

Cymraeg in every Community, strengthening the Welsh language

The Report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities on communities with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers



Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities
March 2026

Overview

The Commission's work is to make recommendations to the Welsh Government to strengthen public policy in terms of community linguistic sustainability, and the use of Welsh as a community/social language. Its work is rooted in an understanding that Welsh is a language that belongs to the whole of Wales and beyond.

In August 2024, the Commission published the report of its first phase, *Empowering Communities, strengthening the Welsh language* on the situation of Welsh in areas with a high density of Welsh speakers. At the same time, the Commission's second phase was launched. The report that follows is the second phase report.

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The Commission is grateful for the input and assistance of Ian Gwyn Hughes, especially in terms of the [Sgôr: Minoritised Languages and Football symposium](#).

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Foreword by the Chairs

It is our privilege to present to the Welsh Government, ‘Cymraeg in every community: strengthening the Welsh language,’ the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities’ report on communities with medium or lower densities of Welsh speakers.

Our starting point in all aspects of the Commission’s work is that Welsh is a national language that belongs to us all—no matter who we are, where we live, or how much Welsh we can speak.

Increasing community use of the Welsh language is of the utmost importance in all parts of Wales. In this report, we propose a series of recommendations that, if implemented, will lead to that increase. Our intention in compiling the report was not to catalogue current good practice in Wales, but rather to present ideas, strategies, and methods to hasten progress to our goal and achieve our vision as a nation for the future of the Welsh language.

This report stands alongside ‘Empowering communities: strengthening the Welsh language,’ the Commission’s report on communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers and its report on Town and Country Planning. Central to both reports is the need to designate areas of higher density linguistic significance. A report on the Welsh language outside Wales is also forthcoming. These reports contain key recommendations for the maintenance and development of the Welsh language as both a community and national language. They are also priorities that require adequate resources for implementation.

In May 2025, Simon had to step aside as Chair for a period in order to receive treatment following a cancer diagnosis. As a result, we adjusted our roles as Chair and Vice-Chair, and Elin became interim Chair for eight months. On Simon’s return in January 2026, we decided it would be wise to jointly chair the Commission.

We would like to thank all the members of the Commission, all those who gave of their time to support the work of the Commission, and officials of the Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 Division for acting as secretariat.

We now submit this report to our elected Government so it can be developed and realised, confident in the welcome that it will receive, alongside the Commission’s previous work.

Dr Simon Brooks and Professor Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones

Chairs, Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities

Executive summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the second phase of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, which focuses on the situation of the Welsh language in areas of medium or lower density of speakers in Wales. The Commission starts from the fundamental principle that Welsh is a national language that belongs to us all, regardless of where we live, and that increasing community use of the language in all parts of Wales is central to the 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy.

The majority of Welsh speakers in Wales (294,900 people or 54.8% of Welsh speakers) and the vast majority of the population of Wales live in areas of linguistic significance of 'medium or lower' density, where fewer than 40% of the population in the county and area can speak Welsh. As a result, multi-sectoral interventions are needed to maintain, create, and develop spaces where the Welsh language can be used by people and children in everyday life. We must ensure that Cymraeg reaches every community.

Introduction

The Commission's first phase report, 'Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language,' was published in August 2024. It focused on areas with a higher density of Welsh speakers. Following the Welsh Government's commitment to expand the work, the second phase of the Commission was launched, and this report is a result of that work.

One of the report's main messages is that spaces to use the Welsh language beyond school—in workplaces, communities, leisure, and everyday life—need to be expanded and strengthened.

The report is set in the context of the two overarching 'Cymraeg 2050' targets:

- the number of Welsh speakers to reach 1 million by 2050.
- the percentage of the population who speak Welsh on a daily basis, and who can speak more than a few words of Welsh, to increase from 10 per cent (in 2013-15) to 20 per cent by 2050

There are also three themes to 'Cymraeg 2050' (1): Increasing the number of Welsh speakers; (2) Increasing the use of Welsh; (3) Creating favourable conditions: infrastructure and context. The Commission's work contributes directly to all of these, with particular emphasis on the need to ensure that the policy focus is centred on creating favourable social conditions for the use of Welsh.

The report uses a holistic community language planning perspective, recognising that language use is shaped by social circumstances, norms, and spaces. It emphasises the importance of creating and nurturing spaces where the Welsh language can be easily used, including what we describe as Welsh language spaces or breathing spaces, in face-to-face and digital contexts alike.

We have examined international good practice in countries that have a similar linguistic situation to Welsh. It is the Basque Country which offers the best model—in policy, in research and in grassroots action. A strong civic society is an important backbone of the innovative and successful work that takes place there. The report refers to several interventions in the Basque context and recommends that learning between the two countries in this area should be strengthened.

The social context of the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas

The report shows that use of the Welsh language in areas of medium or lower density is shaped by wider social and economic structures. Poverty, deprivation, lack of time, lack of transport, travel distance and time, and lack of local opportunities are barriers to the use of the Welsh language in everyday life for many (see chapter 2, ‘The social context of the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas’).

We draw particular attention to the fact that the Welsh language is sometimes seen as something ‘extra’ rather than as a core social or cultural resource. This underlines the need to mesh Welsh language policy with policies on poverty, well-being, community regeneration, and equality. Cymraeg belongs to us all.

In order for Cymraeg to reach every community, language policy must reflect the lived experiences of people from diverse backgrounds, including multicultural and religious communities, LGBTQ+ people, and disabled people.

Welsh language transmission and socialisation

In chapter 3, (‘Welsh language transmission and socialisation’), we note that the intergenerational transmission of Welsh within the family remains an important factor in terms of linguistic sustainability. However, it is not enough on its own.

Transmission rates are lower in 2-adult households where only 1 of those 2 adults speak Welsh, and often, Welsh is not the usual language of the household, or one of the languages of the household in these situations.

We note that some parents and carers who have Welsh language skills rely on schools to ‘donate’ the Welsh language to their children, rather than the language being used consistently at home. Although schools play a vital role, they are not sufficient to create sustained social use beyond the period of education.

As a result, we argue in favour of moving toward a language socialisation paradigm. This recognises that it is through social experience that individuals develop linguistic habits, and that this process is informed by a wide range of agents: parents and carers, schools, peers, leisure activities, the workplace, and digital spaces.

Drawing on models from the behavioural sciences such as COM-B (Capability/Opportunity/Motivation = Behaviour) and the FEAST framework (Fun, Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely (see section 3.5 in particular)), the Commission notes that linguistic confidence is not a prerequisite for the use of Welsh, but a

consequence of that successful use. This suggests that small, practical interventions that enable real linguistic action and are ‘fun’ are more effective than methods based solely on persuasion or awareness-raising.

Culture, sport, young people, and the Welsh language

Chapter 4, (‘Welsh language socialisation beyond school: culture, leisure, and young people’) shows that for many young people in medium or lower density areas, their main experience of the Welsh language takes place at school, with fewer opportunities to use it in informal social contexts. This has a direct impact on linguistic ownership, identity, and continuity of use of the Welsh language after statutory education.

Culture, sport, music, youth activities, and community events are identified as spaces where Welsh can be further normalised as a social language. However, our work shows that there is a geographical and social disparity in the opportunities available. Tackling this is an unmistakable priority.

We also highlight gaps in the digital space. Many of us spend a considerable proportion of our time online, but the presence of Welsh is weak in many types of popular content. Investment in digital creativity, Welsh language content and support for young creators is needed for the Welsh language to retain and further develop its place as a social language among younger generations.

Workplaces and the Welsh Language

In chapter 5 (‘Workplaces and the Welsh Language’), we note that workplaces can be spaces for increasing the use of Welsh. We emphasise the need to build on the good work that has been done on compliance with regulations and language legislation by adopting methods of organisational change and development, organisational culture and leadership, and creating spaces where Welsh can be easily used, including through technology and workforce planning.

We argue that the workplace needs to be treated as a site of language socialisation, where the use of Welsh is seen as something practical, supportive, and normal, rather than symbolic. This includes workforce planning, training, technology deployment, organisational culture change, and behaviour modelling by senior management.

Conclusion

In order to ensure a sustainable future for Cymraeg, the structural challenges facing its use in medium and lower density areas need to be addressed. The Welsh language exists within a complex social ecosystem, and its prosperity depends on creating the conditions in which people can easily use it as part of everyday life. We should not expect individuals to insist upon access to it or to ask to use it.

The report calls for a change in policy thinking: (a) structural interventions; (b) moving away from persuasion or providing information towards enablement; and (c) focusing on transforming social environments.

We have compiled a 'List of recommendations' which, in our opinion, offer a way forward for implementing our conclusions. Putting those into practice, with the appropriate resources and the will to succeed, together we can ensure that Cymraeg reaches every community.

The Remit of the Commission

The main aim of the Commission's second phase was to consider the situation of the Welsh language in areas with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers in Wales and beyond.

The Commission may set some objectives of its own that it considers beneficial to the future of Welsh as a community language. Nonetheless, the Welsh Government was keen for the Commission to discuss the following objectives as part of the terms of reference for the second phase:

- consider the position of Welsh as a social/community language in communities with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers
- consider how the sustainability of the Welsh language and the use of Welsh in these communities can be strengthened
- identify the role and contribution of key policy areas in relation to Welsh in this context when applicable
- consider relevant Welsh language strategies in communities with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers
- complete a summary report on town and country planning (Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, 2025b)
- consider the presence of Welsh beyond Wales, including the contribution that Welsh speakers there could make to the prosperity of the Welsh language as a whole
- submit a public policy report and recommendations to the Welsh Government within two years of the date of its establishment (August 2024)

Commission meetings and contributors

We are grateful to everyone who gave of their time to contribute to our meetings and discussions. Much of the work under way in the medium and lower density areas has inspired us. Furthermore, we see immense potential to deepen, broaden, and enhance it in order to strengthen Welsh as a community language in these areas.

We held meetings and evidence sessions in Cardiff, Wrexham, Merthyr Tydfil, Pontardawe, Caerphilly, at the National Eisteddfod, at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and online.

We held direct discussions with over 50 people representing a range of regional, national, and international stakeholders. These included other experts in language planning in minoritised languages, particularly Basque, Catalan, Scottish Gaelic and Irish. As during the Commission's first phase, we received input throughout the period from Prosiect BRO researchers.

Method and audience

This report has been deliberately compiled as an in-depth analysis, based on academic and international evidence, to provide a foundation for long-term policy discussion and to make sound recommendations. The document is not intended as a practical guide for a lay audience, but rather as a report that explains social, behavioural, and linguistic complexities in order to aid strategic decisions. Harvard bibliographical references are used throughout, and we include a full 'Bibliography' in section 8.

1 Introduction to the report

The Commission's work was to make recommendations to the Welsh Government in order to strengthen public policy around linguistic sustainability in communities, and the use of Welsh as a community or social language. Its work is rooted in an understanding that Welsh is a language that belongs to the whole of Wales and beyond.

In August 2024, the Commission published 'Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language' on the situation of the Welsh language in areas with a high density of speakers. This was the first phase of the Commission's work. Subsequently (in response to the Welsh Government's commitment to extend the work to other parts of Wales and beyond), the second phase of the Commission was launched. This report documents that second phase. In the course of our work, Senedd Cymru (the Welsh Parliament) also launched its 'Cymraeg for all?' inquiry, exploring the challenges and opportunities for increasing the use of Welsh across Wales. The Commission submitted evidence to this inquiry (Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, 2025a). Its final report 'Cymraeg for all?' was published in February (Welsh Parliament, 2026). The timetable for the preparation and publication of our report means that we have not been able to give detailed consideration to the findings of this report or Welsh Language Commissioner's 5 Year Report (Welsh Language Commissioner, 2026). We are, however, confident that both will be important contributions to policy discussions over the coming months, and look forward to using the insight they will bring to our future work.

1.1 Cymraeg in context

The majority of Welsh speakers in Wales aged 3 or older (294,900 people or 54.8% of Welsh speakers), and the vast majority of the population of Wales, live in areas of linguistic significance of 'medium or lower' density, where fewer than 40% of the population in the county and area can speak Welsh.

For the most part, Wales is characterised by a continuum between areas of higher density, medium density and lower density of Welsh speakers (Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, 2025a; Jones, 2025). Lower density areas that border higher density ones, without a medium density area in between, are exceptions to the rule.

In addition, the percentage and number of Welsh speakers vary greatly within the eighteen counties with an average of below 40%. In numerical terms, they range from 4,000 in Blaenau Gwent to 42,000 in the county of Cardiff. This report covers the Welsh language in medium and lower density areas. This means that, to a large extent, Welsh is not the 'default' language of the street. One of the main Welsh language spaces is education. But our message in the chapters that follow is that the need for spaces and opportunities to use the language outside school, after leaving education, in workplaces and more broadly is increasingly apparent. This ensures

that the language is relevant, accessible and belongs us all and to all communities in Wales.

1.2 Targets for the Welsh language

Cymraeg 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017) sets out an ambitious vision for the future of Welsh, with two main targets:

- the number of Welsh speakers to reach 1 million by 2050.
- the percentage of the population who speak Welsh on a daily basis, and who can speak more than a few words of Welsh, to increase from 10 per cent (in 2013 to 15) to 20 per cent by 2050

These targets provide a clear direction for the Welsh Government and wider government in Wales, for the public sector, and for citizens. They emphasise the fundamental principle that Cymraeg belongs to us all—so too does the responsibility for its future. Both phases of the Commission work will, of course, contribute to the strategic objectives of ‘Cymraeg 2050.’

Underpinning Cymraeg 2050 is a commitment to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, particularly the aim of creating a ‘Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language’ (Welsh Government, 2015).

Cymraeg 2050 has three themes:

1. increasing the number of Welsh speakers, through education, language transmission in the family, and adult learning opportunities
2. increasing the use of Welsh, in community life, work, services and leisure
3. creating favourable conditions, including infrastructure, policies, and social context enabling the Welsh language to thrive

1.3 The basis of our work

We engaged throughout with a number of stakeholders, individuals and groups who live, work, or are connected to the medium and lower density areas. We were met with a wealth of ideas, comments, and experiences. As a rule, we do not name organisations or individuals in the report, but we would like to thank Dr Gwenllian Lansdown Davies and Dr Kathryn Jones for offering independent comments on an early draft of this report, to Ben Caspersz and Emily Rayner for their input on the behavioural sciences, and Dr Ane Ortega and Dr Paula Kasares for sharing their language planning experience in the case of the Basque language.

Throughout all these discussions, one prominent theme repeatedly surfaced, namely that there is a desire to use Welsh socially but that systemic barriers prevent the potential to increase the use of Welsh from being reached.

1.4 Developments that will benefit the Welsh language

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 (Welsh Government, 2025b) received Royal Assent during the work of the Commission. We believe it will make a significant contribution to the future of Cymraeg. This report does not directly address education policy, but several of our recommendations for increasing the use of Welsh outside school, and for language ‘socialisation,’ are linked to the education system. We note the Act’s objective for all learners to leave school as confident Welsh speakers at age 16 by 2050 (at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Consequently, our expectation is that one of the challenges described many times in the evidence provided to us, i.e. the opportunity to use Welsh outside school (and after leaving school), will increase over the coming years, as more people acquire Welsh through the education system. We heard that there is an appetite and a desire to use Welsh outside the school context, just as there is for acquiring Welsh post-statutory education amongst adults who have grown up in Wales and people who have settled here or are in the process of doing so. But language use and the language journeys of Welsh speakers from diverse backgrounds do not exist in a social vacuum. In the report, we will refer to the behaviour change work necessary to ensure that Cymraeg reaches every community—alongside strengthening opportunities in order to increase the use of Welsh in the medium and lower density areas.

So while this report focuses on strengthening community use of the Welsh language beyond school—in workplaces, leisure, and everyday life—it is important to clearly recognise that the early years and the beginning of the language journey are absolutely central to the long-term sustainability of the language in these medium and lower density areas.

In this context, the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 and its promotion duties provide the main policy mechanism for ensuring a solid foundation in the early years, through education, immersion, and support for families. The Commission’s work therefore expands on that foundation, focusing on what happens after the start of the linguistic journey, and how continuity of use can be ensured socially and in the community.

1.4.1 The Cymraeg 2050 Budget

The funding earmarked for Cymraeg 2050 community policy interventions for the 2026-27 financial year (Mentrau Iaith, the National Eisteddfod, the Urdd, the Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, Merched y Wawr, Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant Cymru and the Perthyn Project) is £8.1 million (£12.5 million if Mudiad Meithrin is included). On this basis, the Commission had to ask whether the current funding arrangements for Cymraeg 2050 are sufficient to support work on the scale that our report outlines.

1.5 What we examine in our second phase

The medium or lower density areas refer to the percentage of Welsh speakers in specific areas of Wales, defined on the basis of the percentage of the area's population able to speak Welsh, according to Census 2021 data.

1.5.1 Lower density areas

This term refers to local authorities where the percentage of Welsh speakers is below 20%. This includes 16 of the 22 local authorities in Wales.

