welsh language skills over time may enable more organisations to offer more and better-quality services through the medium of Welsh. This will benefit organisations working with Welsh language communities in particular.

4.4. Justice Impact

The Act's potential impacts on the justice system have been considered. The Welsh Government does not consider there to be any impacts on the justice system in England and Wales given that the Act is administrative in nature, making changes to the way in which education in Wales is planned in order to increase the amount of Welsh language education.

The Act does not:

- create or amend a criminal offence
- create or amend a new civil sanction or fixed penalty
- create a civil order or injunction, breach of which may lead to further proceedings or criminal sanctions
- create or amend sentences or penalties
- create or amend court or tribunal procedure rules
- involve changes to applications to the courts or tribunals, including judicial review
- involve a new tribunal jurisdiction
- create an appeals mechanism
- require enforcement mechanisms for civil debts, civil sanctions or criminal penalties
- result in a change in the number of adult offenders being committed to custody or probation
- result in a change in the number of children and young people entering the criminal justice system, or the numbers of children and young people in custody
- result in a change in the length of custodial sentences

5. What will be the effect on environmental well-being?

Under Section 9 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Welsh Ministers are required to prepare, publish and implement a natural resources policy and to take all reasonable steps to implement it and to encourage others to take such steps. The Natural Resources Policy was published in August 2017.

The following assessments have been considered and completed where appropriate:

- Natural Resources Policy national priorities, challenges and opportunities - required for all proposals (5.1a and 5.1b)

- Biodiversity - required for all proposals (5.2)
- Climate Change - required for all proposals (5.3)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment - certain plans and programmes requiring SEA under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (5.4)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment - proposals which may affect a Special Area for Conservation or a Special Protected, Area (SAC/SPA) (5.5)
- Environmental Impact Assessment - certain projects relating to town and country planning; transport; agriculture; forestry; marine, land drainage; and electricity which require EIA under the various EIA Regulations (5.6)

5.1. Natural Resources

5.1.1. How will the proposal deliver one or more of the National Priorities in the Natural Resources Policy (NRP)?

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on proposals to deliver the National Priorities in the Natural Resources Policy.

5.1.2. Does the proposal help tackle the following national challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources?

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. Overall, it is likely to have a negligible impact on challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources.

- Reverse the decline in biodiversity – by developing resilient ecological networks

Negligible impact.

- Safeguard and increase carbon stores in soils and biomass

Negligible impact.

- Maintain productive capacity, in particular by improving soil quality and biosecurity

Negligible impact.

- Reducing the risk of flooding

Negligible impact.

- Supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem approaches

Negligible impact.

- Reducing noise pollution and pollution levels in our air, and enhance air quality

Negligible to minimal impact. Increasing the number of “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools may lessen the need for learners to travel further than their immediate localities to access education in the language of their choice.

- Improve the quality and ensure the quantity of our water

Negligible impact.

- Taking action to reduce the pressures on natural resources, such as through resource efficiency and renewable energy

Negligible impact.

- Supporting preventative approaches to health outcomes, with a particular focus on key public health issues of transport related air and noise pollution, tackling physical inactivity and mental health

Negligible impact.

- Supporting action to tackle health and economic inequalities

The Act may have a minimal positive impact upon communities and social opportunities in time. Increased Welsh language skills may enable children and young people to access more cultural and social opportunities through the medium of Welsh, and to engage with Welsh-medium spaces. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers may also support children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities. These points may contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people.

- Supporting community cohesion

The Act may lead to a moderate positive impact upon the communities and use of services within those communities in rural areas. Welsh-speaking communities are often found within rural areas and contain a range of Welsh-medium spaces. Access to these communities and spaces can be challenging for people who do not speak Welsh. The linguistic balance of the communities, spaces and services can also be disrupted if residents must frequently switch to English. With more opportunities for people to become confident, independent Welsh speakers, more people may be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces and Welsh-speaking communities. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers may also support children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities.

- Supporting secure and stable employment

The Act may have a minimal positive impact. Enabling more children and young people to become confident Welsh speakers could provide an additional skill, leading to a wider range of employment opportunities.

5.2. Biodiversity

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on biodiversity.

5.3. Climate Change

Climate change has been identified as one of the biggest threats facing our future generations. We need to reduce our emissions through decarbonisation action (5.3a) and to adapt to the impacts of climate change by increasing our resilience (5.3b).

5.3.1. Decarbonisation

Negligible to minimal impact. Increasing the number of “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools may lessen the need for learners to travel further than their immediate localities to access education in the language of their choice. A more thorough assessment of the effect on emissions is not considered necessary.

5.3.2. Adaptation

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on the ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

5.4. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on the environment. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is not considered necessary.

5.5. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on habitats. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is not considered necessary.

5.6. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Act relates primarily to the planning and delivery of Welsh language education within maintained education settings. It is likely to have a negligible impact on the environment. An Environmental Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

6. What will be impact on Socio-economic disadvantage?

6.1. The Socio-economic Duty

A full socio-economic impact assessment is available at Annex D below.

7. Conclusion

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

For each Part of the Act, the main partners affected have been identified. There has been engagement with these partners during and since the consultation period. Representatives of partners with an interest in the Code to describe Welsh language ability have had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on planning and realisation of this provision as members of a Task Group. There has been engagement with schools about the language categorisation system in the context of the non-statutory guidelines. Discussions have been held with Estyn about their proposed role. In education forums, local authorities – key partners for the National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh – largely welcomed the idea of the Welsh Government setting a strategic direction. Evidence from key partners informed a report by the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, which recommended that the Welsh Government develop ‘a national framework to ensure a consistent national approach to Welsh language education planning and delivery’. Local authorities have contributed to provisions relating to local WESPs by developing and implementing the existing WESPs and providing feedback on that system. Four local authorities took the opportunity to contribute to the development of guidance around data analysis and education workforce planning. Initial discussions took place with Estyn on its monitoring role. Discussions have also been held with practitioners in the statutory and post-statutory education sector, local authorities, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner, universities in their role as Welsh language learning providers for adults and as centres for language research and acquisition, and Further Education institutions about support to realise the Act’s objectives.

The Welsh Government issued a consultation on the proposals for a Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act on 27 March 2023, which closed on 16 June 2023. There were 538 responses, 366 of which were unique.

An engagement exercise was commissioned by Welsh Government to support the development of the RIA and IIA. As part of the engagement, a series of workshops were conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government with a range of external stakeholders and key potential delivery partners.

Two online workshops were conducted with local authorities to explain the proposed changes and to gather feedback on the potential positive and negative impacts. At the same time, all local authorities were invited to provide input by completing a series of questions on costs and benefits in a survey format. Feedback was received from 13 local authorities.

Feedback on costs and benefits was also received from 23 schools via a survey. Initial contact was made with 295 schools, stratified by primary and secondary

provision, geographic area and language category. The 23 responses included a range of schools across the stratified categories.

Stakeholder engagement extended beyond local authorities and schools to encompass organisations identified in the white paper, as well as those likely to be impacted by the proposed changes. A group discussion was held with the Policy Development & Implementation Working Group (which has representation from education unions alongside the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and a local authority representative), while interviews were conducted with representatives from Estyn, National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, the Education Workforce Council, and four Initial Teacher Education providers.

The Welsh Government has also engaged with children and young people through workshops undertaken on its behalf by Urdd Gobaith Cymru in February 2024. Over 66 participants aged between 11-18 took part in workshops across Wales. The workshops were held in Welsh- and English-medium schools and youth clubs in several local authorities across Wales. A qualitative survey was also conducted by Children in Wales' Young Wales team during its residential course in February 2024. Ten young people participated, with one doing so in Welsh. These engagement exercises explored the broad principles and aims underpinning the Act.

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

7.2.1 Planning, resourcing and supporting schools to increase and improve Welsh language education

The Act introduces changes that primarily relate to planning, resourcing and supporting the development of Welsh language education in schools throughout Wales. There will be direct impacts of the Act's provisions on education planning and the workforce. Local authorities and schools will be better placed to plan effectively for more and better Welsh language education in all maintained schools and settings in Wales, thus impacting positively on the Welsh language learning of pupils. With clarity on language provision and learning goals within each school language category, schools will be in a better position to plan and develop their provision and workforce over time through their Welsh language education delivery plans so that pupils progress. This will be supported by the common understanding provided by the Code, which will establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability for all ages, including pupils and the school workforce. The local WESPs, alongside the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan, support effective strategic planning for the changes needed in schools over time. They will also allow effective and responsive planning in relation to learners that are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education.

A National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh will provide strategic coherence to the development of Welsh language education throughout Wales, with all local authorities more aware of the

specific and appropriate contribution they can make to the aim of securing a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It will provide local authorities with a more comprehensive and consistent picture of the expectations on them in terms of increasing and improving Welsh language education and increasing the percentage of pupils receiving Welsh language education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools. It will also support planning of the education workforce to ensure the ambitions of the Act can be realised. The National Framework will set out steps to ensure that training, professional development and support is available for education practitioners for the purposes of improving ability in Welsh. This will be based on an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority to meet relevant targets outlined in the Act.

The Act will establish a new statutory body, the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills. The Institute will be a one-stop-shop for supporting all aspects of Welsh language learning. It will provide strategic leadership and support for lifelong Welsh language learning at a national level. Centralising strategic leadership and expertise within one body will ensure a more coordinated approach to Welsh language learning. It will have responsibility for ensuring that Welsh language learning and transmission is given due attention within the whole education system, including in the school sector. This will help all schools meet the challenges of increasing and improving Welsh language education, ultimately benefitting all learners in Wales.

7.2.2 Impact upon children and young people

There will be an impact upon children and young people as a result of the changes to planning, resourcing and supporting schools, which will evolve over an extended time period. The impact will be largely positive, as learners will have more opportunities to become independent and confident speakers of the Welsh language.

Some respondents to the white paper consultation noted that some children are currently unable to access Welsh-medium education, as there is no provision available in the vicinity of their homes. In the workshops undertaken by Urdd Gobaith Cymru and the qualitative survey conducted by Children in Wales, children and young people noted their view that all pupils in Wales should have the opportunity to learn Welsh. In the qualitative survey by Children in Wales, children and young people emphasised the importance of choice, opportunity, and fairness in relation to opportunities to learn Welsh.

The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education in schools in all areas, leading to more pupils in statutory education across Wales having more and better Welsh language education provision, contributing to the promotion of the Welsh language in all areas. The Act will create opportunities for education planners to better understand why some groups

are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified. If successful, the Act will widen access to the Welsh language and address any barriers that some learners may face.

Parents/guardians and learners will also be better placed to make decisions regarding children's education. School language categorisation will provide clarity to parents/guardians and learners on the language provision of schools in their area and the Welsh language learning goals. Placing duties on local authorities to include steps in their local WESPs to promote and provide information about the Welsh language education provided in "Primarily Welsh Language" category schools will improve understanding of its benefits. Moreover, promoting and providing late immersion education in Welsh will widen access to the Welsh language for children and young people in Wales who wish to access Welsh-medium education at various entry points. This will be of particular benefit to families and learners who move into the education system in Wales later in their school life.

Providing clarity and defining the Welsh language learning goals for pupils by the end of compulsory school age in all school language categories will lead to further positive impact and opportunities for learners, both in employment and in their daily lives. Individuals entering the workforce will be able to articulate and define their language ability, and employers will be able to draw on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice. With more individuals entering the workforce with better Welsh language skills, businesses, the public sector and third sector organisations may be better placed to offer Welsh-language services, to comply with Welsh language Standards, and to better reflect and serve the diverse linguistic communities in Wales.

The Welsh Government believes that the Act could contribute to the tackling poverty agenda by equipping children and young people with Welsh language skills that they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to develop. As a result, it is possible these individuals will be able to apply for jobs where the Welsh language is desirable or essential, thereby enabling them to benefit from more opportunities within the labour market which might otherwise have been closed to them. The engagement exercises found similar views among children and young people, and largely agreement amongst participants that ability in Welsh is "an important skill for jobs in Wales" (engagement exercise participant).

The clear direction from the Welsh Government regarding lifelong acquisition of the Welsh language will also support more children, young people and adults, whatever their age, to continue to learn and to improve their Welsh language skills.

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 provisions of the Act are key to the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, and the Wellbeing goal of a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

The Welsh Government has a duty to work towards achieving the well-being goals, including promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh. Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 also requires the Welsh Ministers to adopt a strategy that sets out how they intend to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy was developed in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and its aims align with the well-being goal of a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

More specifically, the targets of *Cymraeg 2050* align with well-being indicators 36 (Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh) and 37 (Number of people who can speak Welsh), whilst indicator 37 also relates directly to the well-being milestone of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy states that the education system has a key role in realising the targets of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and increasing the percentage of the population who speak Welsh daily, and who can speak more than a few words of Welsh, to 20% by 2050. One of the strategy's goals is to 'create a statutory education system which increases the number of confident Welsh speakers. The Act seeks to contribute to the realisation of these targets by widening access to the Welsh language for all pupils in Wales, regardless of the language category of the school they attend, or the community in which they live, and by ensuring that the Welsh language education in all schools provides opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and become confident, independent Welsh speakers. In the long term, this is expected to contribute to upskilling the workforce, including the education workforce, with more pupils entering the workplace with better Welsh language skills.

Specifically:

- Giving a statutory basis to the target of a million Welsh speakers, and the statutory education system's contribution towards realising that target, will lay a strong foundation for widening access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales.
- The introduction of a Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability will enable learners, teachers, parents and employers to have a shared understanding of an individual's journey as they learn the Welsh language.
- Establishing a statutory system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided will give schools a framework to make progress, whether that is to increase the Welsh language education provision within a category or move to a higher language category. Categorising schools will also offer clarity and consistency to learners and parents/guardians in relation to the Welsh language learning goals.

- The National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh will provide strategic direction to local authorities regarding what is expected of them in terms of increasing their Welsh language education provision, and guidance to those providing support to the education system with regard to acquiring and learning Welsh.
- Each local authority's local WESP will set out how it will promote and facilitate Welsh language education and the use of Welsh in schools in its area, responding to targets set for the local authority in the National Framework and taking account of factors relevant to the local area. This will lay the foundations for facilitating the language journey for all maintained schools in Wales.
- The promotion of Welsh language education provided in "Primarily Welsh Language" category schools and the promotion and provision of late immersion education in Welsh will lay a strong foundation for a local authority to widen access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales, including pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium education after the end of foundation learning.
- The aim in centralising provision for lifelong Welsh language learning via the National Institute for Learning Welsh is to support people to learn Welsh, and facilitate their progress, so that more people (of all ages) are learning the language.

In broadening access to the Welsh language, the Act might impact over the long-term perceptions towards culture and identity and further support children's right to learn and use the language and customs of their families (in relation to the Welsh language). The Act will also provide opportunities to better understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified.

Increasing the Welsh language ability of learners in Wales, and ultimately contributing to a million Welsh speakers, may also support the resilience of Welsh language communities. The Act is expected to support families and children in all parts of Wales to fully engage with Welsh language communities, spaces and activities.

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

Plans for post-implementation review are set out within the RIA. To ensure that the post implementation review effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the policy, an evaluability assessment will need to be completed in the early stages. This will help determine the nature and scope of the evaluation programme and the availability of relevant data to monitor progress. This process will also serve as an opportunity to revisit the original Theory of Change designed for the Bill, account for any changes made to the policy during the legislative drafting process and ensure that intended outcomes and impacts of different policy interventions are clearly articulated and identified. It is on this basis that an evaluation of the Act will be designed.

A formative evaluation will be conducted within the initial few years of implementation and will focus on whether policy changes are being implemented as intended and are resulting in improvements to the infrastructure underpinning Welsh language policy planning. This is particularly pertinent for certain elements of the Act such as the National Framework and the new process for categorising schools based on the amount of Welsh language education provided.

Summative evaluation will be conducted towards the end of the ten-year appraisal period (incorporating development of the first two National Frameworks and local WESPs) to determine whether the Act has had the desired impact on the number of pupils leaving statutory education able to speak Welsh confidently and independently.

The summative evaluation will also serve as an opportunity to determine whether the Act has resulted in the desired behaviour change with regard to Welsh language planning. Utilising behaviour change models such as COM-B may be useful during this process to understand whether the Capability, Opportunity and/or Motivation of key stakeholders to engage in the desired behaviour has occurred as a result of the Act.

Effective implementation of the Act will depend on understanding why specific groups (as identified in the impact assessments) are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and any unintended consequences of the Act. Furthermore, there will be a need to determine the extent of the positive intended outcomes of the Act in terms of access to Welsh language education for all children in Wales. This will be factored into both summative and formative evaluations.

Finally, an economic evaluation will be completed to identify any differences between actual costs of the Act and the costs forecasted in the RIA.

Annex A - Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Introduction

The Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) considers the effect of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act on children in Wales and their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty that applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18. It was ratified by the UK in December 1991 and came into force in the UK in January 1992.

The Welsh Government adopted the convention as the basis for policymaking for children and young people in Wales in 2004. Children's rights in Wales are further protected by the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, which requires the Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the substantive rights and obligations within the UNCRC and its optional protocols.

CRIAs are a key mechanism for implementing the UNCRC. The Welsh Government has committed to undertaking them as a means of ensuring that due regard is given to children's rights when introducing legislation or exercising ministerial functions.

In preparing the Act, consideration was given to whether children and particular groups of children may be affected. This has informed the analysis of how the Act impacts on the articles of the convention.

Policy objectives

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act is presented in the context of the significant challenge set by the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, and the target of one million speakers. This calls for transformative changes to the way we think about the Welsh language in general, and specifically the role of education within that. The Act sets out steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become independent and confident Welsh speakers through the statutory education system. The Act also makes provision for supporting the Welsh language more widely than the education sector.

PART 1: Promotion and facilitation of use of the Welsh language

Reflect the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 in law

- Provide a statutory basis for the target of one million speakers by requiring any Welsh language strategy developed by the Welsh Ministers under section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 to include a target of one million Welsh speakers, at least, by 2050; other targets relating to the use of the language; and steps to encourage transmission of the Welsh language.
- Place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to review the standards set under section 26 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 within 12 months of publishing the Code to describe Welsh language ability. This review will determine whether certain standards need to be revised to reflect the Code and to meet the targets set in the Welsh language strategy.

PART 2: Describing Welsh language ability

Prepare a code to establish a standard method of describing Welsh language ability

- Establish the concept of three types of Welsh language user.
- Describe the general characteristics of Welsh language users on the basis of the six common reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- Place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a code that will establish a standard method of describing the specific characteristics of Welsh language users based on the common reference levels. This will facilitate a shared understanding by learners, teachers, parents and employers of an individual's journey to learn the Welsh language and the expected linguistic outcomes at each stage of that journey.

PART 3: Welsh language education

Categorise the Welsh language education provided by schools; Welsh language education delivery plans; and late immersion provision

- Establish a statutory regime to categorise schools' provision of Welsh language education. This includes:
 - creating three statutory categories: (i) "Primarily Welsh Language" (ii) "Dual Language" and (iii) "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh";
 - setting a minimum of Welsh-medium education to be provided in each category, along with Welsh language learning goals for pupils;
 - allowing ministers, in regulations, to increase the minimum provision of Welsh language education over time as factors such as workforce availability change;
 - place a duty on ministers to decide whether the minimum amount for the category "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" should be increased every five years, paying particular attention to the impact this would have on meeting the targets of the Welsh language strategy.
 - requiring schools to provide Welsh language education provision in accordance with the range of their language category;
 - allowing "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools to apply for a temporary exemption to the duty to provide education provision in accordance with their category where more time is required to reach the statutory minimum;
 - require each local authority to maintain a list of the language category of each school in its area and any new schools proposed.
- Require schools to prepare Welsh language education delivery plans outlining, amongst other things, how they will improve or increase their Welsh language education provision and where applicable, plan to move to a higher language category over time.

- Give local authorities the role of approving a school's delivery plan and language category.
- Place a requirement on local authorities to take all reasonable steps to provide late immersion education in Welsh and encourage demand for and participation in late immersion education.

PART 4: Planning Welsh Language Education and Learning

National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

- Place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to produce a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh which sets out the education provided for pupils of compulsory school age and for lifelong Welsh language learning. The Framework will create a link between the national targets and the targets at local authority level in relation to Welsh in education. The Framework will need to be updated every five years and achievement against the targets reported annually.

Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

- Change the system of WESPs, by shifting the focus towards plans that outline the steps the local authority intends to take to achieve the targets set upon them by the Welsh Ministers in the National Framework for increasing Welsh language education provision in their schools.
- Require such plans to detail the steps the local authority will take to:
 - promote and facilitate Welsh language education and the use of Welsh in schools in its area;
 - improve the provision of Welsh language education in the maintained schools in its area;
 - improve the process of planning the provision of Welsh language education in its area;
 - promote and provide information about the Welsh language education provided in “Primarily Welsh Language” schools and “Dual Language” schools;
 - meet its duty to promote late immersion education and to take all reasonable steps to provide late immersion education in its area;
 - facilitate progression in teaching Welsh and education through the medium of Welsh between nursery education and education for pupils of compulsory school age, and between education for pupils of compulsory school age and tertiary education.
- The plans will also need to include information about the education workforce.
- Dissolve Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

PART 5: National Institute for Learning Welsh

- Establish the National Institute for Learning Welsh (“the Institute”) as a new statutory body, and provide for its membership, its governance and its functions.

- The Institute's objective is to facilitate and support people to learn Welsh, so that more people (of all ages) are learning the language and using it daily.
- The Act places a number of duties on the Institute in order to achieve this objective, including to:
 - provide strategic leadership and direction to all Welsh language learning providers;
 - provide opportunities to learn Welsh and improve levels of ability in Welsh for those over compulsory school age;
 - provide, or facilitate the provision of, Welsh language learning materials;
 - develop a national curriculum for Welsh language learning for those over compulsory school age, and arrange provision to facilitate progress along the common reference levels;
 - design and develop Welsh language learning provision for those over compulsory school age, or facilitate such work. The provision must include a variety of learning levels based on the common reference levels;
 - plan the development of the education workforce and provide training in order to improve Welsh language teaching methods;
 - collect and publish data on Welsh learners.
- Enable the Institute to give financial assistance to Welsh language learning providers, provide advice to any persons on teaching and learning Welsh and co-ordinate and commission research on teaching and learning Welsh.
- Require the Institute to:
 - promote innovation and continuous improvement in relation to learning Welsh;
 - promote equality of opportunity and increasing participation in Welsh language learning by those in under-represented groups;
 - promote collaboration and co-ordination in relation to learning Welsh and share best practice;
 - prepare a strategic plan and set out the Institute's arrangements for preparing, submitting, publishing and revising the strategic plan;
 - prepare and publish an annual report on the exercise of its functions. The Welsh Ministers must lay the report before the Senedd.

Gathering evidence and engaging with children and young people

In gathering evidence to support the Impact Assessment, officials have engaged with a range of policy, legal and research colleagues within the Welsh Government. Policy officials have also undertaken / considered the following in relation to the possible impacts of the Act:

- The Welsh Government issued a consultation on the proposals for a Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act on 27 March 2023, which closed on 16 June

2023. There were 538 responses, 366 of which were unique. The consultation posed 36 questions relating to various aspects of the proposals. The responses were varied and, as with the proposals themselves, related mainly to the proposed changes to planning and resourcing Welsh language education provision in schools. Some responses did relate specifically to the impacts upon children and young people. These are referenced in the analysis below. A summary of responses is available.

- Cymdeithas yr Iaith collected comments on postcards at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Carmarthenshire between 29 May and 3 June 2023. The postcards were submitted to Welsh Government officials for consideration as part of the consultation. They are understood to be mainly comments from children and young people, although a small number of responses appeared to have been completed by parents/guardians.

A total of 239 postcards were received. 192 offered comments giving reasons why they want every child in Wales to receive a Welsh language education. 47 signed the postcard without further comment. The vast majority of responses were received in Welsh; 9 responses were in English. All responses were without exception supportive of the Welsh language. No comments disagreed with the text of the template. A summary of the main themes is included in Appendix 3 of the summary of responses.

- The IIA drew on data available on the education system in Wales, including PLASC and GCSE data.
- The National Survey for Wales and the Welsh Language Use Survey were used to gain a better understanding of attitudes towards the Welsh language.
- Secondary sources referenced explicitly in this document include:
 - BBC News. (2020). Black and Welsh: The assumptions and questions people face. BBC News.
 - Black and Welsh. (2020b). BBC One Wales. 26 October
 - Welsh Language Commissioner and Children's Commissioner for Wales. (2023). The Welsh Language in the Additional Learning Needs System. issue brief. Online.
 - Welsh Government. (2021a). Parent beliefs, behaviours and barriers: childcare and early education. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2021b). The Additional Learning Needs Code. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2022). Welsh in Education Workforce Plan. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2023b). Education guidance to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

- Welsh Government. (2024). Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- Welsh Government. (2023a). Evaluation of the Additional Learning Needs system. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

The white paper consultation and the engagement exercise commissioned by the Welsh Government drew responses from a range of stakeholders, some of whom, such as the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Wales, were in a position to represent the views of children and young people.

However, the Welsh Government is aware that the Children's Commissioner for Wales had expressed disappointment about the lack of specific engagement with children regarding the white paper's proposals. The Welsh Government consequently engaged with children and young people through workshops undertaken on its behalf by Urdd Gobaith Cymru in February 2024. Over 66 participants aged between 11-18 took part in the workshops. The workshops were held in Welsh- and English-medium schools and youth clubs in Cardiff, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Bridgend, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Wrexham, the Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly. The workshops explored the broad principles and aims underpinning the Act.

The responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the Act's aims and particularly the notion that all pupils, regardless of which school they attend, should have the opportunity to learn and speak Welsh independently by the age of 16: "Learning the language of your country should be your right [author's translation]" (Workshop Participant, Vale of Glamorgan). A small number of respondents caveated their supportive remarks with the suggestion that learning Welsh should not be compulsory: "Yes, they should have the opportunity to learn Welsh if they want [author's translation]" (Workshop Participant, Vale of Glamorgan).

Participants discussed the benefits of learning Welsh, with many highlighting the social and professional benefits: "It can broaden your job opportunities and help you get better jobs in the future" (Workshop Participant, Merthyr Tydfil). Participants also believed that there were a range of social, cultural and professional benefits related to all learners having the opportunity to learn Welsh.

A qualitative survey was also conducted by Children in Wales' Young Wales team during its residential course in February 2024. Ten young people participated, with one doing so in Welsh. Participants largely believed that pupils in Wales should have the chance to learn Welsh by age 16. They emphasised the importance of choice, opportunity and fairness in relation to opportunities to learn Welsh. Participants also saw value in being an independent and confident speaker, particularly in relation to future careers. However, some participants expressed a concern that the teaching of Welsh should not overshadow or diminish the quality of teaching of key subjects such as Maths, Science and English.

The post implementation review will explore the views of children and young people and will consider the assessments of children and young people as a measure of the Act's success.

Analysing the evidence and assessing the impact

In 2017-18, the National Survey for Wales included questions about the Welsh language, exploring Welsh speakers' confidence to speak the language as well as attitudes towards the language of both those who said they speak Welsh and those who said they did not. Of respondents aged 16-24, 82% agreed that Welsh was something to be proud of; 73% said that they would like to learn Welsh; and 70% agreed that the Welsh language needed more support.

The 2019/20 Welsh Language Use Survey provides additional insights into the attitudes of young Welsh speakers towards the Welsh language. The young people version of the survey found that half of 11 to 15 year olds who are able to speak Welsh agreed or strongly agreed that the Welsh language was an important element of their identity (54%). Furthermore, 80% of 11 to 15 year olds who spoke Welsh said that they were glad that they were able to speak Welsh.

The National Survey and Welsh Language Use Survey results suggest that most young people in Wales are supportive of the Welsh language and would welcome the opportunity to learn Welsh, providing further support for the Act's aim to widen the access of children and young people to the Welsh language, ensuring that all children, no matter where they live in Wales and regardless of linguistic or other background, have the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers.

This will initially involve improving and strengthening the planning and resourcing infrastructure underpinning Welsh language education in schools throughout Wales, which in turn will ensure that all learners have the opportunity to become independent and confident Welsh speakers.

The Welsh Government believes that the Act could contribute to the tackling poverty agenda by equipping children and young people with Welsh language skills that they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to develop. As a result, it is possible that these individuals will be able to apply for jobs where the Welsh language is desirable or essential, thereby enabling them to benefit from more opportunities within the labour market which might otherwise have been closed to them. The engagement exercises found that similar views were held by children and young people, with largely agreement amongst participants that ability in Welsh is "an important skill for jobs in Wales" (engagement exercise participant). The clear direction from the Welsh Government regarding lifelong acquisition of the Welsh language will also lead to more children, young people and adults, whatever their age, being able to continue to learn and to improve their Welsh language skills.

Alongside the potential employment benefits of bilingualism and Welsh language skills, the Welsh Government believes that increased Welsh language skills may offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people. Whether within professional or other contexts, more people will have opportunities to engage in activities in a choice of languages. More people, including children and young people, will also be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers may also support

children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities.

The Welsh Government nonetheless acknowledges the potential for the Act to impact on children and young people in different ways, and a degree of mitigation is required to avoid any potential negative impacts for some groups of children and young people. Potential negative impacts are discussed in detail below, alongside the mitigations in place to limit them.

Each Part of the Act is addressed in turn below, detailing the ways in which the provisions may impact children. The possible impact upon children and young people with a protected characteristic(s) is discussed in detail within the Equalities Impact Assessment. However, some points are also included below.

PART 1: Promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language

Reflect the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 in the law

In making it a duty for the Welsh Language Strategy to include a target of at least a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and making provision for a linguistic outcome for learners through the education system, the Act seeks to ensure that all learners in Wales, regardless of geography or local cultural-linguistic context, are part of and supported to contribute to the national mission of increasing the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050.

The Welsh Government believes this will have a positive impact upon all children and young people who attend maintained schools. Some respondents to the white paper consultation noted that some children are currently unable to access Welsh-medium education, as there is no provision available in the vicinity of their homes. In the workshops undertaken by Urdd Gobaith Cymru and the qualitative survey conducted by Children in Wales, children and young people noted their view that all pupils in Wales should have the opportunity to learn Welsh. Further, in the qualitative survey by Children in Wales, children and young people emphasised the importance of choice, opportunity and fairness in relation to opportunities to learn Welsh. This Act will widen access to Welsh language education. Providing clarity and defining a Welsh language learning goal for each school language category could also lead to a wider range of opportunities for learners, both in employment and in their daily lives. Individuals entering the workforce will be able to articulate and define their language ability.

PART 2: Describing Welsh language ability

A Code to establish a standard method of describing Welsh language ability

The Welsh Government believes that a Code which describes Welsh language ability based on the six common reference levels of the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' will contribute to children and young people's understanding of the expected linguistic outcomes at each stage of the journey to learn Welsh. Upon entry into the labour market, this Code will enable all learners to better define their skills to employers, regardless of location and cultural-linguistic context of the employer. Likewise, employers will be better placed to understand a candidate's level

of ability in the language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice. Consequently, this may lessen the risk of employers drawing on subjective and potentially prejudicial or stereotyped judgements of a candidate's language abilities. Black Welsh people for example, are sometimes assumed to be unable to speak Welsh (see BBC, 2020; 2020b).

A Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability may support children and young people to maintain and build upon their Welsh language skills and reap the benefits of bilingualism in adulthood.

White paper consultation respondents also believed that a single framework, such as this, would provide a general understanding and increased clarity for parents and pupils regarding the likely linguistic outcomes for learners in every school language category.

PART 3: Welsh language education

Categorising the Welsh language education provision of schools; Welsh language education delivery plans; and late immersion provision

A standard system for categorising schools based on the amount of Welsh language education provided, along with increasing and improving Welsh language education provision, will lead to a widening of children and young people's access to Welsh language education wherever they live. This process will also provide clarity to parents/guardians and learners in relation to the language provision in their school and the learners' expected linguistic outcomes in Welsh.

Respondents to the white paper consultation noted that a statutory system for categorising schools based on the amount of Welsh language education provided would allow for accurate definition and regular monitoring, and it would set a foundation for progress in line with the *Cymraeg 2050* targets. Organisations responding to the white paper consultation also acknowledged that, ultimately, the categorisation process would benefit parents/guardians and pupils.

“Creating a categorisation system for maintained schools according to language category will clarify schools' curricular offer, making it easier for parents and carers to make informed choices”

With clarity regarding language provision within each category, schools will be in a better position to plan and develop their provision and workforce over time. Indeed, a number of respondents to the white paper consultation believed that defining the category descriptions would provide improved consistency across schools and reinforce the need for schools to plan for their workforce's professional learning needs. Categorisation, therefore, whilst primarily a process relating to education planning, will help bring about the changes necessary to increase and improve Welsh language education, and thereby improve children's experience, within schools over time.

The Act specifies the amount of Welsh language education to be provided in each school language category, including a minimum amount. The minimum for the “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” category is 10%. Increasing the amount of Welsh language education provided from the lowest base to the minimum of 10% in

these schools may have impact on some learners. In general, we consider the impact to be positive as it will help, alongside the provisions regarding the Welsh language learning goals for each language category and the schools' Welsh language education delivery plans, to ensure that learners in all schools have the opportunity to become independent Welsh speakers.