1.5.2 Medium density areas

This category includes areas where the percentage of Welsh speakers varies between approximately 20% and 40% within medium or lower density counties. At a local authority level, Conwy and Denbighshire are medium density areas. The Commission's first phase report referred to the lower super output areas (LSOAs) that are of higher density within medium or lower density local authorities (i.e. specific areas within Conwy, Denbighshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, and Neath Port Talbot). Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of over 20% and under 40% can be found in Cardiff, Wrexham, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Flintshire. In these places, as the percentages and numbers are above the authority average, Welsh is often more apparent in many aspects of community life, although challenges to extend opportunities, and increase its use, remain. A more detailed discussion of the sociolinguistic profile of medium density areas, as well as policy implications, can be found below.

1.6 Statistical profile

In line with the Commission's first phase report, researchers from Prosiect BRO (an analytical study of the social use of Welsh led by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in collaboration with the University of the Highlands and Islands and Jesus College, University of Oxford) were asked to prepare a collection of demolinguistic statistics based on Census 2021 data. On the basis of the work of Prosiect BRO, comments are offered on some of the most important trends to be seen.

1.6.1 Analysis of increases and decreases in the number and percentage of speakers across the local authorities of Wales

Focusing on interventions that can lead to the strengthening of Welsh in areas with a medium or lower density of speakers is central to the Commission's remit. The data below shows there was a reduction in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers in almost all parts of Wales between the Census 2011 and 2021. A decrease in the number and percentage of the Welsh speaking population was noted in 18 of the 22 local authorities, including the areas with higher density of speakers.

With an increase in the number and percentage of the Welsh speaking population recorded in Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taf (and an increase

in the number, but no change in the percentage in Merthyr Tydfil), further analysis is needed to ascertain whether this reflects population movements within Wales: to what extent is the increase in the number of Welsh speakers in these three counties due to Welsh speakers moving and settling there from other areas of Wales?

1.6.2 Overall decline in numbers

There was a decrease in the number of people able to speak Welsh in 18 of the 22 local authorities in Wales between Census 2011 and 2021. There was a decrease in the four higher density counties, where the percentage of speakers is 40% or higher, i.e. Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire. In the medium or lower density counties, there was an increase in four and a decrease in 14 local authorities. The counties witnessing an increase in numbers were: Cardiff (+6,065); Vale of Glamorgan (+1,500); Rhondda Cynon Taf (+800); Merthyr Tydfil (+100).

In the other 14 counties with an average percentage of speakers of below 40% (areas of interest to this report in the main), there was a drop of 19,000 speakers between the two Censuses. Combining the numbers in the four counties where there was an increase with the numbers in the 14 counties where there was a decrease, there was a net decrease of 10,535 in the numbers of Welsh speakers in the medium and lower density local authorities.

1.6.3 Breakdown of the change in speaker numbers in 2021 as a percentage of speakers by local authority in 2011

According to Prosiect BRO's analysis of Census data, 18 of the 22 local authorities saw a decrease in percentage points, with Carmarthenshire experiencing the largest decrease in number (-5,200) and in percentage points (-4%) between the two Censuses. Across other Welsh local authorities where there was a decrease, there was little difference in the percentage point reduction, with the range between -0.2% (Swansea) and -2.2% (Powys).

Table 1: Change in percentage of the population able to speak Welsh by local authority

Local Authority	Percentage of the population able to speak Welsh in 2011	Percentage of the population able to speak Welsh in 2021	Change in the percentage of the population able to speak Welsh
Swansea	11.4	11.2	-0.2
Blaenau Gwent	7.8	6.2	-1.6
Vale of Glamorgan	10.8	11.5	0.7
Cardiff	11.1	12.2	1.1
Caerphilly	11.2	10.5	-0.7
Newport	9.3	7.5	1.8
Neath Port Talbot	15.3	13.5	1.8
Ceredigion	47.3	45.3	2.0
Conwy	27.4	25.9	-1.5
Gwynedd	65.4	64.4	-1.0
Merthyr Tydfil	8.9	8.9	0.0
Bridgend	9.7	9.2	0.5
Powys	18.6	16.4	-2.2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	12.3	12.4	0.1
Pembrokeshire	19.2	17.2	2.0
Denbighshire	24.6	22.5	-2.1
Monmouthshire	9.9	8.7	-1.2
Carmarthenshire	43.9	39.9	4.0
Flintshire	13.2	11.6	-1.6
Torfaen	9.8	8.2	-1.6
Wrexham	12.9	12.2	-0.7
Isle of Anglesey	57.2	55.8	-1.4%

However, considering the decline in speaker numbers as a percentage of speakers in the previous Census (2011) by local authority, we then see that the following patterns emerge.

Table 2: Change in speaker numbers as a percentage of speakers per local authority

Local authority	Number in 2011	Number in 2021	Change in speaker numbers	Change in numbers as a percentage of speakers
Swansea	26,300	26,000	-300	-1%
Blaenau Gwent	5,300	4,000	-1,200	-24%
Vale of Glamorgan	13,200	14,700	1,500	12%
Cardiff	36,700	42,800	6,000	16%
Caerphilly	19,300	17,800	-1,400	-7%
Newport	13,000	11,600	-1,400	-11%
Neath Port Talbot	20,700	18,700	-2,000	-10%
Ceredigion	35,000	31,700	-3,300	-9%
Conwy	30,600	29,000	-1,600	-5%
Gwynedd	77,000	73,600	-3,400	-4%
Merthyr Tydfil	5,000	5,100	100	1%
Bridgend	13,100	13,000	-100	-1%
Powys	24,000	21,400	-2,600	-11%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	27,800	28,600	800	3%
Pembrokeshire	22,800	20,600	-2,200	-9%
Denbighshire	22,200	20,900	-1,300	-6%
Monmouthshire	8,800	7,900	-900	-11%
Carmarthenshire	78,000	72,800	-5,200	-7%
Flintshire	19,300	17,400	-1,900	-10%
Torfaen	8,600	7,400	-1,300	-15%
Wrexham	16,700	16,000	-700	-4%
Isle of Anglesey	38,600	37,400	-1,200	-3%

- In Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf, there were increases in the numbers of speakers of 16%, 12% and 3%.
- There was no significant change in Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend or Swansea.
- In the 'higher density' local authorities, there were reductions of 3% (Anglesey), 4% (Gwynedd), 7% (Carmarthenshire) and 9% (Ceredigion).
- In the 'medium density' local authorities, there was a reduction of 5% (Conwy) and 6% (Denbighshire).
- Wrexham and Flintshire saw reductions of 4% and 10% respectively.
- Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Powys saw reductions of between 9% and 11%.

- The following reductions were seen in Caerphilly 7%, Monmouthshire 11%, Newport 11%, Torfaen 15% and Blaenau Gwent 24%.

1.7 Medium density areas

The Commission committed in its first phase report to examine the Welsh language in communities where between approximately 25% and 40% are able to speak Welsh. They were not areas that could be defined as those of higher density linguistic significance, as the Commission had recommended that the threshold for that definition be 40%. The first report identified a threshold of around 25% for areas of medium density. However, following the publication of ‘Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language’ further analyses were provided by Prosiect BRO (2024) and we are of the view that it would henceforth be prudent to define areas of medium density linguistic significance as those between 20% and 39%. Setting the threshold at 20% at local authority level is a better reflection of the statistical clustering, with Denbighshire at 23% and Conwy County at 26%, between 5 and 8 percentage points higher than the national average. Considering the data at a Lower Layer Super Output Area level, setting the threshold at 20% means that there are 128 LSOAs of medium density within the medium or lower density authorities, rather than 62, and these also include different types of communities. These are communities where the density of speakers is above the national average.

1.8 Categories of medium density areas

Seven different types of medium density areas were identified in the Commission’s first phase report. Following further analysis and discussion, the Commission is of the view that three categories can be considered, with implications as follows.

1) **Communities that should be treated as areas of higher density by discretion.**

This category includes parts of university towns and cities such as Bangor, Aberystwyth and Carmarthen that are surrounded by higher density communities. The category also includes rural, semi-rural and coastal areas, mainly on the outskirts of areas where over 40% are able to speak Welsh. These include areas such as Montgomeryshire up to the border with Oswestry in England, parts of north Pembrokeshire, dispersed parts of Carmarthenshire, parts of the Vale of Clwyd, and the Ceiriog Valley near Wrexham. These communities are part of a linguistic continuum, and these should be treated as areas of higher density linguistic significance.

2) **Communities that have seen growth in the number of Welsh speakers**

The second category includes communities in south-east Wales, for example to the south of Pontypridd in Rhondda Cynon Taf and in suburbs in west Cardiff, as well as part of the town of Mold. One feature pertaining to Welsh speakers in the communities in south-east Wales is that a number of Welsh speakers acquired the

language through the education system (69% of Welsh speakers in south-east Wales started speaking Welsh at school according to the Welsh Language Use Survey (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner, 2015)), moved to the area, or are the second or third generation of a family to have moved into the area or acquired the language through the education system.

The Welsh language communities of today have been created and have grown, to a large extent, as a result of the education system and migration patterns. The significance of that is there is great potential to build on those skills and to put them to day-to-day use. In addition, there are instances of Welsh speakers and supporters of the language introducing Welsh to new aspects of community life. This is encouraging, and the challenge for language policy therefore is to maintain and increase this.

3) Areas that were higher density communities until recently

The third category includes the post-industrial areas of Carmarthenshire and western Glamorgan—the Swansea Valley area—as well as other parts of Wales such as part of the community of Rhosllanerchrugog near Wrexham. We believe that these communities are different to medium density communities that have seen growth in Welsh speaker numbers.

The demolinguistic profile of these communities tends to be older. Examination of the Swansea Valley, for example, shows that Census data reflects this. The percentage of speakers aged 5 to 15, school age, is slightly lower in Neath Port Talbot (25.8%) than in Cardiff (28.4%), the Vale of Glamorgan (29.2%), and Rhondda Cynon Taf (27%). But we see that the percentage of speakers in Neath Port Talbot aged between 65 and 74 (10%) or aged 75 or over (13.6%) is considerably higher compared to Cardiff (5.9% and 5.6%), the Vale of Glamorgan (4.8% and 4.9%), or Rhondda Cynon Taf (4.3% and 4.1%).

We believe that these demolinguistic patterns are evidence of the legacy of Welsh language communities (previously of higher density). But these communities have not been able to reproduce the language and produce new speakers over the decades, and language shift has occurred from Welsh to English. The percentages of speakers are therefore dropping from census to census, as the older speakers and the legacy of the old higher density Welsh language communities reduce.

Still, there is room for hope. We see that 25.8% of children aged 5 to 15 are able to speak Welsh. The 'old' communities remain for the time being, alongside processes and patterns of Welsh language take-up that are more similar to south-east Wales. But in a few decades' time we predict that these post-industrial areas will more closely resemble other low-density areas of Wales than the higher density communities of the west. In essence, what we are seeing in the Swansea Valley is the decline of Welsh at a community level, alongside modern-day processes of language revitalisation.

We believe that further work to analyse and understand these communities in depth, including undertaking age analysis of Welsh speakers at LSOA level, would confirm this assumption and steer future linguistic interventions.

We believe there are lessons to be learned from the sociolinguistic experience and history of these post-industrial areas. In analysing the linguistic situation in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion today, there are features that were evident in the Swansea Valley a few decades ago—such as the language group’s reliance on religious and social networks that were unable to maintain or reproduce Welsh at a community level. The danger is that sociolinguistic developments and language shift happening today in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion will put them on the same trajectory as that of the Swansea Valley decades before.

1.9 Welsh as national and community language

Although this report focuses on the medium and lower density areas, Welsh is a national language for the whole of Wales, and indeed for communities outside Wales as well.

The official status of our language is clearly enshrined in legislation that applies to all parts of our country, namely the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (National Assembly for Wales, 2011). Strengthening the language in all corners of Wales is at the heart of this vision. Strengthening Welsh in areas where it has significant community presence is likely to create a positive impact across the whole of Wales, due to the linguistic and social networks that connect our communities.

We are eager to see this principle realised not only on a philosophical level, but also through practical action. In other words, the first and second phases of the Commission complement each other and propose a set of actions that will contribute to the future of our language across Wales.

In the course of the Commission’s work, we have addressed a variety of linguistic contexts across the areas in question, recognising the importance of geographical communities, digital communities, and networks alike. We can recognise that:

[...] we need places to be able to speak and use Welsh.

(Young person, Cardiff)

The community is a ‘language planning crossroads’ (Hodges and Prys, 2019), i.e. a place where a plethora of diverse influences come together. The community spans:

- family and households
- education and schools
- workplaces

- services to the public
- leisure
- other elements of neighbourhood life
- digital domains as individuals and groups communicate with each other through multiple media

Different interventions and approaches are needed in different contexts, and these should run in parallel with the implementation of national policy that reflects the status of Welsh as a national language. In order for Cymraeg to reach every community, we recognise the importance of the ‘geographical language continuum’ that exists between areas of different densities of Welsh speakers. This requires a flexible and contextual approach to language policy implementation, reflecting the diversity of linguistic experiences and the extent to which Welsh is used socially. Secondly, it recognises the interdependence between the areas of higher, medium, and lower density linguistic significance. Success in one area can influence other areas.

1.10 Spaces for easy use of Welsh

Medium or lower density areas often include communities and networks where Welsh is present but not used extensively as a social language. Therefore, micro-planning approaches are needed, referring to local, practical actions that influence how people use language in real situations, rather than policy or legislation at a national (macro) level. Repeatedly, as we collected evidence, the need to extend opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh outside the classroom was emphasised. In addition, opportunities to use Welsh in the private sector and in workplaces are an important part of a sustainable linguistic ecosystem. Increasing the use of Welsh in these areas requires evidence-based interventions reflecting the local sociolinguistic reality.

As we gathered evidence, we heard about the need for spaces where Welsh can be used unimpeded and with ease. This is one of the many things to have convinced us that there is an appetite and a desire to increase the use of Welsh at a grassroots level. Areas in similar sociolinguistic positions to Wales also face similar challenges, and we refer later to examples from the Basque Country.

1.11 The language and confidence debate

When considering the challenges impeding the use of Welsh, we had the opportunity to analyse the concept of individual confidence in these contexts. Many have attributed the lack of use of Welsh by individuals in certain situations to their lack of linguistic confidence. Our view is that context or circumstances very often set linguistic norms, and therefore that the individual’s power within such situations is limited. In order to increase community use of Welsh, there needs to be a focus on the circumstances and linguistic norms of spaces, so that using Welsh becomes automatic in the context, rather than an act that requires any particular ‘confidence’

from an individual. We also analyse confidence through the lens of behaviour change models in chapter 3.

1.12 Language and spaces

Spaces where a minoritised language can be spoken ‘by default’ are important to language socialisation processes, and reinforce language acquisition and use (see Kasares, P., Ortega, A., Amorrortu, 2022; Ó Giollagáin et al., 2025). Secondary socialisation processes like this are important to the viability of a minoritised language and take place in spaces that are part of what we call ‘communities.’

[...] linguistic competences can be reinforced and enhanced through social and cultural exchange between proficient speakers (as relevant to the age cohort)

(Giollagáin et al., 2025)

Our view is that spaces that offer positive experiences to use Welsh are particularly important for young people. For many young people living in areas of medium or lower density, there are insufficient opportunities to be able to use the language outside the classroom.

The characteristics of spaces influence social behaviour, including linguistic behaviour. We relate to spaces as part of our physical environment and we can see and sense the feel, features or atmosphere of different spaces or buildings. Our response to these spaces depends on:

- our experience
- our interpretation of the norms
- the social and cultural expectations of our behaviour

For example, as children step into the playground, they understand that they have freedom. Indeed, they are encouraged, within that space, to play, climb, run, and behave in a way that would not be acceptable in a space such as a living room or classroom. Briefly, spaces influence our behaviour, and language is one of those behaviours.

We propose recommendations for creating and developing spaces to increase the use of Welsh. Our aim in doing this is to create contexts where the use of Welsh is easy and a normal part of life. In some cases, we will refer to ‘Welsh language spaces,’ and at other times we will use the concept of ‘breathing spaces’ as has been developed in the sociolinguistic arena.

1.12.1 Breathing spaces and Welsh language spaces

In the view of Joshua Fishman (1991), 'breathing space' is vital for minoritised language maintenance. The Basque term, *arnasgune* (breathing space) has been conceptually discussed over recent years in the Basque media. Some argue that it means any space where use of the language is a social norm—for example in a Basque choir within an area where the overall percentage of speakers is low. Others argue that the term is limited to higher density speaker areas, thereby encompassing whole villages, towns or suburbs (see Jones, 2025).

In order for Cymraeg to reach every community, we believe that breathing spaces or Welsh language spaces are an integral part of a strategy for the future of the language. Identifying, supporting, and developing these spaces, particularly in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers, is essential for achieving the Welsh Government's objectives for our language.