The potential negative impacts could be that increasing the Welsh language education provided could reduce the amount of time available on the school timetable for other elements of the curriculum. The minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision equates to approximately 2.5 hours on average per week. In "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools, this would likely be mainly fulfilled by Welsh (subject) lessons. The Welsh Government will publish guidance relating to extending the provision of Welsh language education and how to do so in a proportionate manner. The guidance will also discuss when and how to appropriately extend provision in relation to a range of subjects/areas. This is consequently considered a low risk, with low impact that can be mitigated.

A community special school will be required to prepare a Welsh language education delivery plan but will not be designated a language category, unless the governing body of the school wishes to have one designated. This will allow each of these schools to plan their Welsh language education in the way that best meets their individual circumstances and pupils.

PART 4: Planning of Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

The National Framework will help to ensure that lifelong Welsh language education and learning Welsh provision is developed and enhanced. In addition to setting out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take to increase and improve provision of Welsh language education in schools, the National Framework will set out the steps that Welsh Ministers will take to provide opportunities for persons of all ages in Wales to learn Welsh, including through childcare to those below compulsory school age, through nursery education, through tertiary education, in the workplace and in the community. These steps are expected to impact positively on children at all stages of their childcare and education journey.

The National Framework will set out steps to ensure that training, professional development and support is available for education practitioners in Wales for the purposes of improving ability in Welsh. This will be based on an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority in order to meet relevant targets outlined in the Act.

This will help ensure that all areas of Wales can develop and enhance their capacity to provide Welsh language education. This, in turn, will enhance access and opportunities to learn Welsh for all learners.

Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

The primary impact of these provisions will be to improve education planning, leading to an increase and improvement in the provision of Welsh language education for all

pupils over time. The local WESPs will help to widen pupils' access to Welsh language education across Wales wherever they live and increase the number of pupils developing Welsh language skills. The impact on children, therefore, will be to have more access to improved Welsh language education in schools over time. This includes provision for additional learning needs (ALN) in line with the duties set out in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (see below for more details on ALN).

A local authority will need to set out how it will promote and facilitate teaching Welsh and education and training through the medium of Welsh for children who are not pupils in maintained schools (as defined in the Act). This would include, for example, children who are EOTAS.

The Act's provisions will allow for more effective and responsive planning in relation to groups of learners that have been under-represented in Welsh-medium education in the past. The Welsh Government believes that education planners will have opportunities to develop over time a better understanding of the support and learning requirements of all learners living within their area.

Placing duties on local authorities to include in their local WESPs steps to promote education in "Primarily Welsh Language" category schools will improve understanding of the benefits of Welsh-medium education. Welsh is a minority language, and as such, there is a need to take additional steps to explain Welsh-medium education to parents that do not speak Welsh, or who are not familiar with the cultural-linguistic or educational context in Wales. Whilst beneficial to a range of people, Welsh Government believes that this provision will have a particular impact upon people with less understanding and familiarity with the cultural-linguistic context in Wales, or who may not be aware that children from families that do not speak Welsh can also attend Welsh-medium schools.

Respondents to the white paper consultation emphasised that placing a duty on local authorities to promote Welsh-medium education could help to provide greater clarity and information for parents in relation to the language categories of schools in their area, and the expected linguistic outcomes of learners. With a formal mandate in place, parents could access more comprehensive information about the options available to them in terms of Welsh-medium education. This, according to some white paper consultation respondents, could empower parents to make more informed decisions on their children's education. Qualitative research in relation to childcare and early education noted that parents who felt unable to make use of Welsh-medium or bilingual education and childcare, may be encouraged to do so if they had greater awareness of Welsh-medium settings in the local authority (Welsh Government, 2021a: 52).

Moreover, providing and promoting late immersion education in Welsh will widen access to the Welsh language for children and young people in Wales who wish to access Welsh-medium education at various entry points. This provision will enable all children and young people to access Welsh-medium education, and ensure the necessary support will be available to them if they choose to do so.

PART 5: National Institute for Learning Welsh

Establishing a new statutory body: the National Institute for Learning Welsh.

Establishing a new statutory body, the National Institute for Learning Welsh, will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills.

As well as supporting adults to learn Welsh, the Institute will also become key in supporting schools, learners and parents/guardians once it is established. In particular, it could build on the experience and record of the National Centre for Learning Welsh in developing courses and teaching Welsh to adults whose first language is not English. This will further support and enable schools and education planners to develop responsive and effective provision, including to children from diverse linguistic backgrounds, helping to widen access to the Welsh language.

Through specialist language training to education professionals; co-operating with stakeholders to develop resources to support Welsh language learning and teaching; and acting as a one-stop-shop for supporting all aspects of Welsh language learning, the Institute will help all schools meet the challenges of increasing the amount and improving the quality of Welsh language education, ultimately benefitting all learners in Wales.

Possible impacts in relation to additional learning needs

The Welsh Government recognises the challenges relating to additional learning provision (ALP) through the medium of Welsh, and this was an issue raised by a number of respondents to the white paper consultation. In their policy paper ‘The Welsh Language in the Additional Learning Needs System’, the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Children’s Commissioner for Wales noted that several local authorities cannot determine if needs are being met whilst most local authorities reported that they cannot offer provision through the medium of Welsh for many additional learning needs. In these cases, some learners must receive support in English, or choose English-medium education from the outset, knowing that Welsh-medium ALP is lacking. The report notes that there are two key challenges to providing adequate ALN support through the medium of Welsh: a lack of specialised workforce with the language skills and the difficulty in offering specialised provision when numbers likely to take advantage of the provision is comparatively low (see Welsh Language Commissioner and Children’s Commissioner for Wales. 2023).

The Welsh Government’s scoping report to inform the approach to the evaluation of the ALN system identified the following challenges:

“In summary, based on the evidence reviewed there are clear challenges to realising the core aim of creating a bilingual ALN system. These challenges include weaknesses in strategic planning to support and develop Welsh-medium ALP, limited Welsh language resources, and a shortage of qualified staff able to support ALN learners through the medium of Welsh. The evaluation will need to explore how these issues are being addressed and whether there is effective implementation of the ALN system in Welsh-medium settings” (Welsh Government, 2023a: 82).

With an increase in students accessing Welsh-medium education, there is likely to be an increase in demand for specialist education services or resources through the medium of Welsh. Left unaddressed, there is potential for children and young people with ALN to continue facing challenges in accessing specialist education services. It is also possible that some children with ALN may not fully benefit from wider access to Welsh-medium education if a choice is made to access English-medium education due to insufficient Welsh-medium ALP.

As "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools develop their Welsh language education, and increase the learning offered through the medium of Welsh, there may be additional challenges for some students with ALN associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons should it lead to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum.

Community special schools will be required to prepare a Welsh language education delivery plan, setting out the amount of Welsh language education they provide and proposals for how they will promote use of the Welsh language within the school. This information will provide greater understanding and increased clarity for parents on the Welsh language education provision within these schools, supporting them to make informed decisions. It will also enable community special schools to widen access to the Welsh language in ways that are appropriate for their pupils.

Mitigations

Planning is already in place to increase ALP through the medium of Welsh. The ALN Code sets out requirements and guidance for schools, further education institutions, local authorities, NHS bodies and others on the ALN system. One of the ALN Code's core principles is to create a bilingual system:

"(e) A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time" (Welsh Government, 2021b: 37).

The Welsh in Education Workforce Plan also sets out a number of actions that aim to develop capacity and expertise to support learners with ALN (see Welsh Government, 2022: 26-27). Moreover, local WESPs will enable more effective planning in relation to the workforce and the specialist provision needed. Local authorities are already required to use the findings of its reviews under section 63 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 to improve Welsh language education provision for persons with ALN and for workforce planning within the ALN sector. This will continue to be monitored annually through the WESPs.

The Welsh Government considers that the likely increase in demand for specialist ALP through the medium of Welsh as a result of the Act, may help alleviate key challenges facing planners and schools at the moment. Currently:

"...local authorities fail to see viable solutions considering the clear financial and resource constraints they face and the need to provide ALN support in a way that meets the needs of the majority" (Welsh Language Commissioner and Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023).

With demand for the provision likely to increase, alongside more strategic and deliberate efforts to plan and increase the number of practitioners able to teach through the medium of Welsh, the Act may make Welsh-medium ALP more cost effective.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 also sets out the statutory obligation on the Welsh Ministers to review and report on the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh. The first report on the outcome of the review must be published before 1 September, five years after the commencement of the Act (which is 1 September 2026). The Welsh Government has established a Welsh-medium ALN implementation steering group to advise on recommendations to improve access to Welsh-medium ALP and develop an evidence base for the review. A dedicated Welsh language national ALN implementation lead has also been recruited whose role includes considering the availability of provision across Wales and working to develop and improve access to, and quality of, Welsh-medium provision and resources. The ministers must publish subsequent reports before 1 September in every fifth year after the first report. This presents a further opportunity to explore and address the adequacy of Welsh medium ALP. The post-implementation review offers a further opportunity to build on this, exploring the Act's implementation and impacts in relation to Welsh-medium ALP.

Possible additional challenges for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils and pupils that qualify for free school meals

PLASC data (February 2022) indicates that of those who attend Welsh-medium education, 4.3% are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils and 13.5% are eligible for free school meals. Of those attending English-medium education, in comparison, 15.5% are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils and 23.3% are eligible for free school meals. There are limitations in the data available on the language of education specifically of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people. However, it is similarly believed that the percentage of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is lower in Welsh-medium schools than in English-medium schools. Of course, there is likely to be considerable diversity within these groups of learners in relation to access to Welsh-medium education, which we do not yet fully understand.

The Welsh Government recognises the need to develop a better understanding of why some groups of learners are under-represented in Welsh-medium schools and to identify any potential barriers. In discussions with local authority officers in relation to Welsh-medium education, for example, Welsh Government officials have noted that a lack of, or misleading information regarding, Welsh-medium education may be a barrier to access. These discussions reflect the findings of qualitative research in relation to childcare and early education, which noted that parents who felt unable to make use of Welsh-medium or bilingual education and childcare at present, may be encouraged to do so if they had greater awareness of Welsh-medium settings in the local authority (Welsh Government, 2021: 52).

The Welsh Government expects the Act to involve a greater degree of change and reform over a longer timeframe within "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools, and particularly schools moving from the lowest base toward the minimum

required hours (10%). Comprehension and familiarity with the Welsh language is likely to be lowest amongst learners in these schools. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners and those who are eligible for free school meals are on average more likely to attend these schools. Consequently, these learners are more likely on average to experience the impacts of the increase and improvement in Welsh language education in these schools, including the enhanced opportunities but also any challenges associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons should this lead to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum. Responses to the Children in Wales' Young Wales Team consultation included concerns that the teaching of Welsh should not overshadow or diminish the quality of teaching of key subjects such as Maths, Science and English.

Mitigations

"Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools moving from the lowest base toward the minimum required hours of 10% will be supported in many ways. The minimum hours will not be introduced immediately. Schools will have time to plan appropriately for raising their Welsh language education provision towards the minimum. Furthermore, the Act also enables schools to apply for a temporary exemption (up to 3 years initially, with the possibility of up to a further 3 years) to the requirement to provide Welsh language education in accordance with their language category, where more time is needed to reach the statutory minimum.

There is a specific risk that wider education may be impacted as the amount of Welsh language education increases, possibly at the expense of other elements of the curriculum. The minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision equates to approximately 2.5 hours on average per week. In "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools, this would likely be mainly fulfilled by Welsh (subject) lessons. The Welsh Government will publish guidance relating to extending the provision of Welsh language education and how to do so in a proportionate manner. The guidance will also discuss when and how to appropriately extend provision in relation to a range of subjects/areas. This is consequently considered a low risk, with low impact that can be mitigated.

The Welsh Government regards the Act as an opportunity to improve the linguistic outcomes of groups of learners who are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium schools, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners and those who are eligible for free school meals – whatever language category of the schools they attend. The Welsh Government recognises the need to develop a better understanding of why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified.

Ensuring Welsh-medium education is a choice and accessible to all is a priority for the Welsh Government. The Act will require local authorities to prepare local WESPs and to improve the planning of education provision through the medium of Welsh in its area. Ensuring access to the language will be a key part of each local authority's local WESP and all local authorities are instructed by the Welsh Government's guidance to consider how it will increase opportunities for all learners to access Welsh-medium

education. This would include groups who have been under-represented in Welsh-medium education in the past, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners and learners eligible for free school meals.

The Act will establish the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will build on the experience of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre for Learning Welsh has experience in engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, including those who are new to Wales and those whose English is limited. It has developed and tailored courses and resources to support the learning of Welsh. It has also developed a strategy to increase engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. The Institute will be able to build on the experience and resources already developed to further support and enable education planners and schools to identify and overcome any barriers affecting some groups of learners, whilst developing responsive and effective provision for all.

The Welsh Government has published guidance on how schools and settings can improve support for learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (see Welsh Government, 2023b). This should further support work to develop effective and responsive provision for this group of students.

The Welsh Government will monitor the success of the Act's implementation as well as emerging lessons from schools and local authorities as they plan for and implement Act provisions. The post-implementation review will include consideration of how the Act has increased access to Welsh-medium education among all learners as well as under-represented groups, and the aspects of implementation at national and local levels that have underpinned the changes observed. The Welsh Government would consider an increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners, and those who are eligible for free school meals, who can speak Welsh to be a measure of the Act's success.

Informal opportunities

Whilst the Act focuses on the statutory education system, informal opportunities to learn and use the language are an important aspect of language learning. Schools will be required to develop delivery plans, detailing how they will increase and/or improve their Welsh language education provision over a period of time. The delivery plans will require schools to set out how they will promote a Welsh language ethos and culture within the school and promote use of the Welsh language within the school.

Child Poverty objectives

The Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024 sets the long-term objectives and priorities for contributing towards the eradication of child poverty, and the eradication of the worst effects of being in poverty in Wales for the next decade or more. The strategy presents five objectives. The provisions set out in this Act may contribute in the following ways.

Objective 1: to reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families.

Whilst not directly aimed at reducing costs and maximising incomes, the indirect impact of the provisions will support this objective. Firstly, and more immediately, as

the number of “Primarily Welsh Language” schools increases across Wales, this will diminish the need for learners to travel beyond their local areas to access Welsh-medium education. Qualitative research conducted with parents suggested that improving transport to Welsh-medium settings is one of the factors that would encourage parents to make use of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision (Welsh Government, 2021: 52).

Secondly, enabling pupils to become confident and independent Welsh speakers, and to demonstrate their ability in line with internationally-recognised common reference levels through the Code, could lead to a wider range of employment opportunities for them in the future.

Objective 2: to create pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have opportunities to realise their potential.

As noted in relation to Objective 1 above, improved Welsh language skills may open up access to employment opportunities where the Welsh language is a desirable or necessary skill. This will support children to access pathways out of poverty through employment.

Objective 3: to support child and family wellbeing and make sure that work across the Welsh Government delivers for children living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes.

The Welsh Government anticipates that increased Welsh language skills will offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people. More people will be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces and to engage with social and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers will also support children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities.

The Equalities Impact Assessment details the positive impact Act provisions will have upon children with protected characteristics. Ultimately, the aim will be to understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified for these groups, which includes Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, learners with ALN, and those who are eligible for free school meals.

Objective 4: to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.

Ultimately, the Act seeks to ensure that all learners in Wales have the opportunity to become independent and confident Welsh speakers. This will include, as detailed above, deliberate planning to understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified for these groups, including those from lower income families who are eligible for free school meals.

Objective 5: to ensure that effective cross-government working at the national level enables strong collaboration at the regional and local level.

The Act seeks to ensure that better and more coordinated planning takes place for Welsh language education at the national, local authority and school levels as well as between these levels. Moreover, establishing the National Institute for Learning Welsh will offer further support to local authorities and schools to plan and deliver more and better Welsh language education.

- How does your proposal enhance or challenge children's rights, as stipulated by the UNCRC articles and its Optional Protocols? Please refer to the articles to see which ones apply to your own policy.

The Welsh Government is eager for the Act to enhance children's rights, and believes that it will do so in relation to articles 2, 8, 22, 28, 29, 30 and 31. The Welsh Government does not believe that the provisions will challenge any articles.

UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
Article 2 The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.	X		The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education for all pupils in Wales, regardless of race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.
Article 8 Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.	X		For some, the Welsh language is a component of national identity. Providing access to the language to all pupils in Wales will enhance children's right to their conception of their Welsh nationality.
Article 22 Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.	X		The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education for all pupils, regardless of background. Local authorities will be required to make immersion provision in Welsh available to newcomers and latecomers to Welsh-medium education. This will ensure access to Welsh-medium education to learners that move to Wales. This will further support and enable such families to engage with the communities in which they live and ensure that their children are able to access the same educational

			opportunities as all other learners in Wales.
Article 28 Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.	X		The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education. All learners in Wales will have opportunities to become confident, independent Welsh speakers through their education.
Article 29 Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents', their own and other cultures and the environment.	X		The Act supports the <i>Cymraeg 2050</i> strategy, which aims to achieve one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Through the statutory education system, the Act's provisions promote the Welsh language and Welsh culture, and encourage children to take advantage of them. In time, every learner will have the opportunity to become a confident an independent Welsh speaker. Alongside the employment benefits of bilingualism and Welsh language skills, the Welsh Government believes that increased Welsh language skills will offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people.
Article 30 Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.	X		The Act will promote the rights of children and young people to access the Welsh language and Welsh culture by promoting formal and informal opportunities to use the language in line with their rights to cultural participation.
Article 31 All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.	X		The Act intends for schools to promote informal activities through the medium of Welsh, which will include leisure, cultural and artistic activities.