These spaces are not confined to classrooms or to formal education, although school can be a 'breathing space' in itself. Rather, they are diverse and dynamic environments, social, professional, and relaxed spaces where speakers can live through the language. Using Welsh in these spaces is not an artificial exercise either, rather, a medium for connection, belonging and creativity.

Not all 'breathing spaces' will be the same, nor will they necessarily be bricks and mortar. They are likely to vary according to the context, needs, aspirations, and realities of the people who occupy them. For example, a breathing space in the workplace can manifest as a team or part of a department that works through the medium of Welsh. For young people, breathing spaces beyond school may include youth clubs, sports teams, or online communities. Spaces can be solely in Welsh, such as the *Eisteddfod*, or ones in which it is usual to use multiple languages (see Nelde, Williams, and Strubell i Trueta, 1996; Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012).

In considering how to cultivate breathing spaces for Welsh, we recognise that it is important to look beyond the physical infrastructure and recognise the social and linguistic behaviour of the individuals operating within those spaces. While community hubs, language centres and public service spaces have the potential to support the use of Welsh, the environment and the physical building alone are not sufficient. Linguistic behaviour is informed by complex factors such as power relations, status, and social expectations. For example, English can dominate in formal settings such as in court or hospital, where the official discourse, technical terminology, and institutional processes are linked to the state language.

Language choice, ability to speak a language, attitudes to language, language ideology and the specific domain all affect how individuals use language (Hodges and Prys, 2019). In line with this, we seek to transcend traditional ways of thinking about language, and to create and promote breathing spaces for the Welsh language. The aim is to cultivate environments where people can expect to use

Welsh. The following chapters explore this concept in more depth across a range of contexts, offering practical steps to build the spaces where Welsh can be used by speakers of all kinds, without hindrance.

By identifying and cultivating breathing spaces, Cymraeg can become more relevant to social life and offer opportunities to people who have not used the language since leaving school. It offers a flexible approach that enables the use of Welsh to be extended beyond traditional geographical boundaries, creating new opportunities for the language to thrive.

We believe that breathing spaces can make a practical contribution to the revitalisation of Welsh as a community language by:

- offering suitable spaces for speakers who do not normally use Welsh
- promoting social use of Welsh in settings such as workplaces, sports clubs, cultural events, and youth services
- connecting communities through local and national networks that foster unhindered use of Welsh

1.13 Welsh Government education policy

This report is based on the concept that behaviour change depends on effective actions that increase individuals' ability, opportunities, and motivation in relation to the behaviour. The education system plays a role in this in relation to individuals' ability, opportunities, and motivation to use Welsh. But more is needed. The Commission's evidence shows that a wider social ecosystem is needed to maintain and reinforce the use of the Welsh language beyond school. That is the basis of the focus of this report.

We are eager to emphasise the importance of an education system that succeeds in creating independent and confident Welsh speakers to ensure the sustainability of a minoritised language. We also urge the Welsh Government and local government across the country to seize every opportunity to maintain, strengthen and grow Welsh language education from the early years onwards, and to support parents and carers every step of the way. This should include opening and expanding 'Primarily Welsh Language' category schools at every opportunity, as this, in the Commission's view, is the category of school most likely to create independent and confident speakers as well as creating opportunities and incentives to use Welsh.

1.14 Conceptual basis

In its first phase report, the Commission focused on Welsh-speaking communities in the areas of higher density linguistic significance, paying close attention to economic and social factors in its analysis and recommendations. This second phase report also uses this perspective.

The main language in a bilingual society often shapes cultural trends, patterns of communication, and technological progress. As a result, there is a tendency to increasingly adopt that language over time.

For language policy in Wales, this means that efforts should concentrate on establishing socio-economic and civic environments that encourage and support speakers of Welsh to actively maintain and use their language alongside the majority language.

At the same time, we must refrain from overemphasising institutional and symbolic considerations. We must, for example, avoid a situation where the minoritised language group is over-reliant on schools for language transmission, particularly if this is at the expense of developing spaces for the transmission and socialisation of Welsh more widely.

Language policy within areas of medium or lower density needs to focus on establishing, extending, and developing the minoritised language group's ability to produce their own strategies for the transmission and socialisation of the language.

Language policy must:

- support families to transmit the language to the next generation as well as extend opportunities to acquire and use the language beyond the family
- create socialisation spaces for the unimpeded use of Welsh

And in order to develop appropriate and effective strategies to achieve the above across the range of social contexts involved, language policy must:

- recognise and respond to linguistic dynamics across medium or lower density areas of Welsh speakers
- recognise and respond to the interrelationship between Welsh and wider sociolinguistic and economic factors, including deprivation, social class, and the increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of our communities

2 The social context of the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas

The Commission's first phase report outlined the general principle that language is a social phenomenon. Language has several social functions:

- allowing people to communicate with each other
- carrying culture in its broadest sense
- identity marking

The social context in which the Welsh language is used is diverse throughout Wales and beyond. The first phase report also recognised that the use of Welsh can vary according to the language of the home, of the neighbourhood, of education, of the economic sector, and that other factors such as age and social class are important.

When discussing medium or lower density areas under the remit of the second phase of the Commission, it is important to revisit these principles as the sociological trends linked to the Welsh language vary.

As the Commission's first phase report noted, the result of all these processes is that the discussion about Welsh language communities often touches on discussions about social justice in areas such as the housing market, the economy etc. The Welsh language does not exist in a vacuum, but as a medium of expression and communication within social groups and as part of a wider linguistic, cultural, and social ecosystem that includes diverse languages, identities, and experiences. In order for Cymraeg to be in every community, the issues affecting different social groups must be understood. Only by recognising these can effective language policies be designed and the challenges faced by these communities in using and relating to the Welsh language addressed. The aim of this report is therefore to firmly embed the Welsh language within the multilingual fabric of Wales' communities, in a way that promotes social cohesion, linguistic respect and belonging.

Recommendation 37 of the Commission's first phase was that 'the Welsh Government should establish a task and finish group in order to examine issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the Welsh language.' It was recommended that the group 'give full consideration to these issues in the context of Welsh as a community language and in areas of higher density linguistic significance,' and that 'appropriate attention should also be given to rurality.' The Commission's opinion is that this task and finish group should widen the scope of its work to include lower or medium density areas as well, and during the discussion below we outline some specific questions which we believe that this group should examine as part of its work.

2.1 Social class and deprivation

One of the Commission's first phase conclusions was that the significance of social class should be fully recognised when developing language policy. One important addition to the work of the task and finish group would be to seek a better insight and understanding of the relationship between social class and use of the Welsh language in medium and lower density areas, as well as in the areas of higher density linguistic significance. This should be done on the basis of a wide range of data, to consider:

- how to ensure that Welsh is a language that is relevant and accessible to all
- how to increase the use and transmission of the Welsh language
- how to plan policy interventions across education, employment, and the community in an intentional and coherent manner

This is particularly true when considering areas such as Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil, which are among the areas with the highest levels of deprivation in Wales.

The understanding of the statistical relationship between socioeconomic status (NS-SEC) and Welsh language ability is insufficient to date, but there is some evidence to suggest, according to Census 2021, that the proportion of Welsh speakers tends to be higher among individuals who belong to the category 'Managerial and professional occupations' (NS SEC Levels 1 to 6) in areas with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers, and that there is a lower representation of Welsh speakers among the working class, especially individuals within NS SEC 7+ (with the exception of students, who show the highest percentage of Welsh speakers across all NS SEC categories).

Indeed, we heard evidence from community leaders in some of the most deprived areas of Wales that detailed consideration needs to be given to the impact of social and economic conditions and challenges on opportunities to acquire and use the Welsh language, and on people's ability to participate in community activity more generally. In order to ensure an increase in the use of Welsh in deprived communities, it is essential for language planning to go beyond just providing linguistic opportunities. It should include integrated approaches that recognise that community regeneration and economic inclusion are integral to linguistic regeneration.

To illustrate what we mean by this, we now turn to discuss some of the specific challenges raised. Among these were:

- Shortage of capital and time, including the effect of a lack of income and employment and time on people's ability to learn or use the Welsh language

- Lack of Welsh language opportunities or activity in disadvantaged areas, leading to a feeling of lack of access to Welsh language life

We heard evidence in several parts of Wales about the lack of free opportunities. In Cardiff, for example, attention was drawn to the economic and social differences between different areas of the city, with the south and east areas experiencing additional obstacles based on these factors. There was evidence of the effect this has on:

- opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language in community activities in their local areas
- opportunities to be able to participate in the Welsh language community outside the classroom, especially in after-school activities

Travel times—along with travel distances—create an obstacle to using the Welsh language, and this is even more significant in disadvantaged communities. Further support is needed for pupils in Welsh language education throughout Wales to ensure that opportunities are available for everyone to participate in Welsh language community activities. In the words of a young person from south east Wales:

It was hard to miss out on after school clubs [due to travel time or distance] because our parents send us to these schools to get the best opportunities in life—but we miss out on them in the first place

Families from deprived urban areas may face barriers to taking advantage of these opportunities. This may be because the school is too far from their home and the travel distance is excessive for Welsh language activities after school hours.

We heard evidence from leaders and members of the community about the impact of deprivation on their relationship with the Welsh language. In particular, it can be challenging to engage with communities where circumstances such as poverty mean that the effort required to come into contact with Welsh is not a day-to-day priority:

The language is not a priority for them at the moment, but [it] needs to be woven in to get everyone to help each other

(Youth group leader)

As this quote suggests, it is possible to consider the Welsh language in these contexts in a completely different way, and there is a seed of an idea here that could be developed. However, by interweaving the language into meaningful community activities and opportunities, the Welsh language can offer new ways of interpreting

and appreciating identity and culture, fostering a sense of belonging and creating meaning. The Welsh language is not an additional luxury to be considered when the socioeconomic conditions are favourable, but something that everyone, regardless of their background, has the right to have access to. The challenge for the task and finish group will be to find new ways of realising this aspiration by weaving the Welsh language into interventions that are relevant to everyday lives, and which combine socioeconomic and cultural benefits for disadvantaged communities, offering new social and cultural opportunities.

Indeed, during our work, we heard widespread support for the Welsh language in principle, but that social and economic barriers, including travel costs and distances, limit participation in reality. This is not necessarily a matter of changing attitudes to the Welsh language, but of ensuring that living conditions allow participation. Events should be held in communities and within easy reach of them in order to reduce barriers such as cost and travel distances and ensure that access to Welsh language spaces is easy. In order for Cymraeg to be in every community, we are of the opinion that exploring this further should be a priority for the task and finish group as it extends its remit to include medium and lower density areas.

2.2 Social, cultural, and economic capital

Understanding the diverse types of capital, whether social, cultural, economic, or linguistic, is another essential way of evaluating the position of the Welsh language as a community language, and of analysing power structures in the social contexts where the language exists and develops. Pierre Bourdieu (1986), the French sociologist, introduced the concept of 'capital' to explain the different resources available to individuals, and which can be used to ensure social advantage. He identifies 3 types of capital:

- economic capital, which refers to financial resources such as money, property, and wealth and determines social status and opportunities
- cultural capital, which includes knowledge, skills (including linguistic skills), education, and cultural preferences
- social capital, which refers to individuals' connections and social networks, and access to information, opportunities, and resources that are not available to individuals with limited social networks

These forms of capital are linked to each other and can influence an individual's social position and power within various social contexts. For example, a lack of economic capital can limit the ability of communities to invest in linguistic infrastructure or local job opportunities. Cultural capital, such as education through the Welsh language, access to literature, history, traditions and the Welsh media for example, is an infrastructure for maintaining and developing linguistic identity. In addition, social capital plays a role by creating supportive networks, promoting social use of the Welsh language, and offering opportunities where the Welsh language

can flourish. Consideration of diverse types of ‘capital’ could help to define and determine the task and finish group’s work programme by examining whether, for example, there is a lack of social capital to access Welsh language spaces, or a lack of economic capital and time for lifelong learning.

Bourdieu’s ideas can also help to add to our understanding of the different dynamics between various Welsh speakers in different communities. Recognising that language is spoken and used along a continuum in terms of proficiency and habits, it could for example be examined whether certain types of Welsh speakers have more social capital and opportunities to use Welsh than other speakers in certain contexts or areas, where the density of speakers is lower. This could lead to the development of ways to ensure that speakers from all backgrounds, all levels of proficiency and usage patterns have access to Welsh language networks and events, and that Welsh language social and cultural opportunities in the community are always visible and accessible.

On the other hand, the lack of community opportunities to use Welsh outside the home affects all types of speakers. Indeed, one could think of situations where a speaker has social capital in the Welsh language, but that capital is of low value in the community where they live. We heard evidence from school pupils who faced criticism for using Welsh in the playground or in other extracurricular contexts, and social pressure from peers to turn to English. In this regard, as well as giving due consideration to the systemic and fundamental barriers limiting individuals’ economic, cultural and social capital and how to address these in the Welsh context, the task and finish group should explore what policy interventions could lead to the establishment of social spaces and environments in which these different forms of capital are negotiated, to try to minimise the impact of different power structures and relationships between peers and each other and to create space to maintain, support and motivate the language.

2.3 Equality, diversity, and inclusion

In its first phase report, the Commission emphasised the need for further research to examine the intersections between linguistic ability and protected characteristics at a local level. For Cymraeg to be in every community, the remit of this research should include the higher, medium, and lower density areas, and it should also consider Welsh speakers outside of Wales. This would include how lived experiences of different groups can vary in rural, urban, and municipal areas, and the relevance of the Welsh language in these contexts. We therefore focus here on what was raised during the work of the Commission’s second phase in relation to multicultural and religious communities, sexuality, and disability.

2.4 Multicultural and religious communities

The Commission’s first phase specifically drew attention to the principle that any language group is a multifaceted group, and that the Welsh language group contains

within its significant internal diversity in terms of the characteristics and identities of individual speakers, together with characteristics and identities that groups of Welsh speakers share together. Issues relating to diversity, inclusion and the Welsh language are therefore at the core of the effort to ensure that the Welsh language belongs to us all, whatever our background.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Welsh Government, 2015) emphasises the aim of fostering ‘a Wales of vibrant culture and flourishing Welsh language.’ The Anti Racist Wales Action Plan (Welsh Government, 2022) includes the aim of eliminating disadvantage in access to education and opportunities to learn Welsh for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, Cymraeg 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017) highlights the opportunity to use the Welsh language as a way of embracing multiculturalism and diversity.

In the multicultural communities of Wales, people’s experiences of the Welsh language can vary greatly. Some have grown up in areas with little contact with the language, some have spoken Welsh for generations, and others have developed a connection with the Welsh language through various routes—whether through their families, schools, or by moving to Wales from other countries. Every journey to the Welsh language is valuable and contributes to the richness of the Welsh language community.

Recognising this, the wide range of backgrounds that are now part of Welsh-speaking communities should be celebrated. It is important to recognise that some communities have been settled in Wales for generations, while others have joined more recently, such as international migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Although the status and rights of migrants vary, each individual and group brings a linguistic, cultural and educational wealth that contributes to the life of the Welsh language, and the breadth of diversity in terms of linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds must be taken into account when trying to ensure equitable and suitable access to Welsh language education as children, young people and adults.

Many people who move to Wales have multilingual skills, and that is an asset in fostering bilingualism and engaging with the Welsh language community. The ability to operate in more than one language can be an advantage in learning Welsh and in building local links (Higham, 2020). Nevertheless, a lack of knowledge or lack of contact with the Welsh language can influence decisions about education and careers. That is especially possible where:

- the density of Welsh speakers is lower
- there is a lack of opportunities to engage with the language
- the Welsh-medium schools are located further away from home

For Cymraeg to be in every community, expanding access to Welsh through community education, such as further education colleges, provision for adults and charities, is an essential initial step, as well as increasing community awareness of those opportunities through coherent and dedicated promotional strategies.

It is essential for speakers of other languages to have access to Welsh language education on the same terms as English language education for adults. We believe that the WSOL and Croeso i Bawb programmes should be expanded to ensure they are available nationally. There is a need to develop specialist training for tutors who teach Welsh to speakers of other languages, including support to develop teaching methods that are sensitive to linguistic and cultural diversity.

In addition, we are of the opinion that Welsh should be integrated as part of mainstream ESOL courses and build on good practice such as the model we saw in a further education college, where the Welsh language is presented as part of the ESOL learning experience. This offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between learning English and learning Welsh, creating realistic bilingual pathways that welcome and support all new speakers.

We also heard about the experiences of some Welsh speakers who follow a religion other than Christianity. These individuals lived in an urban multicultural area but travelled to a less religiously diverse area to attend a Welsh-medium school. An individual from South-east Wales said:

I had to leave my community, and had to explain my religion to other people

This experience suggests that in some cases the sense that the Welsh language belongs to everyone could be strengthened, ensuring that religious and cultural diversity is fully reflected and supported. We heard that this experience of feeling apart sometimes led to uncertainty about taking modules through the medium of Welsh at university.

It should be something I don't think twice about doing modules in Welsh because I have had a Welsh language education.