			<p>The increased Welsh language skills that all pupils will have opportunities to acquire, will offer more cultural and social opportunities for children and young people.</p>
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Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment

How will the proposal promote equality?

Principle and aims of the Act

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act introduces a number of provisions that primarily relate to planning, resourcing and supporting the development of Welsh language education throughout Wales. There will be an impact on children and young people's education as a result of the changes to planning, resourcing and supporting schools, which will evolve over an extended period of time. More learners, including learners who have been under-represented within Welsh-medium education in the past, will have the opportunity to become independent and confident Welsh speakers. The Act is therefore intended to promote equality, and specifically equality of opportunity and access to Welsh language education.

The Act will widen access to the Welsh language and ensure, in time, that all pupils can learn the language and become independent speakers, at least. However, implementation of the Act also offers an opportunity to further consider Welsh language education provision for disabled individuals and in relation to the anti-racism agenda specifically. The Act's provisions create opportunities to purposefully plan to ensure that the Welsh language is inclusive for all. This opportunity has been acknowledged by key stakeholders:

“This Bill offers a genuine opportunity to make Welsh a language for all, as the education system plays the most prominent role in teaching Welsh to children across Wales, regardless of race or ethnicity.” (white paper consultation response, Mudiad Meithrin)

Specific components of the Act

In making the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 a statutory target and making provision for Welsh language learning goals for all school language categories, the Act seeks to ensure that all learners in Wales, regardless of geography or local cultural-linguistic context, are part of and supported to contribute to the national mission of increasing the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050.

A Code will establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability. Upon entry into the labour market, the common reference levels will enable all learners to better communicate and define their skills to employers, regardless of location and cultural-linguistic context of the employer. Likewise, employers will be better placed to understand a candidate's level of ability in the language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice. Consequently, this may lessen the risk of employers drawing on subjective and potentially prejudicial or stereotyped judgements of a candidate's language abilities. Black Welsh people, for example, are sometimes assumed to be unable to speak Welsh (see BBC, 2020; 2020b).

White paper consultation respondents believed that a single Welsh language continuum such as this would provide a general understanding and increased clarity

for parents and pupils regarding Welsh language learning goals for learners in every school language category. The proportion of organisations who, in responding to the white paper consultation, agreed with the principle of introducing a continuum of Welsh language skills was 93%, whilst no organisations disagreed. It was believed that a Welsh language skills continuum would provide a common framework to support employers during recruitment processes to assess and communicate the Welsh language skills required within individual job roles.

“Such a continuum could provide a planning and measurement framework for the whole education sector from the very foundation, and beyond that, in the world of work and employment.” (White paper consultation response, Welsh Language Commissioner)

In relation to **school language categorisation**, the Welsh Government aims to ensure clarity in relation to the amount of Welsh language education provided in schools within each language category. Categorisation will provide clarity to parents/guardians and learners in relation to the language provision in their school and the Welsh language learning goals. A number of respondents to the white paper consultation strongly agreed that providing statutory status to the system of categorising schools according to Welsh language education provision would set a stronger foundation. These respondents also believed that the category descriptions would improve consistency across schools. Moreover, respondents felt that categorisation would reinforce the need for schools to plan for their workforce’s professional learning needs, in turn driving the change required in all schools to ensure that all learners can access Welsh language education and opportunities to become independent speakers over time.

Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (local WESPs) will allow for more effective and responsive planning in relation to minority groups. The Welsh Government believes that education planners will have opportunities over time to develop a better understanding of the support and learning requirements of all learners living within their area. Respondents to the white paper consultation also noted that they believed that the proposal that the Welsh Ministers set local targets for all local authorities, which link to national targets via the National Framework, would be a way of establishing appropriate, challenging and achievable aims for different local authorities. In turn, this would allow education planning to reflect different linguistic contexts and demographic considerations across Wales. The support offered to education planners will further enable more responsive planning and provision of Welsh language education, leading to better linguistic outcomes for learners.

Placing **duties on local authorities to proactively promote and provide information about the Welsh language education provided in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools** will improve understanding of the benefits of Welsh-medium education, and clarify the Welsh language learning goals. Welsh is a minority language, and as such, there is a need to take additional steps to explain Welsh-medium education to parents who do not speak Welsh, or who are not familiar with the cultural-linguistic or educational context in Wales. All people will benefit from being better informed of the linguistic context in Wales, and consequently better equipped to

make decisions about the education of their children. However, the Welsh Government believes that the provision will have a particular impact upon people with less understanding and familiarity with the cultural-linguistic context in Wales, or who are not aware that children from families that do not speak Welsh can also attend Welsh-medium schools. Among others, this might particularly benefit some groups, including people who have moved to Wales, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners who have been under-represented in Welsh-medium education in the past.

White paper consultation respondents emphasised that placing a duty on local authorities to promote Welsh-medium education could help provide greater clarity and information for parents, both in relation to the provision within schools and the Welsh language learning goals. With a formal mandate in place, respondents felt that parents could access more comprehensive information about the options available to them in terms of Welsh-medium education. This, according to some respondents, could empower parents to make informed decisions on their children's education. Qualitative research in relation to childcare and early education also noted that parents who felt unable to make use of Welsh-medium or bilingual education and childcare at present may be encouraged to do so if they had greater awareness of Welsh-medium settings in the local authority (Welsh Government, 2021: 52).

The Act requires local authorities to make immersion education in Welsh available to newcomers and latecomers to Welsh-medium education, as well as to encourage demand and provide information and advice about its availability. This provision will widen access to Welsh-medium education and make the necessary support available to those who choose to access it at various entry points. This is also particularly relevant to families that move to Wales. It will further support and enable such families to engage with the communities in which they live, whilst also ensuring that their children are able to access the same educational opportunities as all other learners in Wales.

The Act will establish a new statutory body, the **National Institute for Learning Welsh**, which will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills. The Institute will be key in supporting schools, learners and parents/guardians as the Act is implemented. This will be key to realising the objectives of the Act. It is expected that the Institute will undertake, amongst other things, the functions currently undertaken by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Centre was praised in a recent review by Estyn and a Rapid Review Report in 2021. The former review recommended that the Centre share its expertise in acquiring and learning the language with schools.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh has prepared a strategy to increase their engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to ensure that they have adequate and suitable opportunities to access opportunities to learn Welsh. The Centre also has experience in engaging with people who have moved to and are new to Wales, and those with limited English. It has, for example, recently developed courses and resources to support the learning of Welsh through the medium of Ukrainian, Cantonese, Syrian Arabic, Farsi and Pashto. Moreover, the Centre has, in

partnership with the Red Cross, refined and developed its support for refugees and asylum seekers by developing face-to-face lessons in appropriate locations.

The Institute will be able to build on the Centre's experience and record in developing courses and teaching Welsh to people whose first language is not English – albeit only in the post-16 sector at present – to further support and enable schools and education planners to develop responsive and effective provision to all, and to help ensure all learners have an opportunity to become confident and independent Welsh speakers.

What are the possible negative impacts on people in protected groups and those living in low income households and how will you mitigate for these?

Possible additional challenges for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

PLASC data (February 2022) indicates that 4.3% of those who attend Welsh-medium education are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils. compared to 15.5% of those who attend English-medium schools (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number and proportion of learners who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic by language medium of school

Type of school	Number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils	Percentage of pupils who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic by language medium of school
Welsh Medium	3,284	4.3%
Twin stream	501	6.8%
Transitional	14	3.7%
Bilingual type A	270	2.6%
Bilingual type B	593	5.8%
Bilingual type C	153	5.2%
Bilingual type Ch	0	(z)
English with significant use of Welsh	1,247	11.2%
English medium	52,917	15.5%

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), February 2022 (z = not applicable)

The Welsh Government recognises the need to develop a better understanding of this pattern. Discussions with local authority officers in relation to Welsh-medium education have suggested that a lack of, or misleading information regarding Welsh-medium education may be a barrier to access. These discussions reflect the findings of qualitative research in relation to childcare and early education, which noted that parents who felt unable to make use of Welsh-medium or bilingual education and childcare at present, may be encouraged to do so if they had greater awareness of Welsh-medium settings in the local authority (Welsh Government, 2021: 52). There are limitations in the data available on the language of education specifically of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people. However, it is similarly believed that the percentage of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is lower in Welsh-medium schools than in English-medium schools.

The Welsh Government expects the Act to involve a greater degree of change and reform over a longer timeframe within “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools, and particularly within schools moving from the lowest base toward the minimum required hours (10%). Comprehension and familiarity with the Welsh language is likely to be lowest amongst learners in these schools. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners are on average more likely to attend these schools. Consequently, they are more likely on average to experience the impacts of the increase and improvement in Welsh language education in these schools, including the enhanced opportunities but also any challenges associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons should this lead to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum. Responses to the Children in Wales’ Young Wales Team consultation noted concerns that the teaching of Welsh should not overshadow or diminish the quality of teaching of key subjects such as Maths, Science and English.

Mitigation

The “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools moving from the lowest base toward the minimum required hours of 10% will be supported in many ways. The minimum hours will not be introduced immediately. Schools will have time to plan appropriately for raising their Welsh language education provision toward the minimum.

There is a specific risk that wider education may be impacted as the amount of Welsh language education provided increases, possibly at the expense of other elements of the curriculum. The minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision equates to approximately 2.5 hours on average per week. In “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools this would likely be mainly fulfilled by Welsh (subject) lessons. The Welsh Government will publish guidance relating to extending the provision of Welsh language education and how to do so in a proportionate manner. The guidance will also discuss when and how to appropriately extend provision in relation to a range of subjects/areas. This is consequently considered a low risk, with low impact that can be mitigated.

More broadly, the Welsh Government regards the Act as an opportunity to improve the linguistic outcomes of groups of learners who are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium schools, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners, and children and young people from lower income families – whatever language category of the schools they attend. The Welsh Government recognises the need to develop a better understanding of why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place promptly to address any barriers identified.

The Act will establish the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will build on the experience of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre for Learning Welsh has experience in engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, including those who are new to Wales and those whose English is limited. It has developed and tailored courses and resources to support the learning of Welsh. It has also developed a strategy to increase engagement with people of Black, Asian and

Minority Ethnic communities. The Institute will be able to build on the experience and resources already developed to further support and enable education planners and schools to identify and overcome any barriers affecting some groups of learners, whilst developing responsive and effective provision for all.

The Welsh Government has published guidance on how schools and settings can improve support for learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (see Welsh Government, 2023). This should further support work to develop effective and responsive provision for this group of pupils.

The Welsh Government will monitor the success of the Act's implementation as well as emerging lessons from schools and local authorities as they plan for and implement Act provisions. The post-implementation review will include consideration of how the Act has increased access to Welsh-medium education among all learners as well as under-represented groups, and the aspects of implementation at national and local levels that have underpinned the changes observed. The Welsh Government would consider an increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, learners, and those who are eligible for free school meals who can speak Welsh to be a measure of the Act's success.

Diversifying the profession

Respondents to the white paper consultation identified a further and key challenge for the Welsh Government. Some respondents noted the current lack of diversity within the education sector, and the need to take steps to attract more individuals from minority groups to the profession. This was supported by the submission of the Children and Young People's Commissioner, who noted that young people have often raised the lack of diversity within the profession, particularly in relation to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and disabled teachers.

Mitigation

The Welsh Government recognises that a diverse profession will greatly support efforts to develop effective and responsive teaching and access to the Welsh language for all. The Act places duties on local authorities to include in their local WESPs information on the education workforce within their area and the steps they will take to ensure sufficient workforce with the necessary Welsh language skills to implement their plans. The Welsh Government would expect local authorities to acknowledge and seek to address within their local WESPs the challenges in their long-term planning for the workforce. The Welsh in Education Workforce Plan is the Welsh Government's 10-year plan for developing the Welsh language workforce in schools to realise the vision of *Cymraeg 2050*. It sets out a number of actions, including those to help increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Welsh-medium teachers in line with the 'Initial Teacher Education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Recruitment plan' (see Welsh Government, 2021; 2023: 16).

The Welsh Government also intends to monitor the make-up of the workforce capable of teaching through the medium of Welsh, further informing and supporting efforts to diversify the profession and to create role models and champions for minority groups.

The Welsh Government recognises, however, that some schools may not have vacancies arising in the short term, and that diversifying the workforce can only take place over a longer timeframe. This highlights the need to explore additional, alternative means of addressing this challenge in the short term, which will be considered further while implementing the Act.

Possible impacts in relation to additional learning needs

The Welsh Government recognises the challenges relating to additional learning provision (ALP) through the medium of Welsh, and this was an issue raised by a number of respondents to the white paper consultation. In their policy paper ‘The Welsh Language in the Additional Learning Needs System’, the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Children’s Commissioner for Wales noted that several local authorities cannot determine if needs are being met whilst most local authorities reported that they cannot offer provision through the medium of Welsh for many additional learning needs. In these cases, some learners must therefore receive support in English, or choose English-medium education from the outset, knowing that Welsh-medium ALP is lacking. The report notes that there are two key challenges to providing adequate ALP through the medium of Welsh: a lack of specialised workforce with the language skills and the difficulty in offering specialised provision when numbers likely to take advantage of the provision is comparatively low (see Welsh Language Commissioner and Children’s Commissioner for Wales, 2023).

With an increase in students accessing Welsh-medium education, there is likely to be an increase in demand for specialist education services or resources through the medium of Welsh. Left unaddressed, there is potential for children and young people with ALN to continue to face challenges in accessing specialist education services. It is also possible that some children with ALN may not fully benefit from wider access to Welsh-medium education if a choice is made to access English-medium education due to insufficient Welsh-medium ALP.

As “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools develop their Welsh language education, and increase the learning offered through the medium of Welsh, there may be additional challenges for some students with ALN associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons leading to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum. The amount of Welsh language education refers to the percentage of education and training provided over a school year during school sessions for pupils of compulsory school age; that is, on aggregate, rather than for each individual child.

Community special schools will be required to prepare a Welsh language education delivery plan, setting out the amount of Welsh language education they provide and proposals for how they will promote use of the Welsh language within the school. This information will provide greater understanding and increased clarity for parents on the Welsh language education provision within these schools, supporting them to make informed decisions. It will also enable community special schools to widen access to the Welsh language in ways that are appropriate for their pupils.

Mitigation

Planning is already in place to increase ALP through the medium of Welsh. The ALN Code sets out requirements and guidance for schools, further education institutions, local authorities, NHS bodies and others on the ALN system. One of the ALN Code's core principles is to create a bilingual system:

“(e) A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time” (Welsh Government, 2021b: 37).

The Welsh in Education Workforce Plan also sets out a number of actions that aim to develop capacity and expertise to support learners with ALN (see Welsh Government, 2022: 26-27). Moreover, local WESPs will enable more effective planning in relation to the workforce and the specialist provision needed. Local authorities are already required to use the findings of its reviews under section 63 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 to improve Welsh language education provision for persons with additional learning needs and for workforce planning within the additional learning needs sector. This will continue to be monitored annually through the WESPs.

The Welsh Government considers that the likely increase in demand for specialist ALP through the medium of Welsh as a result of the Act, may help alleviate key challenges facing planners and schools at the moment. Currently:

“...local authorities fail to see viable solutions considering the clear financial and resource constraints they face and the need to provide ALN support in a way that meets the needs of the majority.” (Welsh Language Commissioner and Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023).

With demand for the provision likely to increase, alongside more strategic and deliberate efforts to plan and increase the number of practitioners able to teach through the medium of Welsh, the Act may make Welsh-medium ALP more cost effective.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 also sets out the statutory obligation on the Welsh Ministers to review and report on the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh. The first report on the outcome of the review must be published before 1 September, five years after the commencement of the Act (which is 1 September 2026). The Welsh Government has established a Welsh-medium ALN implementation steering group to advise on recommendations to improve access to Welsh-medium provision and develop an evidence base for the review. A dedicated Welsh language national ALN implementation lead has also been recruited whose role includes considering the availability of ALP across Wales and working to develop and improve access to, and quality of, Welsh-medium provision and resources. The ministers must publish subsequent reports before 1 September in every fifth year after the first report. This presents a further opportunity to explore and address the adequacy of Welsh medium ALP. The post-implementation review offers a further opportunity to build on this, exploring the Act's implementation and impacts in relation to Welsh-medium ALP.