We also heard about the importance of ensuring that Welsh language school staff and community organisations better reflect their communities in multicultural areas. We heard about the success of a school holding an Eid Party, giving Muslim families the opportunity to take a central part in a Welsh language school event. This is an

example of a community event around the school which used the Welsh language leading to a positive experience.

An important part of the task and finish group's work, therefore, will be to consider how to build upon successes such as this in order to expand and vary the range of cultural events held in Welsh, to ensure that they incorporate the experiences, cultures and perspectives of all the people who use the Welsh language today. Ensuring that Cymraeg belongs to everyone also means promoting wider linguistic respect, where Welsh is strengthened alongside other languages that are part of community life in Wales today. This means creating social spaces where speakers from all linguistic backgrounds can feel part of the same civic community.

2.5 Gender and sexuality

A core part of this work will now be to consider the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities through the medium of Welsh. According to Census 2021, around 13,320 Welsh speakers aged 16 or over identified as:

- 'Gay or Lesbian'
- 'Bisexual'
- other minority sexual orientation (LGBT+)

This represents 3.4% of all Welsh speakers aged 16 or over.

'Queering Language Revitalisation' (Walsh et al., 2025) explores how LGBTQ+ speakers of minoritised languages, including Irish, Breton, Catalan and Welsh, think about their identities and find ways to include them and to be included within minoritised linguistic communities. It emphasises the need for inclusive language and the essential role that the arts and the community play.

We note the success of the LGBTQ+ Irish language chat group in Ireland, 'Queercal Comhrá' (Walsh, 2025). Many members of this group have learned Irish as adults rather than through the education system. For many, learning the language has been a way of connecting to their LGBTQ+ identity and, at the same time, to their Irish identity. Through this experience, they have realised that LGBTQ+ identity and using the minoritised language can coexist and, in fact, strengthen each other. Being an LGBTQ+ person and a minoritised language speaker are therefore not necessarily 2 conflicting or incompatible identities: on the contrary, they can intersect and reinforce each other. In the case of the Welsh language, we note that the language and LGBTQ+ identities have been combined for decades—from the days of CYLCH (Cymdeithas yr Hoywon a'r Lesbiaid Cymraeg eu Hiaith, a society for Welsh-speaking gay and lesbian people) in the early 1990s to 'Mas ar y Maes', which was first introduced at the Cardiff National Eisteddfod in 2018 (Jobbins, 2013; Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, 2021).

In this regard, this is another example of how the Welsh language can take advantage of its minoritised position to foster understanding and inclusivity of all

kinds of other minoritised groups and communities. An example of such possibilities is an annual event, ‘Dragwyl,’ which is part of the Tafwyl events in Cardiff. It is a night of celebrating the diverse culture of ‘drag’ in Welsh and bilingually. Welsh-medium LGBTQ+ spaces can provide an inclusive space for speakers from all backgrounds, proficiency, and practice to explore the relationship between their linguistic identity and other identities. Furthermore, the Irish case previously mentioned highlights how such a community can be a ‘locus of language revitalisation’ (Morris and Parker, 2025) for LGBTQ+ individuals. It also echoes the suggestion later in this report (see chapter 3, ‘Welsh language transmission and socialisation’) that our understanding of the various methods of transmitting the Welsh language must now transcend the more traditional models that focus solely on family transmission.

We also heard that there is a need to be active in terms of LGBTQ+ Welsh language vocabulary that is accessible and culturally relevant for everyday use. The Welsh Government (2023a) has already published a comprehensive list of LGBTQ+ Terms in Welsh and English. However, there is still work to be done to consider suitable terms in some areas, for example family relationships in the context of non-binary people (such as aunt or uncle, niece, or nephew etc). The task and finish group will need to consider what further work could be done in this area so that Cymraeg reaches every community.

2.6 Disability

Similar to the way in which we have discussed the interweaving of the identity of minoritised language speakers and other types of identity, we emphasise the need to recognise the combined identity—Welsh language identity and disabled identity—as part of multifaceted social experiences.

In this context, the social model of disability is important for understanding this relationship. Rather than seeing disability as an individual or medical characteristic, the social model emphasises the role of social structures and attitudes in shaping the experiences of disabled people. Therefore, when considering language planning and the promotion of the Welsh language, it is important to adopt an approach that recognises this intersectionality of identities and ensures that the voices and experiences of disabled people have a central place within the field. By doing so, an inclusive approach can be developed that enables disabled people to fully express and live their Welsh language identity, reflecting the diverse and interconnected nature of society.

We heard about the relationship between the Welsh language and the experiences of disabled people, recognising the importance of the evidence gathered through the ‘Disabled People’s Rights Plan Consultation’ (Welsh Government, 2025a).

The responses to this consultation highlight evidence that a number of disabled people have lost opportunities to learn Welsh due to a lack of suitable provision.

Others have faced structural barriers that limit their ability to use or develop their Welsh language skills (Welsh Government, 2025a).

The responses also show a need to reflect more clearly the interrelationship between language and accessibility. The rights of blind, deaf and people with alternative communication needs to have accessible Welsh—be it through Braille, an easy-to-understand format or assistive technology—is an integral part of ensuring language justice. The Welsh language needs to be more rooted in the disabled rights agenda. Accessible methods are mainly produced in English, services are often English-only by default, and Welsh language digital provision does not keep up with the need. The responses to the consultation suggest that a lack of training and of Welsh-speaking staff in healthcare, education and social care also contribute to undermining language rights.

The responses to the consultation indicate a number of positive ways in which opportunities can be used to promote the Welsh language in an inclusive way. There are strong calls to:

- develop and increase British Sign Language services through the medium of Welsh
- ensure that all public services, including health, justice, and social care, are available bilingually
- create accessible materials such as easy-to-read versions, captions, and audio translation into Welsh at all times

The Commission agrees with the recommendations and suggestions of this consultation.

In addition, we believe that the role of disabled people’s organisations such as Disability Wales and Learning Disability Wales is of particular importance. The consultation responses show that these organisations are important in terms of planning, governing, and evaluating the Disabled People’s Rights Plan.

In this context, therefore, the work of the task and finish group should include examining ways to ensure that all services and all accessible methods are available in Welsh, and to monitor linguistic impact. For Cymraeg to reach every community, disabled people who speak Welsh should be included at all stages of this process. This will require collaboration between several organisations: the Welsh Government, Welsh Language Commissioner, and disabled people’s organisations. It is only by treating the Welsh language and accessibility as integrated principles that it is possible to ensure that disabled people in Wales get the language rights and opportunities they deserve.

2.7 Welsh as a social tool: the possibilities

We have outlined some of the challenges that may hinder or reduce the opportunities for individuals and communities to participate in the Welsh language.

We have also suggested that the task and finish group should explore integrated and holistic ways of considering these multifaceted issues when considering how to ensure use of the language in areas of lower or medium density, as in the areas of higher density. In summary, the Welsh language should be considered as one of a number of factors that intersect with each other rather than as a separate phenomenon. The Commission is clear that strengthening the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas must be linked to the work of uniting communities and creating new social connections. The aim of this work is to ensure that the Welsh language is a natural, welcoming, and integrated part of community life, where people from different linguistic backgrounds mix, work together and feel part of the same civic community.

In closing this section, we now turn to outline how such a mindset and approach could work in practice and overturn any perceived perceptions of the Welsh language as an optional, additional luxury. Rather, the language should be thought of as a social tool that can contribute in an integrated way to improving well-being and social participation in our communities. In so doing, it can become relevant to people's everyday lives, fostering a sense of belonging on their own terms.

Well-being was a constant theme as we heard about successful community activity in disadvantaged areas, or activity that engaged people from disadvantaged backgrounds; indeed, it was a key consideration at the heart of the work. At the same time, the language was used as an integral part of the way people fostered relationships with each other, gained confidence, and created a sense of belonging within the community. A member of staff at a late immersion centre noted:

Well-being always comes first. That's the most important thing

Putting well-being first creates conditions and positive support that facilitate language acquisition. We heard from staff at a Late Immersion Centre who deal with many working-class learners, who have also experienced challenges in their lives. Not only does the Centre create learners who are confident in their Welsh, but it also contributes to developing wider self-confidence and self-worth. When immersing them in the Welsh language, they are also offered the opportunity to get intensive support and explore new and diverse ways of expressing themselves. Although teaching the Welsh language is the main aim of the provision, there is recognition that the wellbeing of the individual must be given priority and that the language is therefore part of a much wider interweaving of factors. A member of staff at Menter Iaith said:

Well-being is central to everything we do

Well-being is also central to community work for young people and adults. We heard from a Menter Iaith that the levels of deprivation in the area it serves is a central consideration when creating programs and activities for the community, to ensure that people from disadvantaged backgrounds feel welcome and are fully included.

Well-being is at the heart of their work, as they are aware of the area's social challenges and the possible negative impact on well-being. Because of this, we believe that community language planning should carefully consider the social and cultural context in disadvantaged areas, in order to ensure that everyone has equal access to the Welsh language. A member of staff at Menter Iaith said:

[We use] the Welsh language for community regeneration

Examples such as these show how the Welsh language can be used to engage with children from disadvantaged backgrounds in lower or medium density areas. That is, Welsh is part of the children's confidence-building journey and part of a wider welfare campaign. The children learn and use the language in a supportive environment, with welfare at the heart of the work. As a result, the children in the centres see the relevance of Welsh to their lives and develop a positive personal relationship with the language. It is a positive example of successful local activity that puts well-being first, and the Welsh language is an integral part of that.

While this section highlights some of the immediate barriers that individuals and communities face when using the Welsh language—such as lack of time, costs, travel distances and a lack of local opportunities—it is important to emphasise that these are not the core problems in themselves, but symptoms of wider structural challenges. Factors such as economic deprivation, lack of community infrastructure, and restrictions on access to cultural and recreational opportunities shape this reality. As a result, any intervention—including the work of the task and finish group—must focus primarily on addressing these structural problems, rather than treating the symptoms alone.

2.8 Conclusion

Recommendation 37 of the Commission's first phase report was that 'the Welsh Government should establish a task and finish group to examine issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the Welsh language'. When considering medium and lower density areas under the remit of the Commission's second phase, the need to consider a wide range of socioeconomic factors, including social class,

multicultural communities and religion, gender and sexuality and disability was highlighted again when examining the use of the Welsh language in those areas.

It is therefore the Commission's opinion that this task and finish group should broaden the scope of its work to include lower or medium density areas, examining the factors that affect people's ability to use the Welsh language in Wales and beyond. Its terms of reference should also include:

- exploring what policy interventions could lead to the establishment of spaces to maintain, support, and motivate the language
- consider how the range of cultural events held in Welsh can be expanded and varied in order to better reflect the breadth of experiences, cultures and perspectives that live and exist through the medium of the language.
- consider what further work could be done to establish LGBTQ+ Welsh language spaces and vocabulary that are accessible and culturally relevant for everyday use
- explore ways to ensure that services are accessible and that Welsh language accessibility is easy
- work to identify and recognise interventions that can address the structural problems—economic, community, and culturally—that cause barriers for some individuals and communities to use the Welsh language

3 Welsh language transmission and socialisation

Although the transmission of Welsh is a factor in language policy across Wales, its nature and the challenges associated with it differ in medium and lower density areas. In these contexts, many Welsh speakers have acquired the language through the education system rather than at home, and as we will see below, are less likely to automatically pass it on to the next generation. This creates a cycle where the school becomes the main site of transmission. This chapter focuses on how that cycle can be addressed by strengthening language socialisation in the family, and beyond school.

We start with intergenerational transmission in the family, a daily act by parents, grandparents, and caregivers. According to Joshua Fishman (1991)—a major figure in language revitalisation—this type of transmission can provide one of the strongest foundations for the long-term vitality of a language. Indeed, he once wrote:

[to attempt to revive language] via stylish efforts to control the language of education, the workplace, the mass media and governmental services, without having safeguarded [intergenerational language transmission] is equivalent to constantly blowing air into a tire that still has a puncture

Data shows that children who acquire Welsh at an early age are more likely to use it later in life (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner, 2015). However, intergenerational transmission in the family is not always possible. In minoritised contexts such as that of Welsh, many families do not have relevant Welsh language skills or feel that they do not have the confidence to use the Welsh they have with their children (we address the ‘confidence paradox’ in 3.4).

Other types of transmission are also important. Schools, networks of friends, cultural activities, and Welsh-language spaces can all play a role in enabling people to learn, use, develop or regain Welsh language skills. This is true in all areas, regardless of the density of speakers of a particular language. It is particularly important in medium or lower density areas, where transmission is less likely to occur at home, and where there are fewer community and social interventions to maintain and develop the use of Welsh. This holistic approach is also important in ensuring that children do not experience the language in a fragmented or disjointed manner, and the language can reach them across all areas of their lives, including at home, at school, in the community and online/on screen.

From the family context, we proceed to consider other ways people can acquire, learn, or re-energise their Welsh, such as community-based transmission, sibling,

and peer transmission, and more. Drawing on insights from the situation of the Basque language, we consider how 'language socialisation' could be incorporated into policy and strengthen the transmission of Welsh and encourage its everyday use. Prior to this, we examine statistics regarding the intergenerational transmission of Welsh.

3.1 The intergenerational transmission of Welsh: statistical evidence

This section summarises results of the Census regarding the intergenerational transmission of Welsh in Wales. The data concentrates on three- and four-year-olds residing in one-family households. The transmission rate is measured as the percentage of these young children who are identified as being able to speak Welsh within a particular household structure, in the period before they enter statutory education. It should be noted that, as the Census asks no questions about language use, transmission is merely inferred from these statistics. Additionally, Census 2021 was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of lockdowns and remote learning on reported Welsh language skills remains underexplored.

3.1.1 Transmission rates by household structure

The composition of a household is a strong predictor of Welsh language transmission and early transmission in the family itself is a strong predictor of the use of Welsh in later life. According to Census 2021, intergenerational transmission rates varied across the 3 main family types with children aged 3 to 4. In couple households where 2 or more adults spoke Welsh, the transmission rate was 80.7%, remaining broadly consistent with the Census 2011 figure of 82.2%. In contrast, couple households with only one Welsh-speaking adult saw a lower rate of 40.4%, down from 45.4% in 2011. Lone parent households with a one Welsh-speaking adult had a transmission rate of 52.1%, similar to the 53.3% recorded in 2011.

The Commission has also benefited from further specialist analysis of Census 2021 which helps to understand patterns of Welsh language transmission and acquisition. The work (Prosiect BRO, forthcoming) shows that these percentages are not consistent across Wales, and that density or percentage of speakers in the locality or local authority correlates with the percentage of children aged 3 and 4 years old who have acquired Welsh before statutory education. The data for 3-year-olds further reinforces this, but with the numbers smaller the data is harder to interpret, especially in some counties. In the case of Welsh language households with only 3-year-olds, the rates fall in all counties and in all types of Welsh language households. The national rates for this type of household decrease as follows:

- couple households with 2 speaking Welsh: from 81% to 76%
- single-parent households with one Welsh speaking parent from 52% to 44%
- couple households with one Welsh speaking from 40% to 32%

The percentage point reduction is less significant in Welsh-speaking couple households where 2 speak Welsh. The density of Welsh speakers again manifests itself as a factor, particularly in Welsh-speaking single-parent households and Welsh-speaking couple households. This suggests that a linguistic environment is a factor in the transmission of Welsh within the family. This data reinforces findings suggesting that this may also be linked to the availability of childcare and early years provision through the medium of Welsh (see also Evas et al (2017)).

Beyond the number of Welsh speakers, the sex of the Welsh-speaking adult proved to be a factor, particularly in households where only one person spoke Welsh. For Couple Households where only one adult was able to speak Welsh, the transmission rate to 3- to 4-year-old children was markedly higher when the Welsh-speaking adult was female (45%), compared to when the Welsh-speaking adult was male (34%). This pattern held true across all 22 local authorities.

In mixed-language households with 2 adults, the high-density area of Gwynedd led with a 60.0% transmission rate, compared to 18.8% in Blaenau Gwent. One-parent households with one adult able to speak Welsh reported the highest rates in Ceredigion (77.8%) and Gwynedd (77.0%), which, of course, are areas of high language density. Contrastingly, Newport, a lower density Welsh-speaking area, had the lowest at 22.2%. These findings highlight the relevance of both household composition and local context in shaping the transmission of Welsh and the need for flexible and inclusive approaches to language transmission.

3.1.2 Fluency levels by initial learning context

A comparison of self-described fluency levels among Welsh speakers, categorised by their primary learning environment, highlights a significant correlation between early acquisition in the family at home and higher fluency.

Data from 2019 to 2020 shows that 83.7% of those individuals who learned to speak Welsh at home as a young child described themselves as fluent. When the initial learning context was a formal education setting, 43.3% of those who began to speak Welsh at nursery (aged 3 to 4) described themselves as fluent. This figure is 13.2% for those who began to learn the language at primary school (Welsh Government, 2020c).

3.1.3 Transmission and National Statistics socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)

Analysis by Hywel Jones of Statiaith (2025) used NS-SEC data to examine the relationship between socio-economic class and the intergenerational transmission of Welsh. He showed that around 60% of children analysed across the 2001, 2011, and 2021 censuses lived in households where the Household Contact Person (normally the person who completes the census form in a given household) fell within NS-SEC levels L4 to L11. This range of NS-SEC categories covers all occupational groups except large employers and senior management, administrative and professional

occupations (L1 to L3) and those who have never worked or are long-term unemployed (L14.1 and L14.2) and students (L15).

Controlling for household type, age of child, census, region (Gwynedd; Anglesey, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire; the rest of Wales), and area (defined as MSOA) and allowing for some interactions, his statistical model showed that:

- the highest transmission rates are consistently in households where 2 adults spoke Welsh (as is evident from the raw data)
- geography remained significant: Gwynedd showed the highest rates, followed by the combined area of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, and Anglesey.
- transmission rates varied by NS-SEC category, but it was only when moving from the combined upper and intermediate NS-SEC groups (L1 to L11) to semi-routine and routine occupations (L12 and L13), and again to the inactive economic groups (L14 and L15) that a downward and significant social gradient was seen

3.2 What may lie behind the statistics

Statistical analysis, particularly of decennial census data has given pointers for policy development that have been complemented by research bridging statistics, behavioural science and lived experience. For example, commissioned by the Welsh Government, a Cardiff University report (Evas et al., 2017), explored how Welsh was transmitted in families with children aged 0 to 4. This research used:

- reviews of international literature on language transmission
- reports on Welsh language transmission interventions
- census data
- questionnaires
- interviews with 60 carers in north-west and south-east Wales

The report found that demographic factors, rather than psychological or attitudinal ones, were the strongest predictors of language transmission. In other words, one could hold a positive attitude towards the Welsh language, whilst not using one's Welsh with one's children. For many in Welsh-speaking areas, using Welsh with children was automatic, while in lower density areas, English was often the default.

A significant finding of this research, echoing research carried out in the mid-1990s by Evas (1999), was the concept of 'intergenerational language donation', where Welsh-speaking parents and carers (who had often been educated in Welsh) relied on schools to pass on the language rather than using it at home. Evas et al (2017) note:

[...] such donation would take place when a Welsh speaker ensures their children gain Welsh language skills, via the education system,

but not by making Welsh the language of the home, or possibly not using it with the child at all

Barriers mentioned in the 2017 work included lack of confidence, limited practice and opportunity, and fear of judgment. In mixed-language households, use of Welsh was often limited to one-to-one interactions with children as the ‘sociolinguistic maths’ (Alvarez Enparantza, 2001) of a household (amongst other possible factors) did not allow Welsh to be routinely spoken in front of those who did not understand it. Participants in Evas et al (2017) noted:

If you don't speak Welsh at home, which we didn't, when you have a child, it tends to be that you don't even think about the language [...]. When they start school, then you make a decision. If you're not used to speaking [Welsh], English is the default setting

Welsh doesn't come naturally [to me] in a home environment

These insights highlight the need for diverse and community-based transmission strategies. Supporting the use of language beyond the family is essential to maintaining the Welsh language. Therefore, the potential of ‘language donation’ should be seen as a further opportunity to increase transmission in situations where more direct intergenerational transmission has not been possible. This kind of support is also crucial in ensuring that Welsh is regarded as a vibrant, multi-faceted language that exists and is spoken beyond the classroom and other institutional settings.

3.3 Policy on Welsh language transmission

Recent Welsh transmission policy has focused on encouraging active use of Welsh between parents/carers and their children in the family, whilst considering different parental linguistic profiles with limited competence and/or lack of confidence in Welsh. The National policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families (Welsh Government, 2021) aimed to refine the approach to the intergenerational transmission of Welsh in the family. This is the main current policy structure for this field. Grounded in behavioural science and informed by research and stakeholder engagement, it recognises that language transmission is often unconscious rather than a deliberate choice. It sought to make using Welsh at home feel easy and natural, especially for those lacking confidence or regular practice.

The principles of the policy include:

- recognising children as active agents in the use and transmission of the Welsh language

- supporting diverse family structures (including single-parent and LGBTQ+ families)
- recognising the role of extended family networks

The policy committed to an evidence-based, iterative approach and set out 4 aims:

1. inspire today's generation of children and young people to speak Welsh to their children in the future.
2. reignite the Welsh language skills of those who may not have used Welsh since their school days, or who aren't confident in their language skills, to speak Welsh with their own children
3. support and encourage the use of the Welsh language in families where not everyone speaks Welsh.
4. support Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children

3.4 Behavioural research and Welsh language transmission

One project that emerged from the policy was a research project based on the behavioural sciences (Claremont Communications 2026), targeting parents or carers who have or had Welsh language skills, but who, for whatever reason, do not use their Welsh with their children. Using the COM-B model, which posits that an individual must possess the necessary Capability, Opportunity and Motivation before performing a specific Behaviour, and which is discussed in further detail in Michie, van Stralen and West, (2011), the study identified common barriers to transmission and highlighted an important group, the 'moveable middle', who are motivated but who may lack self-belief in their Welsh language skills. The research recommends small, simple, and non-judgemental interventions to gradually increase use. 3 pilot ideas were developed:

- using songs to trigger Welsh language use
- encouraging early commitment during pregnancy
- prompting Welsh through play at home

This behavioural sciences-based project applies to all types of sociolinguistic contexts, including those with a high density of speakers (as well as those that this report focuses on). It directly addresses the everyday gaps that can prevent parents and carers who have Welsh language skills from using Welsh with their children. It directly addresses the confidence and routine gaps that can prevent Welsh-speaking parents from using Welsh with their children. They may not have everyday opportunities to hear and use Welsh. In these cases, transmission is an even greater challenge. Full results will be available later in 2026.

Focussing on small, practical interventions, like providing easy access to Welsh language music, can help parents and carers use their Welsh with their children in a low-pressure, fun, and effortless way. The approach also helps to bridge the

'dropped link' between structured support and everyday home life. This ensures that the use of the Welsh language does not cease after families leave formal sessions, such as those funded by the Welsh Government, which include Clwb Cwtsh's Mudiad Meithrin programmes, Cymraeg i Blant and Cylch Ti a Fi's infant and toddler groups. In short, it aims to assist families to become active agents of language transmission, even in environments where Welsh is not the norm. And this in turn can build confidence in language use.

Lack of confidence was a theme that was frequently mentioned in this work on transmission. Indeed, lack of confidence in one's Welsh language abilities is a common theme that also came up in the rest of the Commission's work. As already noted, the individual's confidence is linked to a number of factors beyond personal linguistic proficiency with the linguistic environment of the context playing a significant role in the use of Welsh. In the next section, we further analyse confidence (or the lack thereof) in the context of Welsh language transmission using the COM-B model.

3.5 COM-B and Welsh language transmission: policy implications

Perceptions of lack of confidence in one's self-defined Welsh language ability points to a barrier for increased use of the Welsh language. This section refers to the COM-B model (Michie, van Stralen and West, 2011), which suggests that for any particular Behaviour to occur, a person must possess the necessary Capability, Opportunity and Motivation to carry out that behaviour. 'Confidence' pertains to psychological Capability and to Opportunity.

The most precise technical term for this is self-efficacy, defined as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1997).

A parent or carer with low belief in their ability to speak Welsh 'correctly' anticipates a negative outcome—i.e. the fear of making a mistake or the fear of feeling embarrassed. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is built from 4 main sources, the most powerful of which is mastery experience (a past success).

A 'confidence paradox' or a 'Catch-22' situation arises because these mastery experiences are scarce amongst parents and carers with low proficiency. To feel confident speaking Welsh, a parent or carer needs positive experiences of doing so successfully (and of doing so successfully with children). But to attempt to speak Welsh, a parent or carer feels they need a pre-existing level of confidence.

This cycle is a powerful barrier. However, taking a direct focus on 'fixing confidence' through persuasion (or informational approaches) is often inefficient and trying to change people's confidence at scale, particularly through direct persuasion, is difficult and unlikely to succeed. The core reason is that confidence is primarily a

product of experience, not information. Although it may appear instinctive to tell people, 'Go on, you can do it!', the evidence shows that this is a weak and unreliable means of creating permanent change.

3.5.1 The action-first model

The most effective strategy is an 'action-first' model. This approach is built on a foundational principle of social psychology: belief and confidence often follow behaviour, not the other way around. This is not an emerging method; it is a proven approach used successfully for decades in fields such as public health and education. It is grounded in classic, heavily researched theories. It is based on classical, thoroughly researched theories of Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 2017) and Self-perception Theory (Bem, 1972).

3.5.1.1 Cognitive Dissonance Theory

People feel a powerful mental discomfort (dissonance) when their actions conflict with their beliefs. To resolve this, they are more likely to change their beliefs to align with their actions than the other way around.

3.5.1.2 Self-Perception Theory:

We often deduce our own attitudes by observing our own behaviour. A parent who uses a Welsh phrase successfully will observe this and infer a new attitude: 'I must be the kind of person who is capable of speaking Welsh.'

3.5.1.3 Outcomes of the action-first approach

An 'action-first' approach:

- supports parents and carers
- builds real capacity based on successful experiences
- creates a sustainable and positive cycle of language use

It also moves beyond asking parents to feel confident and instead gives them the tools to become confident. Rather than trying to fix a low Capability (confidence), we focus on reshaping the Opportunities and Motivations in such a definitive way that the Behaviour occurs even with a low initial Capability. The question is not, 'how do we persuade people to act?' but rather, 'how do we help them make the steps forward, and let the belief catch up thereafter?' In moving towards this model, however, there remains an acknowledgment that belief in being able to perform a certain behaviour is not in itself sufficient, and that ensuring sufficient opportunities to learn the requisite skills for the behaviour is also fundamentally important.

When a parent takes a small, successful action, they engage in a process of self-persuasion. The action itself generates the indisputable evidence that reshapes their belief about their own capabilities. This is how a mastery experience is created, providing the most powerful fuel for self-efficacy.

This 'action-first' model is not merely theoretical; it is a proven, practical approach used in analogous fields to solve similar challenges.

3.5.1.4 *Examples of action-first approaches*

The 'Couch to 5K' programme is a world-renowned success. It does not try to convince a non-runner they are capable of running 5km. It prescribes a tiny first action (run for 60 seconds). This small behavioural success builds the belief required to attempt the next, slightly harder action. The identity of 'a runner' is built through action, not persuasion.

Modern Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is built on this principle. Learners are encouraged to act—to communicate and complete tasks in the new language from day one, even with mistakes. Confidence and identity as a 'speaker' emerge directly from the behaviour of speaking.

3.5.1.5 *An example of how to put the approach first into practice*

If the strategy is to help parents and carers take a step forward, the technical challenge is designing that first step.

EAST (Behavioural Insights Team, 2015) is a practical, evidence-based toolkit for creating these crucial 'opportunities to act': there are 4 elements to EAST:

- Easy
- Attractive
- Social
- Timely

3.5.1.5.1 *Easy*

This is the main rule. The first step must be radically simple. This entails lowering the cognitive load by supplying necessary words in their context (e.g. a fridge magnet) so that effort is not required to remember something.

3.5.1.5.2 *Attractive*

The action must be framed to appeal to the parent's core motivations and identity. It is not a language test, rather a meaningful act of connection.

3.5.1.5.3 *Social*

Behaviour is contagious. We must create a supportive social environment where 'giving it a go' is normalised and celebrated.

3.5.1.5.4 *Timely*

Prompts and cues should be delivered at the optimal moment. A sticker on a lunchbox with 'Mwynha dy ginio' (Enjoy your lunch) is a timely trigger for the behaviour.

3.5.1.5.5 *Adding to a practical EAST resource pack*

Recent discussions advocate for adding an 'F' for 'Fun' to create the more comprehensive FEAST model. This addition is critical for discretionary behaviours like using Welsh at home. In Welsh, we refer to FEAST as 'HAPUS' (Hawdd;

amserol; pleserus; undod; sbort). Making an activity fun provides an immediate emotional reward, which helps overcome the powerful appeal of short-term ease (speaking English) over a distant, long-term benefit. By reframing the task as a playful interaction, we create a positive feedback loop that encourages the repetition necessary to build a lasting habit. This makes the intervention effective and sustainable. So, for our coverage of language transmission in this chapter, 'Fun' means that the experience needs to be enjoyed. Using Welsh through songs or games removes the pressure of performance and provides immediate emotional rewards.

3.5.1.6 Conclusions about the action-first approach

Help and assistance is at the heart of this. Success is to be had by 'helping people do what they already want to do' (Fogg, 2020). This shifts the entire framing from a deficit model ('parents lack confidence and this must be fixed') to a strengths-based one ('parents are motivated but face a barrier'). It steers us away from designing a single choice. Instead, we look to build upon a person's underlying skills and competence, assisting them to make better choices for themselves in the long term.

3.5.2 Emotion and logic

The behavioural sciences emphasise the importance of emotion in relation to individuals' decision-making processes. Logical arguments do not always convince or condition people to change. That is because emotions, thought patterns, and social influences play a significant role in the way we make decisions. Often, people will rely on feelings and make decisions suddenly, preferring emotion at the expense of logic. Factors such as what is popular or fits the group's presumed opinion can also influence decisions, rather than logic. While logic is important to justify decisions, emotion and social influence are powerful factors, and at times, more important than others (see also Brader, 2006; Moran, N., and Bagchi, 2019).

So, in seeking to influence individuals' decisions, and in helping individuals to change behaviour, messages, arguments, and techniques must be presented that appeal to emotion and also suit social contexts.

3.5.2.1 Summary of how to influence behaviour

- We start with the Fogg principle: assume parents and carers are motivated.
- We use the FEAST framework to design simple actions that enhance Opportunity and Motivation.
- This easy action serves as a boost to their competence.
- The successful action provides a Mastery Experience (Bandura).
- This experience directly builds self-efficacy, improving their psychological Capability (COM-B).
- This newfound confidence allows belief to catch up with behaviour, creating a self-sustaining, virtuous cycle.

The applicability of the FEAST and COM-B frameworks for wider language policy are evident, and the Commission believes that these should be further explored and adopted in future policy and interventions.

Work thus far on the transmission of the Welsh language in Wales has primarily centred around parents and carers as the primary transmitters of the language and efforts (including *Cymraeg i Blant* and others) have concentrated on encouraging them to do so. But parents and carers are not the only possible allies and agents in the transmission of Welsh.

The TRIAUD model (TRansfer, Acquisition, Use, Development) developed by Jones, Llwyd and Roberts (forthcoming; see graphic on BRO website) was presented to the Commission. This model is based on three core contexts, namely the home/family, the community/socialisation and the school/education (replacing the latter with work/workplace in its broadest sense as individuals move to new phases in their lives), integrating digital into these contexts. It recognises both *intergenerational* transmission—vertical processes in both directions of age groups—and *intragenerational* transmission—horizontal processes among people of the same age groups—and that these processes take place within each of the three core contexts. The model also notes that the three contexts are continuously changing; they expand and decrease in their intensity and significance at different times, and intertwine with each other in different combinations, according to the individuals' situations in their lives. The three contexts are also located within the wider sphere of the 'macro'—such as the policies, systems, cultures, values, practices etc—so that these wider forces that influence languages, individuals and societies are acknowledged.

We now turn to the Basque country, where a more holistic approach to the language socialisation of children has revealed interesting pathways and strategies that go beyond parents and look at the whole community as agents that can have a positive effect on the learning and usage of the minoritised language by all.

3.6 Basque language transmission: a new paradigm for Wales to emulate?

The situations of Basque and Welsh display territorial, demographic, and sociolinguistic features that make them especially suited for the exchange of experiences and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

As in Wales, Basque revitalisation work has long focussed on the need to increase the number of Basque speakers. In this regard, 4 areas were addressed:

1. the transmission of Basque in the family
2. building full capacity among speakers through literacy programmes
3. creating Basque-medium education for children of Basque speaking families and Spanish-speaking families

4. adult Basque learning

As a result of the rise in Basque-medium education, there has been a large increase in 'euskaldun berri' (new speakers of Basque), i.e. individuals who acquired Basque through avenues other than through intergenerational transmission in the family (Gobierno Vasco and Siadeco, 2021; Nandi et al., 2022). This development has received academic attention (Ortega et al., 2016) and is increasingly considered in civil society activism and institutional language policy alike. Issues of language proficiency and confidence noted previously in the case of the Welsh language in Wales are also present in the case of the Basque language in the Basque Country. Whilst many new speakers have developed elevated levels of proficiency and report 'living in Basque,' others have not. In highly Spanish-speaking areas, many young people report losing their skills after they leave compulsory schooling and thereafter struggling to use Basque actively. Research already noted (Evas et al., 2017) showed similar results for some former pupils of Welsh-medium schools in Wales. Perception of lack of confidence is also an issue for many Basque speakers, to the point that many new speakers do not consider themselves 'true' or 'legitimate' speakers of Basque (Gobierno Vasco and Siadeco, 2021; Nandi et al., 2022).