Treating one language more favourably than another

In relation to placing duties on local authorities to include in their local WESPs steps to promote Welsh language education provided in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools, some respondents to the white paper consultation were concerned that favouring one language or one model could inadvertently discriminate against English speakers. Whilst ‘English speakers’ are not defined by respondents, and is not a protected characteristic, the Welsh Government acknowledges that it may include people with a protected characteristic.

Mitigation

The Welsh Government does not believe that the Act provisions ‘favour’ one language over another. Rather, they promote the availability of and access to provision through a minority language. Welsh is a minority language, and as such, there is a need to take additional steps to explain Welsh-medium education to parents who do not speak Welsh, or who are not familiar with the cultural-linguistic or educational context in Wales. The provisions will improve access to information about Welsh-medium education for all, but particularly benefitting groups that have been under-represented in Welsh-medium education in the past.

In responding to the white paper consultation, 85% of respondents agreed with the proposals, and respondents called for more communication and promotion of the benefits of bilingualism and using the Welsh language as well as the advantages of Welsh-medium education.

Record of impacts by protected characteristic:

Please complete the next section to show how this policy / decision / practice could have an impact (positive or negative) on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010. It is important to note any opportunities you have identified that could advance or promote equality of opportunity. This includes identifying what we can do remove barriers and improve participation for people who are under-represented or suffer disproportionate disadvantage.

Lack of evidence is not a reason for *not assessing equality impacts*. Please highlight any gaps in evidence that you have identified and explain how/if you intend to fill these gaps.

Protected characteristic or group	What are the positive or negative impacts of the proposal?	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)	How will you mitigate Impacts?
Age (think about different age groups)	No impact noted	The provisions directly affect statutory education.	

<p>Disability (consider the social model of disability¹ and the way in which your proposal could inadvertently cause, or could be used to proactively remove, the barriers that disable people with different types of impairments)</p>	<p>Positive and negative</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>The provisions will give children and young people the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills and ensure they are supported to do so throughout their education journey.</p> <p>One of the outcomes in the local WESPs will be to improve provision and support for pupils with ALN, enabling more of those who need ALP to access it through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Community special schools will set out the amount of Welsh language education they provide and how they will promote use of the Welsh language within the school, widening access to the Welsh language in these schools in ways that are appropriate for their pupils.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>As schools develop their Welsh language education provision, and increase the learning offered through the medium of Welsh, there may be an increase in demand for specialist education services through the medium of Welsh. Left unaddressed, there is the potential for some protected groups such as children and young people with ALN to continue facing challenges in accessing specialist education services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>As “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools develop</p>	<p>Planning is already in place to increase ALP through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Local WESPs and the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan will support the improvement of ALP through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The likely increase in demand may enable education planners to provide more cost-effective responses to key challenges and barriers to ALP through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The amount of Welsh language education refers to the percentage of education and training provided over a school year during school sessions for pupils of compulsory school age; that is, on aggregate, rather than for each individual child.</p>
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¹ Welsh Government uses the social model of disability. We understand that disabled people are not disabled by their impairments but by barriers that they encounter in society. Ensuring that your proposal removes barriers, rather than creating them, is the best way to improve equality for disabled people. For more information, go to the intranet and search ‘social model’.

		their Welsh language education, and increase the learning offered through the medium of Welsh, there may be additional challenges for some students with ALN associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons leading to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum.	
Gender Reassignment (the act of transitioning and Transgender people)	No impact noted		
Pregnancy and maternity	No impact noted		
Race (include different ethnic minorities, Gypsies and Travellers and Migrants, Asylum seekers and Refugees)	Positive and negative	<p>Positive</p> <p>The Act will give all children and young people the opportunity to learn and gain Welsh language skills and ensure they are supported to do so throughout their education journey. The provisions will widen access to Welsh-medium education for all learners, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, who are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education.</p> <p>Local authorities will be required to make immersion education in Welsh available to newcomers and latecomers to Welsh-medium education. This provision will enable all children and young people to access Welsh-medium education, and to receive the necessary support if they choose to access it.</p> <p>The categorisation of schools based on the amount of Welsh</p>	<p>The Welsh Government regards the Act as an opportunity to improve the linguistic outcomes of learners who are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium schools, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roman and Traveller learners.</p> <p>The promotion and provision of late immersion education in Welsh will improve access to the Welsh language to people who move to Wales during their education journey.</p> <p>The National Institute for Learning Welsh will build on the experience and resources of the National Centre for Learning Welsh in supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic adults, those who are new to Wales and those whose English is limited. The</p>

		<p>language education provided will give parents and learners a better understanding of schools' language provision as well as their Welsh language learning goals.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners, are on average more likely to attend "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" schools, which face the most change and reform to achieve the minimum required hours of 10% of Welsh language education. They are consequently more likely on average to experience the impact of any challenges in these schools associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons should this lead to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum.</p>	<p>Institute will be able to build on this work to further support education planners and schools to identify and overcome any barriers that may affect some groups of learners, whilst developing responsive and effective provision for all.</p> <p>The post-implementation review will include consideration of how the Act has increased access to Welsh-medium education among all learners as well as under-represented groups.</p>
Religion, belief and non-belief	No impact noted	<p>Whilst no specific impact has been noted, many voluntary aided or controlled schools are also schools with a religious character or have formal links with a faith-based organisation. These schools will still be categorised and be under duty to prepare Welsh language education delivery plans.</p>	
Sex / Gender	No impact noted		
Sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual)	No impact noted		
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact noted		

Children and young people up to the age of 18	Positive	<p>The Act is expected to have a positive impact on children and young people.</p> <p>It will give all children and young people the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills and ensure they are offered support to do so throughout their education journey.</p> <p>This will also mean that children and young people have better Welsh language skills, potentially widening their future employment opportunities to include those where the Welsh language is a desirable or necessary skill.</p>	
Low-income households	Positive	<p>This issue is discussed in detail within the ‘Socio-economic duty Impact Assessment’.</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Learners that are eligible for free school meals have been under-represented within Welsh-medium education. These learners will have the opportunity to become independent and confident speakers of Welsh. Improved Welsh language skills may widen their future employment opportunities to include those where the Welsh language is a desirable or necessary skill. This will potentially support pathways out of poverty through employment.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The Welsh Government recognises the risk of the provisions impacting negatively upon these learners in the short term, as the schools which they attend develop and increase their Welsh language education provision over time. Specifically, there is a risk that wider education may be impacted as the amount of Welsh language</p>	<p>The minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision equates to approximately 2.5 hours on average per week. In “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools, this would likely be mainly fulfilled by Welsh (subject) lessons.</p> <p>The Welsh Government will publish guidance relating to extending the provision of Welsh language education and how to do so in a proportionate manner. The guidance will also discuss when and how to appropriately extend provision in relation to a range of subjects/areas. This is consequently considered a low risk, with low impact that can be mitigated.</p>

		education provided increases, possibly at the expense of other elements of the curriculum.	
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Annex C – Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Introduction

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 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 seven 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 3 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
- Linguistic infrastructure
- Language planning
- Evaluation and research

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.

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?

Yes – The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy states that the education system has a key role in realising the targets of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050, and increasing the percentage of the population who speak Welsh every day and who can speak

more than a few words of Welsh to 20% by 2050. One of the strategy's goals is to "create a statutory education system which increases the number of confident Welsh speakers". The Act seeks to realise these targets by widening access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales, wherever they live, and by ensuring that Welsh language education in all schools provides opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and become independent and confident Welsh speakers.

Providing a statutory basis for the *Cymraeg 2050* target of one million Welsh speakers is a means of increasing awareness of the link between the education system and efforts to realise the objectives of the strategy.

The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy refers to Welsh-medium immersion education as the 'principal method' for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills, and for creating new speakers. The Act also includes a provision to promote and provide late immersion education in Welsh to widen access to Welsh-medium education for those wishing to access it at a later entry point.

Cymraeg 2050 notes that the English-medium sector has an important contribution to make to the aim of developing Welsh speakers. The strategy identifies the need to 'transform' how the Welsh language is taught in these schools. It states the intention to develop 'a single continuum for the teaching of Welsh' and the provisions in the Act regarding describing Welsh language ability, and providing Welsh language learning goals for schools according to language category, links clearly to this. This will ensure that learners, teachers, parents and employers have a shared understanding of the journey to learn Welsh and the expected linguistic outcomes at each stage of that journey.

Cymraeg 2050 states that local authorities have a role in responding to and supporting the aim of the strategy to increase the number of Welsh speakers through the statutory education system, through clear leadership and ambition, and also through intentional linguistic and educational planning. The provisions in the Act to reform local authorities' WESPs links to this.

The Act provisions link to several commitments presented in the *Cymraeg 2050* Work Programme 2021-26 – and in some cases have gone further:

- "Develop a five-year strategy for the acquisition and lifelong learning of Welsh - from the early years, during statutory and post-compulsory education, in the workplace and in the community"
- "Introduce a Welsh-medium Education Bill to strengthen and increase Welsh-medium education across Wales and ensure that the WESPs are delivered in each county to make Welsh-medium education more accessible and fair"
- "Expand the late Immersion Programme to ensure that all newcomers to the language have access to Welsh-medium education when they need it and wherever they are on their learning journey"
- "Simplify how we categorise schools according to their Welsh language education provision to provide clarity about the expected linguistic progress and outcomes for

pupils according to the medium of school teaching, as well as encouraging and supporting schools to increase their provision of Welsh”

- “In collaboration with the regional consortia and local authorities, expand the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support the teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools and provide a language learning pathway from school to post-compulsory education”

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.

These provisions will have a positive impact on the Welsh language by widening the opportunities for children and young people to develop their Welsh language skills, and to become independent and confident Welsh speakers, regardless of the language category of the school they attend, or in which community they live.

Impact of specific proposals

Reflecting the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 in law

Providing a statutory basis for the target of a million Welsh speakers will set a strong foundation for local authorities to make ambitious decisions about Welsh language education in order to increase the number of Welsh speakers in their area. The target is intended to stimulate local authorities’ commitment to the ambition of creating a million speakers, and to put in place plans intended to meet the target.

In the long term, these duties are expected to contribute to improving the skills of the workforce, including the education workforce, with more pupils entering the workplace with better Welsh language skills.

The review of Welsh language Standards will also consider how the Standards align with the Act’s provisions, and specifically the statutory target and the Code.

A Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability

The Code will contribute to laying a foundation for the planning of lifelong Welsh language learning and enable learners, teachers, parents and employers to have a shared understanding of an individual’s journey to learn the Welsh language and the outcomes expected at each stage of the journey.

Categorisation of schools according to Welsh language education provision and school delivery plans

This Act’s provisions will lead to more pupils in statutory education across Wales receiving more and better Welsh language education. It will do this by increasing and improving Welsh language education in all schools, giving all pupils the opportunity to become confident and independent Welsh speakers. The Act sets a requirement for maintained schools to increase and improve their Welsh language education provision, whether that is an increase within a category or by moving to a higher category.

The Act will lead to more pupils having more Welsh language skills the length and breadth of Wales. The intention is for this, in turn, to increase opportunities for people

to interact and communicate with one another in Welsh, in both formal and informal contexts, including the workplace. In the long term, the provision is expected to contribute towards improving the workforce's skills, including the education workforce, with more pupils entering the workplace with better Welsh language skills.

National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

Through the National Framework, the Welsh Ministers will set the strategic direction for the whole Welsh language learning and acquisition sector to reach the long-term goal of one million speakers and create a single system focused on learner outcomes.

This Act provision will support the *Cymraeg 2050* aim 'to create a statutory education system which increases the number of confident Welsh speakers' by providing strategic direction and clear leadership to local authorities about what is expected of them regarding increasing their Welsh language education provision. It will create a link through targets set for each local authority, between the target of one million speakers and the local authorities' local WESPs. It will create a single coherent framework focused on learning and acquiring the Welsh language, bringing together all elements and ensuring that all partners in the field are working towards one goal. It will provide guidance to those who provide support to the education system on the acquisition and learning of Welsh and thereby lay the foundations for facilitating the language journey for schools and pupils in Wales.

This Act provision will lead to pupils, regardless of age, being able to continue to learn and improve their Welsh language skills throughout their lives. It will widen access for pupils in Wales to Welsh language education, so that they have the opportunity to become independent and confident Welsh speakers. In this regard, it will contribute to promoting the Welsh language in all areas.

Ultimately, the National Framework will have a positive impact on adults, increasing Welsh language skills among the workforce, which will enable bodies and organisations of all types to offer services in Welsh.

Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

Local WESPs will support the increase and improvement in Welsh language education across Wales, and increase the number of pupils having the opportunity to become independent and confident Welsh speakers.

As part of this provision, local authorities will work towards meeting the individual target(s) set for them by the Welsh Ministers in the National Framework. This will help to ensure that local authorities, through the education system, maintain or improve the sustainability of their Welsh-speaking communities.

The collection of annual data on the numbers starting school, the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data, as well as progress reports on implementation of local WESPs, will allow the Welsh Government to track the progress and success of the Act in growing Welsh language education based on evidence and data.

Promoting Welsh language education in "Primarily Welsh Language" category schools and late immersion education in Welsh

This provision will widen access to the Welsh language for pupils in Wales over time. It will help parents and carers to understand the options available to them in terms of the language of their children's education, allowing them to make informed decisions and in turn, contribute to the number of learners attending Welsh-medium education. It will also support pupils wishing to access Welsh-medium education at a later entry point.

Centralising specialist support provision for lifelong Welsh language learning, including school education, within a single organisation

Centralising specialist support provision within the National Institute for Learning Welsh offers stability, consistency and long-term direction for the Welsh language learning sector.

Annex D – Socio-economic Duty Assessment

What evidence has been considered to understand how the proposal contributes to inequalities of outcome experience as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act aims to widen access to the Welsh language, and to ensure that all children, no matter where they live in Wales and regardless of linguistic or any other background, have the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers. The Act introduces a number of changes that primarily relate to planning, resourcing and supporting the development of Welsh language education in schools throughout Wales. There will be direct impacts of the Act's provisions on education planning and the workforce. There will also be an impact on children and young people, over a longer time span, due to the changes to Welsh language education in schools. The impact is expected to be largely positive, as all learners will have more opportunities to become independent and confident speakers of the Welsh language.

In seeking to understand how the provisions contribute to inequalities of outcome and experience, the following sources of evidence have been considered.

- Extensive discussions with Welsh Government officials
- The Welsh Government issued a consultation on the proposals for a Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act on 27 March 2023, which closed on 16 June 2023. There were 538 responses, 366 of which were unique.
- An engagement exercise was commissioned by Welsh Government to support the development of the RIA and IIA. As part of the engagement, a series of workshops was conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government with a range of external stakeholders and key potential delivery partners.
- Two online workshops were conducted with local authorities to explain the proposed changes and to gather feedback regarding the anticipated costs and benefits. All local authorities were also invited to provide input by completing a series of questions on costs and benefits in a survey format. Feedback was received from 13 local authorities.
- Feedback on costs and benefits was also received from 23 schools via a survey. Initial contact was made with 295 schools, stratified by primary and secondary provision, geographic area and language category. The 23 responses included a range of schools across the stratified categories.
- Stakeholder engagement extended beyond local authorities and schools to encompass organisations identified in the white paper, as well as those likely to be impacted by the proposed changes. A group discussion was held with the Policy Development & Implementation Working Group (which has representation from education unions alongside the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and a local authority representative), while interviews were conducted with representatives from Estyn, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, the Education Workforce Council, and four Initial Teacher Education providers.

- The Welsh Government has engaged with children and young people through workshops undertaken on its behalf by Urdd Gobaith Cymru in February 2024. Over 66 participants aged 11-18 took part in the workshops. The workshops were held in Welsh- and English-medium schools and youth clubs in several local authorities across Wales. The workshops explored the broad principles and aims underpinning the Act. A qualitative survey was also conducted by Children in Wales' Young Wales team during its residential course in February 2024. Ten young people participated, with one doing so in Welsh.
- The IIA drew on data available on the education system in Wales, including PLASC and GCSE data.
- The National Survey for Wales and the Welsh Language Use Survey was used to gain a better understanding of attitudes towards the Welsh language.
- Secondary sources. Those referenced explicitly in this document are:
 - Welsh Government. (2017). Welsh speaker estimates 2011 to 2050: technical report. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2021). Parent beliefs, behaviours and barriers: childcare and early education. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2021b). Initial teacher education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment plan. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2022). Welsh in education workforce plan. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Government. (2024). Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
 - Welsh Language Commissioner and Children's Commissioner for Wales. (2023). The Welsh Language in the Additional Learning Needs System. issue brief.

What information has been gained through engagement with those effected by the proposal/decision and specifically those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage?

Children and young people's responses in the Urdd Gobaith Cymru workshops were overwhelmingly supportive of the Act's aims and particularly the notion that all pupils, regardless of which school they attend, should have the opportunity to learn and to speak Welsh independently by the age of 16: "Learning the language of your country should be your right [author's translation]" (Workshop Participant, Vale of Glamorgan). A minority of respondents caveated their supportive remarks with the suggestion that learning Welsh should not be compulsory: "Yes, they should have the opportunity to learn Welsh if they want [author's translation]" (Workshop Participant, Vale of Glamorgan).

Participants discussed the benefits they perceived of learning Welsh, with many emphasising the social and professional benefits: "It can broaden your job opportunities and help you get better jobs in the future" (Workshop Participant,

Merthyr). Participants also believed that there was a range of social, cultural and professional benefits related to all learners having the opportunity to learn Welsh.

Respondents to the Children in Wales' Young Wales team's qualitative survey generally believed that pupils should have the chance to learn Welsh by age 16. They emphasised the importance of choice, opportunity and fairness when deciding in relation to opportunities to learn Welsh. Participants also saw value in being an independent and confident speaker, particularly in relation to future careers. However, some participants expressed a concern that the teaching of Welsh should not overshadow or diminish the quality of teaching of key subjects such as Maths, Science and English.

In 2017-18, the National Survey for Wales included questions about the Welsh language, exploring Welsh speakers' confidence to speak the language as well as attitudes towards the language of both those who speak Welsh and those who do not. Of respondents aged between 16-24, 82% agreed that Welsh was something to be proud of; 73% said that they would like to learn Welsh; and 70% agreed that the Welsh language needed more support.

Have protected characteristics been considered?

Yes. The Equalities Impact Assessment details the analysis of the Act's potential impact upon individuals with protected characteristics.

Have communities of interest and places interest been considered?

Yes. The Act aims to improve access to Welsh language education to all learners in Wales, regardless of background.

The Rural Proofing Impact Assessment draws particular attention to rural communities that are home to a low proportion and number of Welsh speakers. These areas may face additional challenges in recruiting staff capable of teaching through the medium of Welsh. The issue and mitigations are discussed in detail within the relevant impact assessment.

What information has been considered regarding future trends?

The Welsh Government would expect each local authority's approved local WESP to account for the challenges in their long-term planning for the workforce. The Welsh in Education Workforce Plan is the Welsh Government's 10-year plan for developing the Welsh language workforce in schools to realise the vision in *Cymraeg 2050* (see Welsh Government, 2021b; 2023). The local WESPs and the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan will provide the mechanisms to develop and diversify the workforce. These strategies also align with the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy and its aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to one million by 2050, in line with the projection and trajectory (see Welsh Government, 2017).

What data has been considered (national and local)?

See question 1 for an outline of the evidence and data that has been considered.

Local WESPs provide data at a local level, whilst the projection and trajectory within *Cymraeg 2050* relates to the national level.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

See question 1 for an outline of the evidence and data that has been considered.

How could the proposal potentially further exacerbate inequality of outcome experienced as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

Please provide detail regarding inequalities of outcome likely to be impacted and those people and communities likely to be impacted

The Welsh Government expects the Act to involve a greater degree of change and reform over a longer timeframe within “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools, and particularly schools moving from the lowest base of Welsh language education toward the minimum required hours (10%). Comprehension and familiarity with the Welsh language is likely to be lowest amongst learners in these schools. Learners who are eligible for free school meals are on average more likely to attend these schools. Consequently, these learners are more likely on average to experience the impact of the increase and improvement in Welsh language education in these schools, including the enhanced opportunities but also any challenges associated with wider subject lessons potentially being delivered in Welsh, or an increase in Welsh (subject) lessons should this lead to a reduction in the teaching of other elements of the curriculum.

There is a risk that wider education is impacted as the amount of Welsh language education provided increases, possibly at the expense of other elements of the curriculum. The minimum of 10% Welsh language education provision equates to approximately 2.5 hours on average per week. In “Primarily English Language, partly Welsh” schools, this would likely be mainly fulfilled by Welsh (subject) lessons. The Welsh Government will publish guidance relating to extending the provision of Welsh language education, and how to do so in a proportionate manner. The guidance will also discuss when and how to appropriately extend provision in relation to a range of subjects/areas. This is consequently considered a low risk, with low impact that can be mitigated.

The Welsh Government regards the Act as an opportunity to improve the linguistic outcomes of learners who are eligible for free school meals who are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education. The Act places a duty on all local authorities to promote Welsh language education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools, which aims to help address the current under-representation of certain groups. The Welsh Government also recognises the need to develop a better understanding of why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place promptly to address any barriers identified.

More broadly, the Act will establish the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will build on the experience of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre for Learning Welsh has experience in engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, including those who are new to Wales and those whose English is limited. It has developed and tailored courses and resources to support the learning of Welsh to learners of post compulsory school age from a wide range of backgrounds. The Institute will be able to build on the experience and resources already developed

to further support and enable education planners and schools and to identify and overcome any barriers that may affect some groups of learners, whilst developing responsive and effective provision for all.

The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education in schools in all areas, leading to more pupils in statutory education across Wales having more and better Welsh language education provision, contributing to the promotion of the Welsh language in all areas. The Act will create opportunities for education planners to better understand and address any barriers that some groups of learners may face in relation to accessing Welsh-medium education. These opportunities, alongside a range of further and specific support measures, will be key to mitigating potentially negative impacts of the Act on groups of learners, including those eligible for free school meals, that have been less likely on average to access Welsh-medium education. If successful, the Act will widen access to the Welsh language and address the barriers that some learners may face.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

PLASC data (February 2022) indicates that 13.5% of pupils who attend Welsh-medium education are eligible for free school meals, compared to 23.3% of those who attend English-medium education (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number and proportion of learners who are eligible for free school meals by language medium of school.

Type of school	Number of pupils who are for free school meals	Percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals by language medium of school
Welsh Medium	10, 451	13.5%
Twin stream	1,477	19.8%
Transitional	101	26.0%
Bilingual type A	1,291	12.3%
Bilingual type B	1,575	15.3%
Bilingual type C	538	18.0%
Bilingual type Ch	0	(z)
English with significant use of Welsh	2,003	17.7%
English medium	80,293	23.3%

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), February 2022 (z = not applicable)

See question 1 for an outline of other evidence and data that has been considered.

How could the decision potentially improve outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage?

Please provide detail regarding outcomes that will be improved and for who.

The Act aims to ensure that all children, no matter where they live in Wales and regardless of linguistic or other background, have the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers. The Welsh Government believes that the Act could

contribute to the tackling poverty agenda by equipping children and young people with Welsh language skills that they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to develop. As a result, it is possible those individuals will be able to apply for jobs where the Welsh language is desirable or essential, thereby enabling them to benefit from more opportunities within the labour market which might otherwise have been closed to them. The engagement exercises found that similar views were held by children and young people, and largely agreement amongst participants that ability in Welsh is “an important skill for jobs in Wales” (engagement exercise participant).

Learners who are eligible for free school meals have, on average, been under-represented within Welsh-medium education. The Welsh Government sees the Act and its implementation as an opportunity to better understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified.

The Code will establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability. Upon entry into the labour market, the common reference levels will enable all learners to better communicate and define their skills to employers, regardless of location and cultural-linguistic context of the employer. Likewise, employers will be better placed to understand a candidate's level of ability in the language by drawing on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

See question 1 for an outline of the evidence and data that has been considered.

How will you monitor the impact of this decision? (Please consider wider outcomes)

Plans for post-implementation review are set out within the RIA. To ensure that the post implementation review effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the policy, including consideration of potential impacts on specific groups, an evaluability assessment will need to be completed in the early stages. This will help determine the nature and scope of the evaluation programme and the availability of relevant data to monitor progress. This process will also serve as an opportunity to revisit the original Theory of Change designed for the Bill, account for any changes made to the policy during the legislative drafting process, and ensure that intended outcomes and impacts of different policy interventions are clearly articulated and identified. It is on this basis that evaluation for the Act will be designed.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

PLASC will provide data relating to eligibility for free school meals.

Annex E – Rural Proofing Impact Assessment

Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on rural people, businesses and communities.

For example: How will the proposal affect the lives of rural people, positively and negatively? For example as service users, workers and consumers.

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act aims to ensure that all children, no matter where they live in Wales and regardless of background, have the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers. The Act introduces a number of changes that primarily relate to planning, resourcing and supporting the development of Welsh language education in schools throughout Wales. There will be limited impact of the provisions specifically on rural people. The impact upon rural areas, and specifically children who live in rural areas, will be the same as in other areas, and the impact will be over a long time span due to the changes to Welsh language education in schools. The impacts are expected to be largely positive, as learners living in rural areas, as in all areas, will have more opportunities to become independent and confident speakers of Welsh.

In addition, the Act may lead to further positive impact upon the communities, and use of services within communities, in rural areas. Welsh-speaking communities are often found within rural areas and contain a range of Welsh-medium spaces. Access to these communities and spaces can be challenging for people who do not speak Welsh. The linguistic balance of the communities, spaces and services can also be disrupted if residents must frequently switch to English. With more opportunities for more people to become confident, independent Welsh speakers, more people will be able to access and engage with Welsh-medium spaces and Welsh-speaking communities. Having the opportunity to become confident, independent Welsh speakers may also enable children and families who have moved into primarily Welsh-speaking communities to engage with and become part of those Welsh-speaking communities.

Relevant to rural areas, with more and easier access to Welsh-medium education, the need for learners to travel far to school will also likely diminish.

Recruiting staff

In implementing the provisions, however, there are possible challenges in relation to recruiting teaching staff within rural areas.

Key to the success of the provisions will be the development, over the long term, of a workforce capable of teaching through the medium of Welsh. Rural areas may face additional challenges in recruiting staff who can teach through the medium of Welsh. Rural areas that are home to a low proportion and number of Welsh speakers may face particular challenges, given the increased likelihood that local authorities will have to look to attract teaching staff into the area.

Mitigation

The Welsh Government would expect each local authority's approved local WESP to account for the challenges described in their long-term planning for the workforce. The

Welsh in Education Workforce Plan' is the Welsh Government's 10-year plan for developing the Welsh language workforce in schools to realise the vision in *Cymraeg 2050*. The local WESPs and the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan' will provide the mechanisms to develop and diversify the workforce.

The Act provides for the establishment of a National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills, building on the legacy of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Institute will provide support to schools and local authorities as they develop their Welsh language education. The Centre has developed its online provision in recent years, particularly in response to the COVID pandemic. The Institute may therefore be in a position to advise on and support the development of online provision to supplement teaching and reduce any short-term gaps.

The Welsh Government is also exploring the local teacher model / peripatetic provision as a means of diversifying the teaching workforce with which pupils come into contact in the short term. The Act provides greater certainty for late immersion education in Welsh and will require greater certainty in relation to funding. Late immersion providers will therefore be in a position to recruit staff on a more permanent basis. They will also be better placed to recruit new staff, and consequently to attract more diverse staff compared to the existing teaching workforce. The providers, through their peripatetic provision could also look to focus on diversifying the teaching staff with which learners currently engage.

E-sgol is a blended learning initiative to provide online teaching and learning opportunities using direct, real-time and interactive methods. Using the range of tools and services available through Hwb, the project has enabled students from different schools to access digital teaching opportunities from qualified and experienced teachers. E-sgol may be a further means of providing additional support in the short-term to rural schools as they seek to increase and improve their Welsh language education provision.

Annex F – Assessment of Impact on the Workload of Education School Staff

Executive Summary

Overall, we anticipate that implementing the Act will lead to some additional work for leaders, school governors, some teachers and teaching assistants, and local authority officials. We recognise that capacity will need to be found in the system to allow the Act to be implemented in a purposeful way.

The main workload impact identified is for schools in relation to the preparation and implementation of the school Welsh language education delivery plans. The scale and extent of the work required will depend on (a) the current Welsh language education provision within the school, (b) the current Welsh language skills capacity of the school workforce, and (c) the ambition that the school will set in its delivery plan in terms of increasing and/or improving Welsh language education provision.

Additional workload will include:

- **familiarisation with new provisions, regulations and guidance** – leaders, school governors, some teachers and teaching assistants, and local authority officials
- **development and consultation on a Welsh language education delivery plan** – mainly leaders, school governors
- **overseeing implementation of the delivery plan** – mainly leaders, school governors
- **familiarisation with new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum/qualification requirements, as well as training and application in the classroom** – mainly some teachers and teaching assistants
- **ensuring there are sufficient staff in the school with the necessary Welsh language skills, overcoming potential recruitment and retention challenges** – mainly leaders

The delivery plans will be a new requirement for schools, with preparation commencing in 2029/30 for implementation from September 2030. Under business as usual, similar planning may have been undertaken via the school development plan. Delivery plans will collect information in a more consistent way across schools to facilitate targeted support at national level.

In the longer term, by standardising approaches, the Act seeks to make the planning processes more efficient and less time-consuming, potentially reducing workload. The National Institute for Learning Welsh and the Code describing Welsh language ability are also expected to lead to efficiencies, through providing support and guidance, and through the development of new resources.

Workload Impact Assessment pro-forma

1. Please describe your proposal, including if this is as the result of a statutory or non-statutory change:

- i. **If this is a change to an existing policy / system / process / guidance / project then please outline the current arrangements and then outline the changes.**
- ii. **If this is a new policy / system / process / guidance / project, then please detail how this will work and what changes it will bring.**
- iii. **Generally, who will this policy change / benefit and in what way?**

Overview

The Welsh Government has set an aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. This calls for transformative changes to the way we think about the Welsh language in general, and specifically the role of education. The Act sets out steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become independent Welsh speakers through the statutory education system.

In summary, the Act's provisions involve:

- Providing a statutory basis to the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050, as well as other targets relating to use of the language, including in the workplace and socially.
- Preparing a Code that will establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- Establishing a statutory system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided, with Welsh language learning goals for pupils in each category.
- Linking linguistic planning at a national level (by placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh), at local authority level (by placing a duty on the local authorities to prepare local Welsh in education strategic plans (local WESPs)), and at a school level (by placing a duty on schools to prepare Welsh language education delivery plans).
- Establishing a National Institute for Learning Welsh as a statutory body responsible for supporting people of all ages to learn Welsh.

Changes to planning, resourcing and supporting schools to increase and improve Welsh language education

The changes primarily relate to planning, resourcing and supporting the development of Welsh language education in schools throughout Wales. There will be changes to education planning and the workforce. Local authorities and schools will be better placed to plan effectively for more and better Welsh language education in all maintained schools and settings in Wales, thus impacting positively on the Welsh language learning of pupils. With clarity on language provision and learning goals

within each school language category, schools will be in a better position to plan and develop their provision and workforce over time through their Welsh language education delivery plans so that pupils progress. This will be supported by the common understanding provided by the Code, which will establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability for all ages, including pupils and the school workforce. The local WESPs, alongside the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan, support effective strategic planning for the changes needed in schools over time. They will also allow effective and responsive planning in relation to learners that are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education.

A National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh will provide strategic coherence to the development of Welsh language education throughout Wales, with all local authorities more aware of the specific and appropriate contribution they can make to the aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It will provide local authorities with a more comprehensive and consistent picture of the expectations on them in terms of increasing and improving Welsh language education and increasing the percentage of pupils receiving Welsh language education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools. It will also support planning of the education workforce to ensure the ambitions of the Act can be realised. The National Framework will set out steps to ensure that training, professional development and support is available for education practitioners for the purposes of improving ability in Welsh. This will be based on an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority to meet relevant targets outlined in the Act.

The Act will establish a new statutory body, the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills. The Institute will be a one-stop-shop for supporting all aspects of Welsh language learning. It will provide strategic leadership and support for lifelong Welsh language learning at a national level. Centralising strategic leadership and expertise within one body will ensure a more coordinated approach to Welsh language learning. It will have responsibility for ensuring that Welsh language learning and transmission is given due attention within the whole education system, including in the school sector. This will help all schools meet the challenges of increasing and improving Welsh language education, ultimately benefitting all learners in Wales.

Changes for children, young people and their families

There will be an impact upon children and young people as a result of the changes to planning, resourcing and supporting schools, which will evolve over an extended time period. The impact will be largely positive, as learners will have more opportunities to become independent Welsh speakers.

The Act will increase and improve Welsh language education in schools, leading to more pupils in statutory education across Wales having more and better Welsh language education provision. The Act will create opportunities for education planners to better understand why some groups are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education and to put measures in place to address any barriers identified. If successful, the Act will widen access to the Welsh language and address any barriers that some learners may face.

Parents/guardians and learners will be better placed to make decisions regarding children’s education. School language categorisation will provide clarity to parents/guardians and learners on the language provision of schools in their area and

the Welsh language learning goals. Placing duties on local authorities to include steps in their local WESPs to promote and provide information about the Welsh language education provided in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools will improve understanding of its benefits. Moreover, promoting and providing late immersion education in Welsh will widen access to the Welsh language for children and young people in Wales who wish to access Welsh-medium education at various entry points. This will be of particular benefit to families and learners who move into the education system in Wales later in their school life.