A survey, held in 2021 (Gobierno Vasco; Gobierno de Navarra, 2024) shows the latest situation of Basque transmission in the family. Basque is transmitted as the only language of the household in 96% of households when the 2 parents or 2 carers are first language Basque speakers and in 86% when one is a first language Basque speaker and the other is a second language. The percentage decreases when the 2 parents or 2 carers have Basque as a second language with 37% transmitting Basque as the sole language and a further 36% translating it together with Spanish or French (these data are for the whole of the Basque Country rather than just the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country). In terms of language policy, it is encouraging that certain parents or carers who have not been raised in Basque transmit Basque as a first language to their children. Qualitative research shows that in general parents or carers who are new speakers would like to speak to their children in Basque, but many report not feeling comfortable using the language (Garcia-Ruiz, 2025).

Until the beginning of the 21st century, research on the intergenerational transmission of Basque in the family was scarce. In general, it did not address the fundamental questions of the 'generational continuity' of Basque (Kasares, 2014; Kasares, Ortega and Amorrortu, 2022). Macro language policy has been primarily, and very strongly, focused on Basque-medium education, with rates of pupils educated in Basque-medium schools rising from around 15% in 1983 to 67% in 2021 across all centres of education except universities in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, with the percentages higher again in mainstream education aged 3 to 16 (Lloyd-Williams, ap Gruffudd and Jones, 2024). Despite this, many significant projects—mostly driven by social/micro-level/local initiatives in

collaboration with public institutions—have aimed at influencing the linguistic ecosystem of Basque-speaking children. As we shall see later, bottom-up community-based initiatives have been at the forefront when trying to address challenges, whilst academic research has evolved to provide an enlightening theory. Interestingly enough, both approaches—the more intuitive based on observation of challenges and practical initiatives on the one hand, and theory-led proposals on the other—have drawn the same conclusions. A new theory has therefore shed light on the practices and initiatives that had previously been implemented, and it is to this ‘socialisation’ paradigm that we now turn.

3.6.1 The language socialisation paradigm

The language socialisation paradigm has its origins in the mid-1980s when North American linguistic anthropologists (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986) sought to clarify how people become members of their social group and what role language plays in that process. Crucial to this is the understanding that language socialisation encompasses more than the mere learning of a language. It extends to the cultural (and many other) influences that shape human development, distinguishing two main dimensions: how children are socialised *through the use* of language and how they are *socialised to* use language.

For these authors, language socialisation is a holistic process—not limited to the family—that is dynamic, interactive, and contextual, i.e. situated in its context and developed when speakers engage in situated interactions. The socialisation process is continuous, not bounded in time and therefore not limited to childhood. It is a lifelong process.

This paradigm questions the notions of verticality (top-down) and unidirectionality (from parents/carers to offspring or adults to children) implied by the notions of transfer or transmission. Young children are not passive recipients; they can socialise the adult members of their families (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986) and also act as active agents in the socialisation of other children. At the same time, other agents and spaces that are part of the dynamic web of interactions with children are made visible and indeed recognised. For this reason, this process is characterised by its bidirectionality or multidirectionality (Sacks, 1984; Garrett and Baquedano-López, 2002; He, 2011). It is also multiagency (He, 2011). It should be acknowledged, however, that despite a growing recognition that children may have more agency than previously perceived, in most adult-child relationships the parent or carer retains the authority, and this will inevitably affect the level and impact of a child’s agency. It is parents and carers, in the main, who make decisions in relation to whether a child attends a particular playgroup or school, for example. In short: children have agency, but parents and carers have authority.

Some (Duranti, Ochs and Schieffelin, 2011) have argued that the paradigm of language socialisation—because of its methodology, analytical approach, and

theoretical perspective—can make a contribution, not only to understanding the processes of linguistic minoritisation and shift, but also to processes of language maintenance and revitalisation. However, examples remain scarce, and in the specific context of European minoritised languages, studies are very few. In Wales Jones and Morris (2007a;b); a Morris and Jones (2008) applied this approach to their qualitative study of the early language socialisation of children aged 0 to 2 years old. Kasares (2012; 2014) also applied this to the Basque situation. Both studies showed that the pattern of language socialisation is suitable for studying the intergenerational continuity of language. The concepts traditionally used—transmission (and reproduction)—embody an entire worldview or way of understanding the phenomenon that obscures fundamental aspects of the process through which children become speakers.

3.6.2 The change in thinking: from transmission to socialisation

As a result, Kasares (2017) proposes a change from the ‘transmission’ paradigm to ‘socialisation.’ This shift in focus brings new goals, methods, spaces, and agents to the fore.

The first consequence of adopting the language socialisation paradigm is that it relativises the concept of *mother tongue*, giving prominence to other factors (social relationships, school life, leisure, etc.) that shape linguistic upbringing (‘*crianza lingüística*’) (Kasares, 2017). As a result, children’s intragenerational relationships (among peers) gain importance because these are the best indicator of their socialisation as speakers. By non-institutionalised communications we mean interactions (such as free play) in which the language of communication is not pre-established, as opposed to communicative situations that *are* institutionalised (the classroom, organised and regulated activities, etc.), where language use is induced or prescribed (Kasares, 2017).

That the concept of ‘mother tongue’ is not the only way of transmitting a language makes it possible to work with a wider range of family types, such as parents or carers who have limited or even no ability at all in the minoritised language. This is valuable, given the demographic characteristics of the sociolinguistic situations of Basque or Welsh. Most families would otherwise be beyond the scope of research and policy, and their efforts and strategies for raising children who speak minoritised languages would be much less visible (Kasares, 2020a).

The language socialisation paradigm also allows us to reform efforts to ensure the intergenerational continuity of the minoritised language. That means children use the minoritised language in their non-institutionalised communications. The issue is not just ‘learning’ the language. Being active users of the language and using it in non-institutionalised situations is important in minoritised-language situations (Kasares, 2017).

The following table summarises the main differences between the two paradigms.

Paradigm shift: concept, objective, means, and agents (Kasares (2017)).

Concept	Objective	Means	Agents
Transmission	Mother tongue	The home The school	Parents and carers Teachers Unidirectional agency (vertical, top-down [↓])
↓	↓	↓	↓
Socialisation	Children's non-institutionalised communications	Holistic (the child's entire linguistic ecosystem)	Multiple agencies Interactive (vertical, top-down and bottom-up [↑] and horizontal [↔])

The consolidation of usage habits in children's relationships is not limited to the home and school. Socialising influences extend into the broader spheres of social life, and the holistic nature of language socialisation affects the entire community (extracurricular activities, sports, music, or the media—in other words, the entire communicative ecosystem of childhood).

Socialising new generations into a minoritised language requires the conscious socialising role of the family, the essential socialising work of the school, the socialising cooperation of the extracurricular world, and the opportunities created by public administrations—in short, what amounts to community transmission (Kasares, 2020b) which creates the social conditions that make the language an appealing resource worth using and choosing. But, if—as already stated—children are not mere receptors of a language or simple heirs to their parents' or carers' linguistic heritage and, rather, active agents in the continuity of the language, they must make the language they receive their own—in short, for becoming who they want to be (Kasares, 2017).

3.7 Reframing socialising agents and spaces

Given the new 'lens' for language policy which we have explained above, we will now continue to use the case of Basque and turn to an analysis of who or what can be considered as agents of minoritised-language socialisation, be they people, spaces, or activities.

3.7.1 Parents, carers, significant linguistic socialising agents, and much more than language transmitters

While we are convinced by the argument that agents beyond the family can contribute to the intergenerational continuity of language, it should not be inferred that we are questioning the importance of the family's role in socialisation. Parents or caregivers who speak minoritised languages are undoubtedly important social agents for their children. However, that is not the only activity they undertake. In minoritised language contexts like that of Welsh or Basque, parents and carers also

need to be seen as 'in-situ language planners' whose choices and routines are shaped by broader social forces (King and Fogle, 2006; Nandi, 2018). Their decisions consciously take into account the minoritised-language situation of Basque, or Welsh, and many approach the bilingual upbringing of their children in a holistic way that seeks to include as many support strategies as they can possibly manage (Kasares, Ortega and Amorrortu, 2022).

For many, raising children in a minoritised language is a conscious and active process and we now turn to the act of planned language socialisation by parents and carers. This could be challenging, because in the Basque and Welsh contexts alike, we have seen that even one family member who does not speak Basque or Welsh can lead to lower transmission rates between the generations. When transmission does not succeed among motivated and committed parents or carers, this can lead to frustration or guilt when they struggle to maintain consistent use of the minoritised language (Garcia-Ruiz, 2025) and also when children begin to implement their own language choices (Nandi, Kasares and Manterola, 2024). Birnie (2024) conducted a similar study on Gaelic in Scotland in the post-COVID-19 period.

But apart from 'using' their Welsh or Basque with their children, there are many other areas where parents and carers can use their personal ability to plan language.

These areas include:

- transmitting positive attitudes and emotional attachment towards Basque
- choice of school
- use of cultural products such as books, television, or music
- active participation in cultural and leisure activities in Welsh or Basque

These types of strategies have also been noted in families where parents or carers have limited or no competence of Basque, but who are committed to their children learning the language as fully as possible (Amorrortu et al., 2009). It is also important to note that this discussion applies to parents and carers in Wales (regardless of their ability in Welsh). The role of parents and carers as agents of socialisation extends far beyond any Welsh language skills they may have, and includes decisions, attitudes and choices that enable their children to acquire, use, and own Welsh in wider contexts than school.

Such efforts are not fully visible through the lens of the traditional vertical transmission concept that only takes parents who are speakers into account. As a result, there has not been enough support and acknowledgement of this contribution to language policy.

This section discusses initiatives and projects from the Basque Country that support the use of the minoritised language and which also link to what is often seen in the Welsh context, i.e. the central place of the school for language transmission (see

also references to intergenerational language donation by Evas (1999) and Evas et al (2017).

3.7.2 Initiatives and other projects and ways of supporting transition

In the Basque Country, a body of linguistic initiatives designed by communities themselves (often with public funding) are cases of good practice that may be shared and replicated in other communities.

For example, parents and carers will often take proactive steps to create Welsh or Basque environments. They are:

- organising informal playgroups
- choosing Welsh or Basque speaking carers
- joining Welsh or Basque networks to get support from others (Jones a Morris, 2007b; Nandi, Kasares and Manterola, 2024)

These efforts could help counterbalance the dominance of what is known as hegemonic language (the term 'hegemonic language' is increasingly used in the Basque context to refer to a language that dominates specific contexts. It can be French as well as Spanish, or English) and extending Welsh or Basque beyond the classroom, with the help of bodies, societies, and organisations. By recognising their influence and acting collectively, parents can sustain Basque/Welsh in everyday life, even in lower density Welsh language areas. The question is how to facilitate this at scale.

This list notes some projects and initiatives to support parents on the lines noted above:

3.7.2.1 Websites

Websites have been launched by consortia of local councils ([Emangiltza](#) 'Give the key' in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and [Era Nafarroa](#) in Navarra). Their aim is to raise awareness and provide information to families interested in raising their children in Basque. On these webpages, parents and carers can find training sessions, resources for play, and a schedule of activities for children's leisure in Basque.

3.7.2.2 Campaigns

['Haurren aurrean helduok heldu'](#) (In front of children, Basque always for us adults) is a campaign by the civil society organisation Euskaltzaleen Topagunea. It operates with funding from the Government of Navarre. The project targeted the fact that many Basque-speaking parents and carers speak to their children in Basque, encourage their children to speak to peers in Basque whilst themselves using Spanish with each other. The campaign highlighted the importance of parents as role models for linguistic behaviour.

3.7.2.3 Societies

Societies have been created to establish spaces for Basque-speaking families and offer them activities especially those living in areas where Basque has a weak social presence. An example of this is [Irauli](#) in Pamplona, Navarra, or [Plaza](#) in Baiona, the Basque Country in France. The latter association has launched the '[FamiliON](#)' project, which offers language immersion experiences for families (from all over the Basque Country), where the programme of activities is aimed at both parents and carers (including language development training for those who want to improve their communicative competence in Basque), and at children, with a range of recreational activities. Families live together in Basque for a week.

3.7.2.4 General Initiatives

General initiatives to support and encourage the learning and use of Basque at community level often include special programmes and activities for parents and families. An example of this is [Egizu](#) in Getxo, a medium-density area on the outskirts of Bilbao (where 33% speak Basque, and 11% speak Basque or Basque and Spanish at home), with the 'Sendi' project to support Basque in the family. Activities range from lessons for parents or carers to improve their Basque speaking skills ('Gurasolagun' = 'Parent friend'), talks for parents and educators, or 'Euskaraz Olgetan' family sessions to play and sing in Basque. Community-based associations such as this, with a strong volunteer base and financial assistance from the local council, are a common working model in the Southern Basque Country within the Spanish state which are medium or lower density areas. There are, of course, examples of similar initiatives and schemes which have been implemented in the context of the Welsh language in Wales.

3.7.2.5 Implementing this from a Welsh language perspective

For Cymraeg to reach every community, a strong, well-designed system of supporting parents/carers and families should be a central part of policy. This system should:

- have practical actions and clear information on how to get involved
- be based on the behavioural sciences and reflect local needs
- encourage grassroots ideas and recognise that people's lived experience have valuable insight, but may need help to make lasting change

3.8 Supporting parents and carers from all linguistic backgrounds

Much of the discussion about the transmission of Welsh focuses on parents or carers who have some Welsh, or who have received a Welsh language education themselves. While this group is important, it is essential to clearly recognise that this is not the profile of the majority of parents or carers of children receiving Welsh language education in medium and lower density areas. In the same way as the

experiences of groups are discussed earlier in this report, non-Welsh speaking parents and carers should be understood as a central part of the social and linguistic reality of these areas.

Also, as discussed in chapter 2 ('The social context of the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas'), the communities involved are often bilingual or multilingual communities, with the Welsh language coexisting alongside other languages, identities and experiences. The following discussion about families, schools and the socialisation of language should be understood within this wider context, and not as a discussion of the Welsh language in a separate silo.

A sizeable proportion of children attending Welsh-medium education in these areas come from families where the parents or carers have no Welsh, or where the parents or carers feel that they do not have the ability or confidence to use the Welsh that they have. These parents and carers have a significant contribution to make to the future of the Welsh language, and we outline this in the following sections.

The following evidence shows that supporting non-Welsh speaking parents and carers is not a matter of 'language transmission' in the traditional sense, but of enabling them to function as agents of socialisation in other ways, regardless of how much Welsh they have. This may include:

- supporting educational decisions that favour the Welsh language
- facilitating access to Welsh-medium community and leisure activities
- reinforcing positive attitudes towards the Welsh language and seeing them as something that belongs to their families too
- supporting children to maintain the use of Welsh outside of school, even when the parent or carer is unable to speak the language themselves

From a language policy perspective, this requires moving away from expectations that Welsh language skills are needed in order to support the Welsh language, i.e. deliberately considering the realities of linguistic demography when planning interventions.

3.8.1 The school as an ecosystem for language socialisation

The school is an important foundation for the revival of all minoritised languages, but this function is not limited to teaching, teaching about or teaching through a language. Basque-medium schools have functioned as a catalyst for transmission especially in contexts where Basque has a weaker social presence, as an agent of the municipality's sociocultural and linguistic regeneration (Hernández García, 2005; Kasares, 2014). Experience of more than 40 years of education in Basque coupled with new insights derived from the theory of language socialisation have helped to identify strategies to strengthen its role of Basque-medium education and schools.

Although the school is a central space for language socialisation, it is important to emphasise that Welsh-medium schools do not exist apart from the families and wider

communities they serve. The school is often a meeting place between parents and carers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including a sizeable number of non-Welsh-speaking parents and carers. As a result, the role of the school should be understood not only as a 'Welsh language space,' but also as a social and linguistic bridge that enables the socialisation of the Welsh language beyond its gates. The role of the school as a socialising ecosystem depends on creating opportunities for parents and carers to participate without any expectation of themselves 'performing' linguistically, and on normalising the presence of non-Welsh speaking parents and carers as a central part of school life.

The Basque Country and Navarre Autonomous Community Education Departments' policy of schools developing a School Language Plan parallels one of the provisions of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, which sets a new expectation for all schools in Wales (by 2030) to prepare school delivery plans which, among other things, show how schools will improve and, where it is reasonably practicable, to increase their Welsh language provision.