Providing clarity and defining the Welsh language learning goals for pupils by the end of compulsory school age in all school language categories will lead to positive impact and opportunities for learners, both in employment and in their daily lives. Individuals entering the workforce will be able to articulate and define their language ability, and employers will be able to draw on common reference levels, consistent with international best practice. With more individuals entering the workforce with better Welsh language skills, businesses, the public sector and third sector organisations may be better placed to offer Welsh-language services, to comply with Welsh language Standards, and to better reflect and serve the diverse linguistic communities in Wales.

Summary

The following table summarises whether key provisions in the Act change existing policy or introduce new policy, the key changes being made and who will benefit and in what way.

Table 1: Key policy changes introduced by the Act and who will benefit

Key Act provisions (Act part)	Do the Act provisions...?		What are the key changes being made in this policy area?	Who will benefit and in what way?
	Change existing policy	Introduce new policy		
Reflecting the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 in law (Part 1)	X		The target of reaching one million Welsh speakers will be changed from a non-statutory goal to a statutory target.	Incorporating the target in primary legislation will reflect the importance placed on achieving the target and provide clarity and direction for those responsible for planning compulsory education.
A Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability (Part 2)		X	Stakeholders currently use a variety of frameworks for defining and measuring Welsh language skills. The Code will provide a standard method for describing Welsh language ability based on the CEFR.	The Code will provide learners, parents, teachers and employers with a common understanding of the language ability expected at each stage of the journey towards learning Welsh. In education, the improved consistency will support planning of Welsh language education and the workforce, as well as development of education practices, assessment and resources.
Establish a statutory system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided (Part 3)	X		The Act builds on the existing non-statutory guidance for categorising schools that was introduced in 2021 and places the system of categorising schools on a statutory footing. The amount of Welsh language education to be provided in each language category is specified, including a minimum. The Act also specifies Welsh language learning goals for pupils in each category.	The new system for categorising schools will ensure alignment with other Act provisions, requiring schools to provide Welsh language education in accordance with their category. It will provide clarity on Welsh language education and learning goals for schools, placing them in a better position to plan and develop their provision and workforce over time. Combined with other Act provisions, it will provide the opportunity for all learners in Wales to become independent Welsh speaker by the time they leave statutory

				education. It will provide clarity for parents and carers on Welsh language education and learning goals in each school, helping them to make informed decisions regarding their children's education.
Welsh language education delivery plans (Part 3)	X		Schools already prepare school development plans, but the Act places a duty on governing bodies of schools to meet new requirements relating to preparing Welsh language education delivery plans. The delivery plans will, among other things, set out how schools will continuously increase or improve their Welsh language education and, if they choose to do so, how they will move over time to a higher language category.	Schools will be in a better position to develop their Welsh language education and workforce over time. Better planning at school level will support the Welsh language learning of all learners, whatever language category of school they attend, ensuring they have more and better Welsh language education provision.
Promote and provide late immersion education in Welsh (Part 3)	X		A grant has supported local authorities to provide late immersion education in Welsh since 2021/22. The Act places a requirement on local authorities to promote and provide late immersion education that meets demand.	Promoting and providing late immersion education in Welsh will widen access to the Welsh language for children and young people in Wales who wish to access Welsh-medium education at various entry points. This will be of particular benefit to families and learners who move into the education system in Wales later in their school life.
National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh (Part 4)		X	There is currently no central or overarching mechanism for coordinating Welsh language education and learning Welsh in different sectors and at different stages of life. Through the National Framework, the policy ambition is to move towards a single joined-up system, with specific targets and guidance set by the Welsh Ministers.	The National Framework will provide strategic coherence to the development of Welsh language education throughout Wales. It will create a clearer line of accountability between Welsh Ministers, local authorities and schools in relation to Welsh language education. Local authorities will be more aware of their contribution to the goal of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. They will also have more clarity on the expectations of them in terms of increasing and improving Welsh language education. The National Framework will support planning of the Welsh language

				education workforce and set out steps to ensure that training, professional development and support is available.
Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Part 4)	X		<p>The Act will change the current system of WESPs by shifting the focus towards plans that outline the steps the local authority intends to take to achieve the targets set upon them by Welsh Ministers in the National Framework for increasing and improving Welsh language education in their schools.</p> <p>This differs to the current situation where local authorities set their own targets, having regard to the Welsh Ministers guidance. This will ensure better coordination of Welsh language education policy across Wales.</p>	The local WESPs will support effective planning for the changes needed in schools over time to meet the ambitions of the Act, based on the targets set out in the National Framework. They will also allow effective and responsive planning in relation to learners that are currently under-represented in Welsh-medium education.
National Institute for Learning Welsh (Part 5)	X		<p>The Act will establish a new statutory body, the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will facilitate and support people of all ages to learn Welsh and develop their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>This will be a shift from the current situation, where National Centre for Learning Welsh oversees the provision of Welsh language learning for people aged over 16, but there is no single body that provides strategic leadership and support for Welsh language learning across all ages.</p>	The Institute will centralise strategic leadership and expertise within one body, ensuring a more coordinated approach to Welsh language learning. It will help all schools meet the challenges of increasing and improving Welsh language education, ultimately benefitting all learners in Wales.

2. Please provide an assessment of the impact of your proposal on the workload of education staff against each of the following:

i. How have you built assessment of the impact of workload into this proposal?

Various engagement exercises have informed this assessment of the impact on workload.

Engagement with partners

Assessment of the impact on workload has been informed by engagement with the partners likely to be affected, as part of developing the Bill and by evidence submitted during the public scrutiny of the Bill following its introduction in the Senedd. Discussions were undertaken with unions that represent the school education workforce in autumn 2024. Representatives of partners with an interest in the Code to describing Welsh language ability have had the opportunity to discuss planning and realisation of this provision as members of a Task Group. There has been engagement with schools about the language categorisation system in the context of the non-statutory guidelines. Discussions have been held with Estyn about their proposed role. In education forums, local authorities – key partners for the National Framework – largely welcomed the idea of the Welsh Government setting a strategic direction. Evidence from key partners informed a report by the then Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, which recommended that the Welsh Government develop ‘a national framework to ensure a consistent national approach to Welsh language education planning and delivery’. Local authorities have contributed to provisions relating to WESPs by developing and implementing the existing WESPs and providing feedback on that system. Four local authorities took the opportunity to contribute to the development of guidance around data analysis and education workforce planning. Discussions have also been held with practitioners in the statutory and post-statutory education sector, local authorities, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner, universities in their role as providers of Welsh language learning provision for adults and as centres for language research and acquisition, and Further Education institutions about support to realise the Act’s objectives.

Formal consultation on the white paper

The Welsh Government issued a consultation on the proposals for a Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act on 27 March 2023, which closed on 16 June 2023. There were 538 responses, 366 of which were unique. The summary of responses highlighted some concerns regarding workload. Key issues included staffing challenges relating to securing enough teachers with Welsh language skills to support the proposed changes. Respondents noted the time and resources required for training and professional development for current staff. An increased administrative burden for schools and local authorities in implementing and monitoring changes was also raised.

Engagement exercise to support the RIA and IIA

Following the consultation, an engagement exercise was commissioned by the Welsh Government to support the development of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and IIA. A series of workshops were conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government with a range of external stakeholders and key potential delivery partners.

Two online workshops were conducted with local authorities to explain the proposed changes and to gather feedback on the potential positive and negative impacts. At the same time, all local authorities were invited to provide input by completing a series of questions on costs and benefits in a survey format. Feedback was received from 13 local authorities.

Feedback on costs and benefits was also received from 23 schools via a survey. Initial contact was made with 295 schools, stratified by primary and secondary provision, geographic area and language category. The 23 responses included a range of schools across the stratified categories.

Stakeholder engagement extended beyond local authorities and schools to encompass organisations identified in the white paper, as well as those likely to be impacted by the proposed changes. A group discussion was held with the Policy Development & Implementation Working Group (which has representation from education unions alongside the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and a local authority representative), while interviews were conducted with representatives from Estyn, National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, the Education Workforce Council, and four Initial Teacher Education providers.

The evidence gathered through these engagement exercises has informed assessment of the impact of the Act on workload. Issues pertaining to education workforce training and professional development are a key focus of the costs set out in the RIA.

Preparing the workload impact assessment

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act is among the first to include a specific workload impact assessment as part of its IIA. The engagement and evidence gathering exercises set out above informed the assessment. A thorough mapping was undertaken internally of the workload impacts for each part of the Act. Alongside the development of this assessment, there has been engagement with education unions who provided comments on the mapping exercise in meetings and in writing in autumn 2024. This version of the impact assessment has been updated to take account of the mapping exercise.

ii. Who have you engaged with about this proposal to assess the impact on workload, e.g. headteachers, teachers, local authorities, education unions?

Below is a summary of the main engagement with external stakeholders that has helped to inform the assessment of impact on workload, for different parts of the Act:

Describing Welsh language ability

- Representatives of partners with an interest in the Code describing Welsh language ability have discussed planning and realisation of this provision as members of a Task Group

- Formal consultation on the proposals in the white paper

Welsh language education

- Engagement with schools about the language categorisation system in the context of the non-statutory guidelines
- Formal consultation on proposals in the white paper
- To inform the IIA and RIA, two online workshops with local authorities to gather feedback on potential positive and negative impacts and a survey on costs and benefits
- Survey of schools to inform the IIA and RIA
- Wider stakeholder engagement to inform the IIA and RIA (education unions, WLGA, Estyn, National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, Education Workforce Council, Initial Teacher Education Providers)
- Regular engagement with education unions on the assessment of workload impact

Planning Welsh language education and learning Welsh

- Evidence from key partners informed a report by the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee, which recommended that the Welsh Government develop 'a national framework to ensure a consistent national approach to Welsh language education planning and delivery'
- Local authority feedback on the current WESP system. Four local authorities took the opportunity to contribute to the development of guidance around data analysis and education workforce planning
- Discussions with Estyn about their proposed role
- Formal consultation on proposals in the white paper
- To inform the IIA and RIA, two online workshops with local authorities to gather feedback on potential positive and negative impacts and a survey on costs and benefits
- Survey of schools to inform the IIA and RIA
- Wider stakeholder engagement to inform the IIA and RIA (education unions, WLGA, Estyn, National Centre for Learning Welsh, Mudiad Meithrin, Education Workforce Council, Initial Teacher Education Providers)
- Regular engagement with education unions on the assessment of workload impact

National Institute for Learning Welsh

- Discussions with practitioners in the statutory and post-statutory education sector, local authorities, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Coleg

Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Language Commissioner, universities in their role as providers of Welsh language learning provision for adults and as centres for language research and acquisition, and Further Education institutions

- Formal consultation on the proposals in the white paper

iii. What in the proposal is different or extra work or reduced work for education staff?

Table 2 provides detailed information for each of the key provisions in the Act on what will increase or reduce workload for the education workforce.

Overall, the main workload impact identified is for schools in relation to the preparation and implementation of the school Welsh language education delivery plans. The delivery plans will be a new requirement for schools. However, under business as usual, some of the information will have been collated, and in many schools similar planning may have been undertaken, via the school development plan. One of the aims of the delivery plan is for information to be collected in a more consistent way across schools to facilitate targeted support at national level (e.g. training, teaching resources etc). There may be additional workload for headteachers in ensuring there are sufficient staff in the school with the necessary Welsh language skills. In some schools, there may be a need for upskilling the Welsh language skills of school staff in line with any ambition agreed in the delivery plan. In some cases, a shortage of applicants with the required skills could mean that headteachers need to readvertise vacancies on multiple occasions. In some cases, headteachers may also have to undertake a restructure based on the Welsh language skills of staff. There may also be additional work for teaching staff to familiarise with and apply new approaches in the classroom. The scale and extent of the work required will depend on (a) the current Welsh language education provision within the school, (b) the current Welsh language skills capacity of the school workforce, and (c) the ambition that the school will set in its delivery plan in terms of increasing and/or improving Welsh language education provision. Preparation work for the plans is likely to commence in the 2029/30 academic year, with implementation of the plans starting in September 2030.

Setting targets for local authorities as part of the National Framework is not expected to increase workload for the education workforce. Work on preparing the new local WESPs is expected to lead to a minimal impact on workload for local authority officials, given that it will largely replace existing work.

There will be some additional work for specific education staff to familiarise themselves with new requirements introduced by the Act, such as the Code on describing Welsh language ability, provisions, secondary legislation and guidance on categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided, local WESPs and Welsh language education delivery plans. If they opt to respond to consultations on regulations or guidance linked with the Act, this may also involve some additional work.

However, the Act also aims to streamline existing activities relating to Welsh language education, which will help reduce the workload for local authority officials, school governors, and headteachers. By standardising approaches, the Act seeks

to make the planning processes more efficient and less time-consuming. Over time, the National Institute for Learning Welsh and Code describing Welsh language ability are also expected to lead to efficiencies, through providing support and guidance, and through the development of new resources. This may also help to reduce workload impact.

iv. Who specifically is this going to create extra work for or reduce work for?

Table 2 provides detailed information for each of the key provisions in the Act on whose workload is likely to increase or reduce.

The Act will create extra work primarily for local authority officials, headteachers, school governors, and some teachers, especially those with specific responsibilities for coordinating or providing Welsh language education. All will need to familiarise themselves with new requirements relevant to their roles, and some may decide to respond to consultations on regulations or guidance.

For school Welsh language education delivery plans, which will have the main impact on workload, headteachers will work to prepare, consult on and implement delivery plans, including ensuring the staff have the necessary Welsh language skills. School governors will work to oversee delivery plans. There may be additional work for some teaching staff to familiarise with and apply new approaches in the classroom, and potentially to upskill in the Welsh language.

The extent of workload impact will vary across schools depending on (a) the current Welsh language education provision within the school, (b) the current Welsh language skills capacity of the school workforce, and (c) the ambition that the school will set in its delivery plan in terms of increasing and/or improving Welsh language education provision.

For local authority officials, there may be some additional workload linked to small changes in the requirements for WESPs; promoting and providing late immersion education in Welsh; and engaging with schools regarding their delivery plans.

v. What existing work is being stopped, paused or replaced?

Table 2 provides detailed information for each of the key provisions in the Act on what existing work will be stopped, paused, replaced or adapted.

Many of the Act's provisions are not expected to result in substantial changes to workload as they will replace existing systems and processes. Overall, the Act aims to standardise and streamline existing work, reducing redundant tasks and allowing stakeholders to focus on more impactful activities.

The Code to describe Welsh language ability will replace the use of existing language ability frameworks. The new system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided will replace the current non-statutory categorisation system. Work on preparing the new local WESPs will largely replace existing work on preparing WESPs under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

While preparing and implementing school Welsh language education delivery plans will have the main impact on workload, some of this work will also replace and adapt existing work. For example, existing work to plan and deliver Welsh

language education provision, including through school development plans and any Siarter Iaith plans/work, will be amalgamated into the delivery plan. However, the extent to which the changes will replace existing work will vary across schools, depending on the extent of existing work taking place to plan, deliver and oversee Welsh language education.

vi. Is any existing work being adapted and if so how will this impact on workload?

Table 2 provides detailed information for each of the key provisions in the Act on what existing work will be stopped, paused, replaced or adapted.

Section 2v. summarises the existing systems and processes that will be replaced under the Act. In these cases, some of the education workforce's existing work will be adapted to meet new requirements. The main impact on workload for the education workforce, aside from those aspects relating to specific provisions described in more detail in section 2iii. and in Table 2, is the need to familiarise with new requirements, and responding to consultations if they choose to do so.