A school's Welsh language education delivery plan will be expected to:

- identify the language category of the school and the current amount of Welsh language education provided
- explain how the school will provide the amount of Welsh language education required for that category
- outline the steps to promote late immersion education
- include proposals for maintaining and increasing the school's Welsh language provision over the duration of the scheme (3 years)
- if the school offers nursery provision, identify the existing provision and proposals for its maintenance and development.
- detail how parents and carers who are not confident Welsh speakers will be supported to support their children and contribute to the culture of the school

An important aspect of a plan will be the need to include proposals on how the school will:

- promote Welsh language ethos and culture
- promote daily use of the Welsh language
- ensure continued improvement in Welsh language provision

This may include a school Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter activity). The Siarter Iaith is a programme that aims to inspire children and young people to use and enjoy the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives. All members of the school community have a role to play including the school council, learners, parents and carers, governors, the school workforce as well as the wider community, such as businesses and local residents. Learner's voice is at the heart of the programme, which helps them better understand their relationship with the Welsh language and

ensures that they are central to any school and community level schemes to stimulate the use of Welsh that is easy, fun, and relevant to their everyday lives. We also cover the Charter in chapter 4 ('Welsh language socialisation beyond school: culture, leisure, and young people').

There are 2 dimensions to analyse in terms of the role of schools: the school as a space where the minoritised language is 'protected' and the school as a focal point for the socialisation of language beyond its gates. This is particularly true for parents and carers who do not speak Welsh, where the school can function as the main mechanism providing access to Welsh language networks, practical information, and socialising opportunities that would not otherwise be available to them.

3.8.1.1 The school as a space where the minoritised language is 'protected'

We have already noted the growth of Basque language education over recent decades. Especially in lower density areas, the Basque language school has often been the main space where the use of Basque is 'safeguarded,' i.e. the space in which it is taught and used without question. One area of action is therefore to support and consolidate Basque-medium education as such a space. This means looking at the school as a complete system of relationships and language use beyond the classroom. To strengthen this aspect, a policy has been launched by the Education Departments of the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre under which schools develop a '[School Language Plan](#).' This document plans for the presence of languages in curricular and non-curricular activities and spaces. In the case of Basque, it examines the spaces where Basque is to be present beyond the classroom (canteen, school bus, playtime in the school playground [...]), based on a diagnosis of the sociolinguistic and social context where the school is. This document is seen as a tool for coherent planning of all languages at schools (Basque, Spanish and English), which will help develop relevant and efficient school- and community-based language strategies for Basque.

3.8.1.2 The school as a hub for the socialisation of language beyond its gates

In the Basque Country, the school has become a focal point for the revival of the Basque language and its culture, especially in areas with a lower density of speakers. As a result, it has been a hub for language socialisation, a hub of school-led and parent/carer-led initiatives, and a space where parents, carers and the community have come together.

Sometimes school-led, sometimes parent/carer-led, projects to strengthen linguistic continuity within the family–school–leisure triangle have been implemented. It is precisely by reinforcing the linguistic continuum between family, school, and leisure that the conditions for children's language socialisation are improved. We must move beyond the fragmented experiences that children and young people have of the minoritised language.

It is essential to ensure that schools and parents or carers (regardless of their ability in Basque/Welsh) work together in a strategy based on the philosophy that the regeneration or socialisation of a language is a shared responsibility for all families, regardless of their linguistic levels (Ciriza, 2019). One effective method for extending school influence is the formation of informal parent/carer networks, often facilitated through digital tools. Recognising the challenges of maintaining Basque outside school, parents or carers organise social events to create spaces for children's interaction in Basque. In addition, schools are often 'loudspeakers,' i.e., they transmit information about projects of all kinds from the community or local authority, including:

- Minoritised language learning activities
- family leisure activities
- cultural activities in Basque
- information or awareness workshops, including for parents and carers providing clear messages about the importance of transmission and practical strategies for home use.

These initiatives have usually originated in parents/carer groups and in the organised civil society rather than being based on a top-down national policy. It should also be noted that up to 50% of Basque-medium schools in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country are 'ikastola' schools, meaning that parents, carers, and supporters have a core role to play in running the school as they are independent entities. They benefit from a solid basis of volunteers, and many are funded by local authorities.

Schools alone cannot be expected to fully maintain or fully normalise social use of Welsh. The purpose of the school is not to be the primary social venue for the Welsh language, but rather to be a trigger that enables families to move, on their own terms, to wider networks and community spaces where the Welsh language can be used without question.

3.8.2 Children's early understanding of linguistic norms and values

When talking about children learning the minoritised language, we often forget that they are learning more than language, including social values, the norms, and the contexts in which that language is used (Luykx, 2003). Children learn these in everyday interaction.

3.8.3 Children's agency in parent-child relationships

We have already heard that language socialisation theory reframes transmission as a dynamic, bidirectional process where children are not passive recipients but recognised as active agents. Children influence family language practices as much as they are shaped by them (Kasares Corrales, 2013). In that sense, in the Basque

context children who incorporate social norms that favour the use of Spanish often introduce Spanish in a Basque-speaking home. Conversely, children have often been found to be gatekeepers that defend Basque at home as ‘their’ language. They can also be the ones introducing Basque in otherwise Spanish-speaking families (Kasares, 2014; Garcia-Ruiz, 2025). And they have often been the motivators for parents to start learning Basque (Amorrortu et al., 2009). This ‘upward transmission,’ where children’s behaviours can motivate parents or carers to (re-)engage with the language, is especially important. Recognising children’s agency is crucial. Parents and carers who recognise it are more likely to involve their children in ways that help them adapt more flexibly, making language use a shared, evolving process rather than a rigid, top-down effort. We note that information needs to be passed to parents, carers, and wider family members in order to be able to interpret their children’s language use and to include their children in a ‘family language policy.’ However, while children have agency, there is an imbalance of power between them and their parents or caregivers.

3.8.4 Children socialising children in relationships between siblings and peers

Sibling language use is an often-overlooked aspect of family language policy. While parents and carers shape the initial home language environment, children’s agency and peer dynamics strongly influence how siblings use language with one another. In families where both parents or carers consistently use Basque, for example, siblings are more likely to speak Basque to each other (Kasares, 2015). Some parents and carers even set explicit rules to encourage this (Garcia-Ruiz, 2025). However, in contexts where the dominant language is more socially prevalent, older siblings sometimes shift toward that language, especially if it is used between parents and carers or among peers (Kasares, 2015).

This has clear implications for the policy of using Welsh. Even when parents or carers are committed to using Welsh, children may default to English [or another language] with siblings if it feels more ‘normal’ in their social world (see also Hodges (2024) regarding the complexity of the sibling language dynamic). This phenomenon is significant not only in the context of Welsh but also for broader minoritised language policy and planning. Evidence consistently shows that behaviours are more likely to be adopted when they are perceived as normal and intuitive. When a behaviour feels new or unfamiliar, its adoption becomes less likely. This insight draws on social norm theory and extends into the realm of personal norms, suggesting that for it to be successful, language policy must address both collective and individual perceptions of what is considered typical or expected in everyday life.

Evidence from the Basque context also shows that children are extraordinarily effective linguistic socialisers for other children. The generational continuity of languages such as Basque or Welsh requires strengthening its use within children’s

relationships, especially in the realm of extracurricular leisure, by enriching children's linguistic experience qualitatively with positive emotions and positive social experiences associated with the language (Kasares, 2017).

3.8.5 Strengthening children's agency in favour of the minoritised language

There are 2 dimensions that have proven effective in the Basque context, namely strengthening emotional and social attachment as well as developing active sociolinguistic awareness among children and young people.

3.8.5.1 Strengthening emotional and social attachment

Strengthening the emotional and social attachment to the language has been proven to be effective, but children and youngsters need to feel strong and secure (empowered), and that is where the peer group is crucial.

3.8.5.2 Developing active sociolinguistic awareness among children and young people

The work of Basque societies with children and young people such as [EBETÉ](#), [EMUN](#), [UHARRI](#), [UEMA](#), or the Basque Country Government's '[Basque Language Immersion Residential Programme](#)' for Primary and Secondary students, as well as research on young people (Ortega, Amorrortu and Goirigolzarri, 2016; Ortega, Goirigolzarri and Amorrortu, 2022; Goirigolzarri-Garaizar, Ortega and Amorrortu, 2025) shows that getting young people to critically reflect on sociolinguistic awareness is an effective approach. Following increasing evidence that young Basque speakers have not had much opportunity to reflect and talk about how they feel as speakers of a minoritised language and that they do not really understand power dynamics between languages, the Education Office of the Basque Government of the Basque Autonomous Community is in the process of designing a programme to include sociolinguistic content in the Basque curriculum, from Infant to Secondary education. The association of Basque-medium schools '[Ikastolen Elkarte](#)' [have been using this kind of sociolinguistic content for several years](#) with positive results.

We have seen that parental and carer agency and activities to help young people critically understand language issues and building strong emotional and social connections to the minoritised language are effective ways to encourage them to use and support a language. We now turn to the role of the wider community in the language socialisation paradigm.

3.8.6 Beyond the family and school, the community as an agent of socialisation

The holistic nature of the process of language socialisation encompasses the entire communicative ecosystem of children, in such a way that it enables children—both

those who come from families in which the language is spoken and those who come from families in which it is not—to become full members of the community of speakers. In addition to the family, children’s peers, other adults with whom children interact communicatively, the school, the activities, and communicative practices in which children participate (leisure, sports, and so on), and other *inputs* (such as screens and the digital world) also play a role. This dynamic, multidirectional, and multi-agency process constitutes a ‘social’ or ‘community’ transmission. Successful transmission is contingent on social use, and sociolinguistic intervention should therefore be directed so it contributes to children’s and young people’s social use of the language.

We have already discussed community transmission in the previous sections, but the strength of this concept requires further examination to identify further agents of socialisation.

3.8.6.1 ‘The person in the street’ as an agent in everyday interactions

When speakers of a minoritised language take upon themselves to talk to children and young people in Basque as a default (the ‘First word, in Basque’ strategy) they are contributing to the language socialisation of those children. In the Basque context, the unspoken social norm ‘to children, only in Basque,’ is rooted at community level, and is to be seen in areas of medium or lower density, even among adults with lower command of Basque (Kasares, Ortega and Amorrortu, 2022). In areas of higher density, the community raises young new speakers in Basque (Ortega et al., 2016). For this to happen, consideration must be given at the societal level, whether by local initiatives or government campaigns, to what extent speakers feel that the wholesale addressing of children and young people in the minoritised language is a feasible thing to do, or whether there are other factors that cause it not to be so. It should be noted that the vast majority of children and young people in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country are educated in Basque-medium or bilingual schools, so adults can expect all children or young adults to be able to speak Basque.

3.8.6.2 New forms of agency and revising social norms on use of the minoritised language

To increase the everyday use of Welsh and Basque, it is essential to address and reshape social norms regarding who speaks these languages, in what contexts, and how. Language policy should foster an inclusive environment in which individuals of all linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels feel able to use their Welsh or their Basque without fetter or embarrassment. This includes those with limited ability, or speakers of certain dialects or variants. Furthermore, policy should recognise and support bilingual interactions, i.e. conversations in two languages, affirming the legitimacy of passive speakers—those who understand the language but do not, for whatever reason, feel they can ‘produce’ utterances in Welsh or Basque.

In this vein, the Basque Government has launched a relevant campaign. '[Pixka bat es mucho](#)' (which would be equivalent in Wales to '... Tipyn bach [a little bit] is a lot'), is a title that mixes Basque and Spanish, with the aim of encouraging those with a small amount of language to use the Basque they have. In the Basque Country this, and other interventions have opened debate and reflection (with hopeful results), but we should remember that language attitudes and preconceived ideas about language are slow to change.

3.8.6.3 Leisure

Recreation plays a vital role in the children's language socialisation. Because of this, it offers a special opportunity to foster the use of language in recreational and extracurricular activities. A first step is to engage social agents (e.g. cultural associations, sports clubs) as language socialisation partners.

It is important to provide training in language behaviour change or socialisation to leisure activity leaders and coaches as well as to sports coaches, in order to increase community use of the language. They can become linguistic role models and develop strategies to foster language use.

The recently launched '[Eusfera](#)' project, seeks to strengthen the presence of Basque in children's daily lives by integrating it across all children's activities. The initiative is promoted by '[Taupa](#)', a federation of social organisations supporting the Basque language, in collaboration with public institutions.

3.8.6.4 Public campaigns and social initiatives

Any initiative where children and young people can join in as part of a social movement fosters positive attitudes and a sense of community belonging. In the Basque language context, [Euskaraldia](#), i.e. 11 days in Basque and [Korrika](#), are examples of extremely successful large-scale national activities in which many thousands of people participate by committing to using Basque (Euskaraldia) or by running and attending musical events across the Basque Country (Korrika).

3.9 Operationalising at scale

Learning from the experiences of minoritised language contexts, such as the Basque Country, and implementing this at scale in Wales requires multifaceted, integrated, and systemic approaches to language regeneration as well as appropriate investment. For Cymraeg to be in every community, this involves public administration, education, families, media, and civic society collaborating towards a shared vision for the Welsh language.

An implication for Welsh language policy is the importance of recognising and supporting parent, carer (and community) agency as a bottom-up force in language transmission. The support parents and carers receive must complement the objectives of formal education to create and develop Welsh language environments in their homes and communities. This includes:

- supporting informal peer networks
- facilitating Welsh language social activities
- supporting parents and carers and providing them with resources that enable them to function as language planners and supporters regardless of their linguistic ability in Welsh themselves

Welsh must be relevant, accessible, and emotionally engaging to younger generations. For this to happen, there must be widespread provision of suitable Welsh-language content (amongst many other developments). This includes digital entertainment, social media, gaming, and cultural programming that aligns with the interests and hobbies of children and youth (Garcia-Ruiz, 2025; Joly, 2025). This is further discussed in Chapter 4 ('Welsh language socialisation beyond school: culture, leisure, and young people'). Making Welsh visible and accessible in these domains is essential for embedding the language into daily life.

This further emphasises the points already made of the salience of informal 'socialisation spaces' and breathing spaces—both face to face and digital (see sections 1.12, 1.12.1, 1.10). These spaces provide opportunities for the transmission of Welsh between peers and the community and help to normalise its use outside of educational settings. These spaces provide opportunities for peer-to-peer and community transmission of Welsh, helping to normalise its use outside academic settings and fostering positive linguistic identities across generations (Nandi, Kasares and Manterola, 2024; Saragueta and Leonet, 2025).

Finally, the success of such a systemic approach depends on consistent research and participatory monitoring. Integrating participatory research methods into Welsh language planning allows for adaptive strategies that respond to evolving sociolinguistic realities. It also empowers individuals and communities as agents of linguistic change, helping to bridge the persistent gap between Welsh language competence and everyday use (Ortega, Goirigolzarri and Amorrortu, 2022).

3.10 Summary: Welsh language transmission and socialisation

3.10.1 Intergenerational transmission in the family

The family is still an essential locus for the transmission of Welsh. However transmission rates vary according to the structure of the home, the fluency of parents and carers, and the local density of Welsh speakers. Other interventions are needed to support all families across Wales. The COM-B and FEAST models provide a behavioural scientific conceptual framework for these (and for other language planning activities).

3.10.2 The role of education and community

Schools, parents, carers, peers, networks, and community initiatives are vital in supporting language acquisition, especially where intergenerational transmission in the family is limited. They also support families who do transmit the language.

3.10.3 Behavioural Insights

Confidence and opportunity are central themes. Interventions should focus on enabling small, positive action by using the COM-B and FEAST models to create 'mastery experiences' which will, in turn, lead to increased confidence.

3.10.4 Policy Evolution

Policy must:

- recognise diverse family structures
- empower children as active agents
- support parents and carers of all language profiles
- tap into the potential of schools as hubs for socialising beyond school gates

3.10.5 International Perspectives

Lessons from Basque language revitalisation highlight the importance of holistic, community-based approaches and the need to move to a socialisation paradigm.

4 Welsh language socialisation beyond school: culture, leisure, and young people

Culture, in all its forms, plays a significant role in the development and use of skills in Welsh. By providing diverse opportunities in ways that are relevant to everyday life, culture builds a strong social connection between people and the Welsh language. In medium and lower density areas—as in higher density areas—community, leisure, and sports groups are vital in offering opportunities for people to use Welsh in an informal space.

Language socialisation occurs in formal and informal contexts outside the family, such as schools, workplaces, and social spaces. Cultural opportunities, such as community sports, local gigs, or youth activities, offer spaces where children and young people can automatically use the language. This can bridge the gap between use in school or in lessons and community and social use. Adolescence and early adulthood are especially important periods in identity formation and in establishing linguistic, social, and cultural practices.

Culture in this context means more than a specific Welsh language cultural activity. While Welsh-language initiatives and events are important, they alone are not sufficient to normalise the use of Welsh. For the Welsh language to be a living part of everyday life, it needs to be given an appropriate place in all aspects of Welsh culture—in wider events, platforms, and cultural spaces—rather than expecting individuals to move towards a specific Welsh-language activity in order to use the language.

What we set out below has to do with weaving the Welsh language through the fabric of communities in a collaborative way, collaborating with communities, enterprises, and organisations to ensure that the Welsh language is used and heard in spaces that are relevant and meaningful to them.

The next sections will explore the relationship between culture and the Welsh language, considering how they can reinforce each other, and how this relationship can build opportunities to create, maintain, and develop Welsh language spaces. Although this chapter focuses on young people, the principles discussed here—i.e. creating opportunities to use the Welsh language in cultural, leisure and social spaces—apply to people of all ages.