Table 2: Impact of each of the key provisions in the Act on the workload of the education workforce

Act Provision	What changes in workload (increase or decrease) will result from the Act?	Who will be affected by these workload changes?	What existing tasks will be stopped, paused, replaced, or adapted?
A Code to establish a standard method for describing Welsh language ability	<p>During the preparation and familiarisation phase, local authority officials, school governors and school staff will need to familiarise themselves with the Code's method for describing Welsh language ability in order to develop their local WESPs and Welsh language education delivery plans respectively.</p> <p>Over time, the Code may lead to efficiencies through providing a stronger framework for Welsh language teaching and assessment, more clarity for the education workforce, and supporting the development of appropriate Welsh language education resources.</p>	<p>Mainly local authority officials, school governors, headteachers, teachers (mainly those with specific responsibilities for coordinating or providing Welsh language education).</p> <p>Potentially teaching assistants and support/admin staff, where it applies to their role.</p>	<p>The Code to describe Welsh language ability will replace existing language ability frameworks. Local authority officials, school governors, and headteachers' work will be adapted as they shift from working with existing frameworks to working with the new Code.</p> <p>Over time, the introduction of the Code will provide a stronger framework for Welsh language teaching and assessment, more clarity for the education workforce, and supporting the development of appropriate Welsh language education resources.</p>
A statutory system to categorise schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided	<p>During the preparation and familiarisation phase, local authority officials will need to familiarise themselves with the content of provisions and related guidance. Local authority officials, school governors and headteachers may need to engage with each other regarding the changes, as required. If they deem it necessary, they may respond to consultations on regulations or guidance.</p>	<p>Mainly local authority officials, school governors and headteachers.</p>	<p>The new system for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh language education provided will replace the current non-statutory categorisation system.</p>
School Welsh language	<p>During the preparation and familiarisation phase, local authority officials, school governors and headteachers will need to familiarise themselves with the new requirements.</p>	<p>During the preparation and familiarisation phase, mainly school</p>	<p>Some of the work to prepare and deliver the plans will replace and adapt existing work.</p>

<p>education delivery plans</p>	<p>School governors, headteachers and potentially specific teachers will undertake work to prepare and consult on Welsh language education delivery plans.</p> <p>During the implementation phase, there may be some new work for school governors in overseeing implementation, headteachers in implementing the delivery plan, and teaching staff in delivering the plan insofar as it applies to their role.</p> <p>There may be additional workload for headteachers in ensuring there are sufficient staff in the school with the required Welsh language skills. In some schools, there may be a need for upskilling the Welsh language skills of school staff in line with any ambition agreed in the delivery plan. In some cases, a shortage of applicants with the required skills could mean that headteachers have to readvertise vacancies on multiple occasions. In some cases, headteachers may have to undertake a restructure based on the Welsh language skills of staff. There is potential additional work for teaching staff to familiarise with any new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum/qualification requirements, as well as training and application in the classroom. This is expected to be countered to an extent by the new support and resources school staff will have access to as a result of the Code and the expertise of the National Institute for Learning Welsh.</p> <p>The extent of additional work for school staff during the preparation and initial implementation phases will vary across schools, depending on the ambition set out in their delivery plans in terms of increasing and improving their Welsh language education provision as well as their existing situation with regard to a) planning of Welsh language education provision, b) the amount of Welsh language education provided, and c) the Welsh language skills capacity of the workforce.</p> <p>Although not a specific duty in the Act, it is expected that local authority officials will engage with schools during the</p>	<p>governors and headteachers, but also local authority officials and potentially specific teachers. In preparing and consulting on the plans, it is assumed that the bulk of the work will fall to the headteacher, with school governors supporting the consultation process.</p> <p>During the implementation phase, mainly headteachers, and teaching staff, but also school governors and local authority officials</p>	<p>School staff's existing work to plan and deliver Welsh language education provision (including through school development plans and any Siarter Iaith plans/work) will be amalgamated into the delivery plan. Some governing bodies may also already be proactively overseeing their school's Welsh language education provision (including any Siarter Iaith plans/work). However, the extent to which the changes will replace existing work will vary across schools, depending on the extent of existing work taking place to plan, deliver and oversee Welsh language education.</p> <p>Many authorities should already be engaging with schools on their Welsh language education provision, especially where they have worked with schools to map current school language categories against the revised PLASC descriptors. The delivery plans will provide a consistent approach for this work to be continued.</p>
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	implementation phase to provide support and ensure there is sufficient progress, as this will be key to meeting local WESP targets. However, engagement with schools regarding their Welsh language education is already happening in many cases.		
Late immersion education in Welsh	<p>All local authorities already have late immersion provision in place, which will continue. However, during the preparation and familiarisation, there may be further work for local authority officials to encourage demand for late immersion, provide information and advice about the provision available, and potentially to increase provision to meet the demand.</p> <p>The extent of any further work will depend on factors such as the current provision and future levels of demand.</p>	Mainly local authority officials. School governors and headteachers to a very small degree.	This provision builds on current provision. The extent of any further work will depend on factors such as the current provision and future levels of demand.
National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh	Setting targets for local authorities as part of the National Framework is not expected to lead to any substantial increase or decrease in workload for the education workforce.	Not applicable	<p>Officials will need to engage with the Welsh Government during the process of setting targets, including responding to a consultation on the National Framework. However, this work will replace existing work under the current statutory framework for the preparation of WESPs.</p> <p>School governors and headteachers may need to engage with local authorities regarding target setting in the National Framework. Again, this would replace existing work.</p>
Local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans	Work on preparing new local WESPs will largely replace existing work on preparing WESPs under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. They are therefore not expected to lead to any substantial increase or decrease in workload for the education workforce. However, during the preparation and familiarisation phase, local authority officials will need to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the new plans.	Local authority officials	Work on the new local WESP system will largely replace existing work on preparing WESPs under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

	There may also be a small amount of additional ongoing work for local authority officials due to small changes in the requirements, such as the emphasis on local authorities planning their education workforce		School governors and headteachers may need to engage with local authorities regarding local WESPs. However, this would replace existing work.
National Institute for Learning Welsh	Over time, establishing the National Institute for Learning Welsh, which will provide central strategic leadership and expertise for Welsh language learning, is expected to lead to efficiencies. Support, guidance and the development of high-quality resources could all help to reduce the workload of the education workforce.	Mainly teachers and teaching assistants	The guidance, support and resources developed by the National Institute for Learning Welsh, grounded in the Code, is likely to reduce some of the planning and resource development that teaching and teaching assistants currently undertake.

vii. Have you considered other ways of doing this and your conclusions?

A variety of alternative options were considered to determine whether a large proportion of the expected benefits of the 'preferred option' for different parts of the Act could be delivered via an alternative option. These are set out in the RIA. The impact of various options on workload was a consideration in this process.

viii. If there is a clear workload impact, what is being put in place to mitigate this and for how long?

In order to minimise and manage workload impact, the Act will be implemented incrementally over an extended time period. The first elements of delivery will set the strategic direction:

- The Code describing Welsh language ability is expected to be published by July 2026, with a consultation expected in autumn 2025.
- Regulations and guidance regarding school language categories and local WESPs are expected to be made by July 2027.
- The first National Framework will have to be finalised by July 2028 at the latest.

Local authorities will prepare their new local WESPs from August 2028 onwards, for approval by the Welsh Ministers by July 2029. This provides at least three to four years for local authorities to start preparing for changes required by the Act.

Schools will be expected to prepare their Welsh language education delivery plans from August 2029, to be approved by the local authority by July 2030 and in place by **September 2030**. This provides at least four to five years for schools to start preparing for changes required by the Act.

In terms of further mitigations, the Act includes a provision allowing schools to apply for a temporary exemption (up to 3 years initially, with the possibility of up to a further 3 years) to the requirement to provide Welsh language education in accordance with their language category, where more time is needed to reach the statutory minimum.

ix. Are there any technological solutions linked to this policy that could reduce workload of school staff?

None identified currently, but this will be kept under review.

x. Has a trial period been considered for this policy or change and if not, why not?

Given that the changes concerned are legislative, a trial period is not possible.

However, many of the Act's provisions build on existing systems, such as the current WESPs and non-statutory guidance for school categories. This means that these provisions have been effectively trialled over many years and embody the feedback, 'lessons learnt' and evaluations from experiences to date. The Act therefore builds on a solid foundation.

The Act will also be implemented incrementally over an extended time period, with opportunities for engagement and consultation on various aspects of implementation. There are also provisions for optional secondary legislation, providing flexibility to specify

or amend certain elements, as needed, as circumstances change. Key provisions, including the National Framework, local WESPs and school Welsh language education delivery plans also have a specified timeframe, after which they will be reviewed and updated, allowing learning to be incorporated over time as a routine part of the process.

3.1. Please provide an assessment of the impact of your proposal on the workload of the education staff listed below and, where possible, an estimate of how many additional hours per week this change may involve or how many hours saved. Also consider the impact around responsibilities, for example, middle leaders, ALN and also consider if there is any particular burden on any of those listed.

i. Leaders

The main impact identified to the workload of leaders is in relation to the preparation and delivery of their school's Welsh language education delivery plan. To enable them to undertake the new requirements, there will be new work to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and related guidance. This will include understanding the relevance of language ability levels to their school's language category as well as ascertaining the language ability levels of their school's workforce in line with the Code, similar to the work currently done in relation to the SWAC. There will also be a need to familiarise themselves with relevant provisions, regulations and guidance, including on school language categories and delivery plans, and they may choose to respond to consultations.

Headteachers will need to prepare and consult on delivery plans, and they will lead on their implementation. Some of this work will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing the school development plans and any Siarter Iaith plans or work. Although the challenges are not new, increasing Welsh language education might involve additional workload to ensure there are sufficient staff in the school with the necessary Welsh language skills. For example, additional workload might be in recruitment, coordinating the release of staff for Welsh language skills training, or in some cases restructuring based on the Welsh language skills of staff.

The scale and extent of the work required will depend on a) the Welsh language education provision within the school at the time; b) the Welsh language skills capacity of the school workforce at the time; and c) the ambition set out in the school's delivery plan regarding increasing or improving Welsh language education provision.

The RIA provides reasonable estimates of the costs of implementing the Act. For the purposes of providing a reasonable estimate of cost per school of preparing and implementing delivery plans, a headteacher's salary is used for simplicity. However, the RIA recognises that, in practice, various education staff may contribute to undertaking this task. The RIA estimates that additional work on delivery plans will require 0.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (headteacher's salary) for six months for the first iteration of the delivery plan and three months for each subsequent iteration. This is an estimate rather than an expectation, and we recognise that additional workload may be higher for some schools and lower for others.

However, the Act also aims to streamline existing activities relating to Welsh language education, which will help reduce additional workload for education staff, including leaders. By standardising approaches, the Act seeks to make planning processes more efficient and less time-consuming. Over time, the National Institute for Learning Welsh and Code describing Welsh language ability are also expected to lead to efficiencies, through providing

support and guidance, and through the development of new resources. This may also help to reduce additional workload.

ii. Teachers

There may be additional workload for some teachers, mainly those with a specific responsibility for co-ordinating or providing Welsh language education. These teachers may need to familiarise themselves with the Code to describe Welsh language ability and participate in discussions with leaders around other new requirements of the Act. Teachers will be required to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and related guidance as it applies to their role.

In preparing delivery plans, these teachers may support leaders. In delivering the plans, teachers may need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This work might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources. Some teachers may need to upskill their Welsh language skills to support implementation of the delivery plan.

However, the National Institute for Learning Welsh and Code describing Welsh language ability are expected to lead to efficiencies over time, through providing support and guidance to education staff, and through the development of new resources. This may help to reduce additional workload.

iii. Teaching Assistants

No substantial increase in workload is anticipated for teaching assistants. However, some teaching assistants, for whom it specifically applies to their role, may need to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and related guidance, as well as participate in discussions at school level on the Welsh language education delivery plan.

In delivering the plan, if it applies to their role, teaching assistants may need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This work might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources. Some teaching assistants may need to upskill their Welsh language skills to support implementation of the delivery plan.

iv. Support / Administrative staff

No specific increase in workload is anticipated for Support / Administrative staff. However, they may need to support leaders with additional work, as required. For example, they may need to support with coordinating the release of staff for Welsh language skills training and securing backfill. They may also need to conduct administrative tasks in relation to the preparation of delivery plans and keeping records of decisions regarding school language categories.

v. Governors

The main impact identified to the workload of school governors is in relation to the preparation and delivery of Welsh language education delivery plans. To enable them to undertake the new requirements, there will be new work to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and related guidance. This will include understanding the relevance of language ability levels to their school's language category as well as ascertaining the language ability levels of their school's workforce in line with the Code, similar to the work currently done in relation to the SWAC. There will also be a need to familiarise themselves

with relevant provisions, regulations and guidance, including on school language categories and delivery plans, and they may choose to respond to consultations.

While it is assumed that the bulk of work on preparing delivery plans will fall to the leaders, the governing body will take a strategic, decision-making role and support headteachers in consulting on the delivery plan. There may also be additional work for school governors in overseeing the school's implementation of the delivery plan. Some governing bodies may already be proactively overseeing their school's Welsh language education provision, including any Siarter Iaith plans or work.

3.2. What will this proposal require education staff to do that they are not already doing? Distinguish again each of the following categories:

i. Leaders

The main provision in the Act that will require leaders to do something they are not already doing is the preparation and delivery of their school's Welsh language education delivery plans. To enable them to undertake the new requirements, there will be new work to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and guidance on school language categories and delivery plans.

Leaders will need to prepare and consult on delivery plans, and they will lead on implementation of their delivery plans. Some of this work will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing the school development plans and any Siarter Iaith plans or work.

ii. Teachers

Some teachers, mainly those with a specific responsibility for co-ordinating or providing Welsh language education, may support leaders in preparing Welsh language education delivery plans (though some of this work will replace existing work). These teachers may need to familiarise themselves with the Code describing Welsh language ability. In delivering the plans, these teachers may also need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This work might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources.

iii. Teaching Assistants

Some Teaching Assistants, for whom it specifically applies to their role, may need to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and related guidance. These Teaching Assistants may need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This work might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources.

iv. Support / Administrative staff

The Act is not expected to require Support / Administrative staff to do anything new that they do not already do.

v. Governors

The main provision in the Act that will require school governors to do something they are not already doing is the preparation and delivery of their school's Welsh language education delivery plans. To enable them to undertake the new requirements, there will be new work to familiarise themselves with the content of the Code and guidance on school language categories and delivery plans. School governors will support leaders in consulting on the

delivery plan and overseeing the school's implementation of the delivery plan. Some of this work will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans or work.

3.3. What will this proposal require education staff to change about something they already do? Distinguish against each of the following categories:

i. Leaders

Adapting existing work undertaken as part of preparing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans or work: Welsh language education delivery plans will be a new statutory requirement, helping to achieve consistency across schools in their approach to collecting information and planning for their Welsh language education provision. However, some of this work will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing and implementing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans.

Integration of Welsh language skills assessment: Leaders will need to integrate the assessment of Welsh language skills into their regular workforce planning, similar to the current work done in relation to the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC).

ii. Teachers

Pedagogical approaches: Some teachers, mainly those with a specific responsibility for co-ordinating or providing Welsh language education, may need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources.

iii. Teaching Assistants

Pedagogical approaches: Some teaching assistants, mainly those for whom it specifically applies to their role, may need to adopt new pedagogical approaches and/or any new curriculum or qualification requirements. This might involve familiarisation, training, and classroom application, supported by new resources.

iv. Support / Administrative staff

No changes are anticipated to the work that support / administrative staff already do.

v. Governors

Adapting existing work undertaken as part of preparing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans or work: Welsh language education delivery plans will be a new statutory requirement, helping to achieve consistency across schools in their approach to collecting information and planning for their Welsh language education provision. However, some of this work will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing and implementing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans.

3.4 What (if anything) will this proposal require education staff to stop doing? Distinguish against each of the following categories:

i. Leaders

Some of the work on Welsh language education delivery plans will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing and implementing school development plans and any Siarter laith plans.

ii. Teachers

Some teachers, mainly those with a specific responsibility for co-ordinating or providing Welsh language education, may need to stop their work on existing pedagogical approaches and/or curriculum or qualification requirements, where these are adapted as a result of the Act.

iii. Teaching Assistants

Some teaching assistants, mainly those for whom it specifically applies to their role, may need to stop their work on existing pedagogical approaches and/or curriculum or qualification requirements, where these are adapted as a result of the Act.

iv. Support / Administrative staff

None identified

v. Governors

Some of the work on Welsh language education delivery plans will replace existing work that was undertaken as part of preparing and implementing school development plans and any Siarter Iaith plans.

3.5. Specifically in relation to the change, what will this proposal require education staff to keep doing? Distinguish against each of the following categories:

i. Leaders

Strategic planning and oversight: Leaders will continue their roles in strategic planning and oversight in relation to Welsh language education provision, ensuring that their school meets requirements.

Workforce planning: Leaders will continue planning their workforce to ensure they have the right Welsh language skills, including recruitment, staffing structures and professional development.

Engagement: Leaders will continue engaging with local authority officials around their Welsh language education provision and with parents around the provision available in their school.

ii. Teachers

Curriculum, assessment and qualifications: Teachers will continue delivering Welsh language curriculum, assessment and qualifications requirements in relation to the Welsh language. They will continue supporting the progression of students' Welsh language skills.

Professional Development: Teachers will continue participating in professional development activities to enhance their classroom teaching and Welsh language skills, as required.

iii. Teaching Assistants

Curriculum, assessment and qualifications: Teaching assistants will continue supporting Welsh language curriculum, assessment and qualifications requirements in relation to the Welsh language. They will continue supporting the progression of students' Welsh language skills.

iv. Support / Administrative staff

No changes identified.

v. Governors

Governance and oversight: School governors will continue their role in supporting leaders with planning and oversight in relation to Welsh language education provision, ensuring that their school meets requirements.