4.1 Sport

Sport of all kinds reaches widespread audiences of people and children who participate by playing the sport, coaching, supporting clubs and players, and of course watching sports. Sport takes place at a grassroots level and at the international level. It is also an activity that is communicated on all kinds of platforms and media. These include:

- content from individuals on social media
- print and online publications
- commentary and analysis
- broadcasting agreements at the highest level

Sport is central to the local, national, and international life of our modern society.

Over the past 15 years, the Welsh language has seen a new prominence, particularly through the work of the Football Association of Wales (FAW). This has included:

- communication and marketing campaigns
- social media content
- a prominent presence on match days, and as national teams succeed on the international stage
- press conferences in Welsh during the highest-profile competitions

All this has set an example as to how a national organisation can integrate Welsh in such a pivotal and influential way, contributing to Cymraeg reaching different contexts and communities.

Members of the Commission contributed to the [Sgôr: minoritised languages and football symposium](#), focusing mainly on Welsh, Basque, Catalan, Frisian, Scottish Gaelic and Breton. There were presentations and discussions highlighting the relationship between language and football including:

- national football
- club and community football levels
- the use of language by supporters and by clubs and societies
- mentoring and training programmes
- the use of language on social media
- community programmes to stimulate language use
- the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds in the world of football

Among the messages that emerged was the fact that football now offers a great many spaces in which minoritised languages— including Welsh—are present and used. Reference was made to the further potential that exists at the community level.

At the international level, there were reports of experiences where individuals have been able to reconnect with Welsh by following Welsh football as the language gains greater prestige and presence at that level, and meeting other supporters who use the language socially.

During international events, such as national team matches, Welsh is heard and seen on a global stage and this fosters a sense of linguistic pride, including among young people. By increasing the presence of Welsh—it being seen and heard in the stadium—the impact continues after the game is over, as discussions on social media and broadcast media replay the experience on various platforms. The

Commission believes that this positive linguistic experience could be extended to other sports. It is encouraging that this is already being implemented by some sports bodies.

In this way, Welsh can become part of a community and national identity, rooted in common experiences and public recognition. Increasing the visibility of Welsh creates better circumstances and extends the opportunity for people to encounter and use the language in social contexts. At the same time, fostering pride and a sense of belonging strengthens motivation, making people more willing to engage with Welsh. By normalising the language as part of community and national identity, the conditions are created where using Welsh can develop into normal behaviour, rather than as a conscious or exceptional choice. Of course, the challenge from now on is to ensure that Welsh develops into the language of the pitch, creating a further community space for people across Wales to use it regularly. Community sport can span social, economic and language boundaries. We heard evidence suggesting that the pitch is the place where many people, particularly young people, spend a significant amount of time week in, week out, and therefore offers a realistic and relevant opportunity to engage with them in Welsh.

4.1.1 Community sport

We heard about local success stories in different medium and lower density areas in Wales where community sport offers opportunities for hundreds of children and young people to use Welsh when taking part in their sport.

An individual from south Wales said:

The sports pitch is the new chapel

According to the Wales Activity Tracker Survey (Sport Wales, 2024b), around 16% of adults in Wales participate as members of sports clubs. This participation tends to be higher among men, young people, and those from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, according to the Sport Wales Annual Survey (Sport Wales, 2024a), around 40% of children participate in sports clubs 3 times a week. However, this figure is lower in deprived areas, where only 32% of children do so. However, a higher proportion of Welsh-speaking children take part, with 46% of them involved in sports clubs three times a week.

We heard concerns that Welsh is often peripheral in the establishment and running of community sports clubs and that there is scope to extend the use of Welsh in these contexts. This is common in other communities where a minoritised language is spoken. In the context of the Basque Country, we refer to 2 initiatives that extend the opportunities to use Basque in sports and leisure clubs. The Euskara Kirolkide project by Soziolinguistika Klusterra works with sports clubs to create spaces where

young people can use Basque in their leisure activities. In addition, the BiKKE project by the provincial council of Bizkaia reinforces the social use of Basque through sport, providing grants, training, and collaboration with sports federations. These programmes operate at the micro- and strategic levels and facilitate the planning of use of the language in face-to-face activities, on websites and in the clubs' internal administration. This ensures that Basque is an integral part of the sporting experience and community life for young people.

As well as providing opportunities to use Welsh, community sport can also be an effective means of fostering leadership skills in Welsh among young people. By taking part as captains, young coaches, volunteers or activity coordinators, individuals can develop communication, organisation, and teamwork skills, all through the medium of Welsh. These experiences are important in fostering youth leadership and linguistic leadership and help to establish Welsh as a language that is relevant and practical within real-life contexts.

Therefore, community sport cannot solely be a social meeting place, but also a space where Welsh can be used, normalised and linked to positive and constructive emotional experiences. Community sport should be considered an important strategic medium for promoting the language and nurturing new Welsh-language leaders within local communities.

Strategic objectives should be developed at the national level through Sport Wales, along with a language planning approach at the micro level for community sport, with a specific focus on ensuring the presence of Welsh at a grassroots level and in day-to-day activities.

4.2 Language planning in culture

The Commission's first phase report underlined the need for community language planning that is strategic and targeted. It is important that there be a suitable mechanism and appropriate funding for language planning at a local level. In this context, a mechanism refers to a collaborative system or structure in which a number of bodies, associations, businesses and organisations or governments at various levels work together to plan and implement language policies at the local level. This can enable more of us to use Welsh in our daily lives in medium or lower density areas and take part in cultural activities in Welsh. For Cymraeg to be in every community, developing these mechanisms further would enable local authorities and other partners to work together more effectively to create and maintain spaces where Welsh is used automatically.

4.3 Creating digital spaces

We believe that the cultural and new media sector, namely those media that are not traditional newspaper, radio or television-based, can play a vital role in maintaining and developing the Welsh language in general, and among young people in particular. Young people spend much of their time online. A report (Ofcom, 2025)

showed that young adults spend the longest periods online on devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers. It also showed that young people between the ages of 18 and 24 spend an average of 6 hours and 1 minute online per day. This time could be an opportunity for individuals to use Welsh beyond the educational environment, but it is mainly English used during this time.

It is important, therefore, for any strategy for extending the use of Welsh to reflect how and where young people spend their time. Currently, there is a lack of detailed data on the language-based aspects of leisure time patterns in Wales. In a context where percentages of young people spend time in activities such as computer games, language and media or communication policies need to consider these digital spaces as real opportunities for the Welsh language.

Work is already underway within eSports with Esports Wales, a national body leading the development of electronic sports in Wales. There is potential to use eSports as a medium to strengthen Welsh and develop Welsh content to encourage the use of the language in new environments.

We heard about other initiatives that show how community momentum can be built through a programme of digital content production by young people as part of preparations to welcome the National Eisteddfod. Digital and local activities like this enable young people to:

- build content production skills, including digital content that uses Welsh for the different digital platforms for others to watch
- develop local and professional links
- possibly use the Welsh language in a new context
- build confidence in general and linguistically

The skills and ability exist in many parts of Wales to run Welsh language digital content production programmes, with many aimed at young people. However, a lack of resources is a barrier to fully realising this potential. Investing in such programmes can not only offer young people experience and employment opportunities, but also their digital products will strengthen the visibility of the language on social media platforms, where there is a shortage of Welsh content.

4.3.1 Digital Influencers

In a context where digital media and social platforms are increasingly part of our day-to-day lives, the role played by influencers is important.

4.3.1.1 Examples of benefiting from the work of content influencers

The Catalan Government has sought to normalise and popularise Catalan among young people by creating a programme to support influencers who produce content through the medium of the language. This programme includes elements of business development as well as elements of using Catalan. This content attracts 'viewing' numbers similar to numbers for national television, which shows the potential of their

reach with the younger generation in particular. The Catalan Government's strategy is led by the Office of the Minister for Language Policy and includes steps to foster a digital ecosystem. The ecosystem includes:

- professionalising content
- data collection on followers
- collaboration with national television to develop a digital channel with influencers
- setting up status rewards
- offering grants to influencers

In civil society and the research community, there are projects such as [llista.cat](https://www.llista.cat) which collate content from online content creators in Catalan to increase visibility and consumption of the Catalan content. It is also a way of highlighting gaps in the type of online content in Catalan and therefore a way of planning new programmes to fill these gaps. It should be noted that social media is not just a medium for young people as a wide range of ages produce and consume content. However, for young people it is the principal medium. The policy that has been introduced in Catalonia can offer a foundation for Wales to develop a suitable model to promote Welsh among young people through digital media. We are not discussing technology here, though appropriate language technology can help create content. We discuss technology and the Welsh language in more detail in section 5.11.

4.4 The role of the media

S4C's Annual Report (2025) raises questions about the ability of traditional media to offer an appealing, productive and responsive space for young speakers. In a time of financial austerity and changes in the way people use media, the traditional Welsh language media are facing intense pressures that jeopardise their sustainability. According to Mcelroy and Noonan, (2016), this decline poses growing concern and underlines the need for purposeful intervention to protect and develop relevant, accessible and high-quality Welsh language media. While traditional media are no less important, the platforms and approaches have changed. It is now social media, TikTok videos, podcasts, and dynamic digital media that are influencing the shaping of identity and language use (Cunliffe, 2025). Creating and sharing content in Welsh is a central part of using the language in everyday life. A more comprehensive approach that supports and motivates people to create their own content in Welsh is needed.

We have heard about the importance of developments such as 'Hansh' which demonstrate models where young people take creative ownership of Welsh culture. The platform provides a space for diverse voices to share real-life experiences through video, music, and digital content that reflects popular culture. By using informal style and social media, Hansh is normalising Welsh online. We believe that these approaches have the potential to spark more creativity and create more Welsh

language content. Welsh-language digital spaces offer important opportunities to use the language, and they are particularly important where there are not enough face-to-face opportunities, and for people living outside of Wales. However, in order to normalise the use of Welsh, there is a need to increase the presence and content of Welsh in general digital spaces and not just rely on Welsh language platforms.

4.5 Young people's attitudes towards the Welsh language

This section:

- explores how young people consider and use Welsh.
- focuses on the factors that shape young people's attitudes towards the language and their linguistic behaviours in educational and social contexts
- includes the views of young people of secondary school age who gave evidence to the Commission
- refers to research on young people in Welsh-medium schools (Williams, 2024)
- offers a picture of the reality of pupils and former secondary school pupils
- aims to understand the barriers faced by those who have their experience of Welsh through school, without it being a home language, and who live in medium or lower density areas
- discusses social norms, cultural relevance, and the spaces in which Welsh is seen and used, and its place in everyday life.

It should be noted that the experiences described in this report are not necessarily fully representative of the experiences of all types of individuals or their communities in medium and lower density areas. However, they offer an insight into some of the themes, experiences, and challenges in trying to increase the daily use of Welsh, in line with the second target of 'Cymraeg 2050.'

According to Census 2021, 63% of Welsh-speaking children and young people in Wales aged 3 to 19 live in local authorities where the percentage of Welsh speakers is below the national average (Prosiect BRO, unpublished). For many Welsh-speaking children and young people in these areas, the presence of Welsh is so much stronger inside the classroom than it is outside. Thus using the language in informal contexts is often far from everyday life. When considering the link between community use and language density, the lower the density of Welsh speakers in an area, the less likely are impromptu opportunities for social and informal use in the community. Analysing these situations through the COM-B behaviour change model shows that the opportunities to use the language in the community are more limited in these areas.

4.6 Welsh as the language of school

Since the 1960s, there has been a common perception of a steady growth in the number of people attending Welsh-medium schools (Hodges, 2012). More recent analyses (Lloyd-Williams, ap Gruffudd and Jones, 2024; Prosiect BRO unpublished)

show that growth has been modest (1.2 percentage points) over the last decade (2013-14 to 2023-24) overall across Wales, although there are variations in different local authorities.

Research on education medium and social use of the Basque language shows that patterns of use remain uneven and highly dependent on community density, although Basque-medium education is now by far the most popular model in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Cenoz, 2009). This underlines the importance of education in ensuring that children and young people have opportunities to acquire, learn, use, and own language, particularly among families where the language is not used at home.

However, too often, the Opportunities for its use outside the classroom are rare. We heard from young people that their experiences of Welsh mean that Welsh is solely the language of school, or of the education context. In order for Cymraeg to reach all communities, it is essential to create spaces where it can be used outside of school, to strengthen its use, to increase access to it, and to ensure that it is seen as a living language with a prominent social role.

The Language Charter programme helps to address this. We heard from the Siarter Iaith coordinators that the Siarter is:

a national framework aimed at inspiring children and young people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives, especially outside the classroom.

The main objectives of the Siarter (Welsh Government, 2020b) are:

- making the Welsh language a fun experience
- increasing confidence and motivation to speak Welsh
- building positive attitudes towards the language

The Siarter operates through national programmes and targets, but with the flexibility to adapt locally. It involves partnerships with stakeholders and offers activities such as after-school clubs, reward systems, and collaboration between Welsh and English schools. Through this, the Siarter aims to ensure that Welsh contributes to the creation of confident bilingual citizens for the future.

4.7 Attitudes and use

4.7.1 Peer pressure

We heard about the pressure some young people feel to not use Welsh outside of school.

Experiences like this can create feelings of uncertainty and alienation among young people, as their ability to speak Welsh sets them apart from their peers, at a time in their lives during which belonging to a social group is important. Evidence from Williams (2024) discusses this further:

Generally, when individuals, especially young people, feel different to those in their social environment, they suppress the behaviour that makes them feel different, i.e., they become less likely to speak Welsh

Social pressure, therefore, can affect young people's use of Welsh, which in turn contributes to the confirmation that Welsh is solely the language of school.

4.7.2 Ownership

We heard evidence about young people's emotional relationship with Welsh and the desire to feel a personal relationship with the language. It was noted that being able to speak Welsh does not necessarily lead to a feeling of ownership of Welsh. This can lead to reduced motivation (i.e. the M in the COM-B model) to use Welsh in their lives beyond school. One young person from south east Wales felt that it was possible to:

[...] leave education feeling that they [young people] don't have a sense of belonging to the language, they see it as a 'skill,' but they don't have it in their hearts

In the same research (Williams (2024)), pupils in Welsh-medium schools stated that the language is an important part of their identity and a positive element of their everyday lives.

I wouldn't feel the same if I didn't speak Welsh

Our language is unique. It's my identity.

Welsh language is important; I wouldn't be the person I am [without it].

We heard that some young people considered Welsh as something that connects people to each other, and that the ability to speak Welsh represents a 'community of people':

It's part of me, I'm part of a community

We are so few; it connects us together.

[It] creates a community that's stronger together.

Young people's emotional relationship with Welsh is an important factor, and they often reflect on its significance in their lives. When discussing the Welsh language, feelings of pride and belonging emerge, but at the same time social barriers influence their experiences. For Cymraeg to reach every community, it is important to understand the factors that inform children's and young people's attitudes towards the Welsh language, to recognise the barriers as well as the opportunities and experiences to strengthen and increase its social and community use among the younger generation. The next section outlines an approach to addressing these issues.

4.7.3 Active speakers

Research in the Basque Country (Ortega, Goirigolzarri and Amorrortu, 2022) argues that giving young people specific opportunities to reflect on their relationship with Basque increases their use of the language (we have referred to this in chapter 3, 'Welsh language transmission and socialisation'). The research suggests that this can turn the individual into an 'active speaker,' i.e., a speaker who makes a conscious decision to use Basque in a variety of social situations, not just in school. This provides the individual with:

[...] knowledge about themselves and their situational context, as well as a safe space to rehearse new forms of speakerhood.

Such reflections provide a space to discuss their experiences of learning and speaking Basque. Ikastolen Elkartea, the Basque schools alliance, has developed an informal, whole-school curriculum based on this research (Muñoa Barredo, Beola Olaziregi and Lasa, 2024). We also discuss Ikastolen Elkartea and other aspects of interventions from the Basque Country in section 3.6. The focus of the curriculum is on teaching pupils the sociolinguistic history of Basque, and on encouraging discussion about individuals' relationship with the language. The 'informal' education modules help learners to understand the social context of the language for themselves and see Basque in a more holistic way than merely as the language of school.

Such reflective techniques are also important in the context of schools in Wales, and consideration could be given to how to implement them in more activities relevant to

young people. Such reflection needs to be appropriate for the young person's age or stage in life, as that encourages their ownership of the process. The aim of this is to give young people the opportunity to reflect deeply on their use of Welsh in a way they ordinarily would not, and enable them to develop a stronger linguistic awareness. The intention is for this to contribute to reducing barriers, to increase the use of Welsh among young speakers, and support them to develop into 'active speakers'. Including the sociolinguistic history of the minoritised language is part of understanding sociological contexts, so that learners learn ethos, rather than simply skills. But the goal and the secret is in the learners themselves reflecting and these sessions not being didactic alone.

4.8 Young people's organisations and clubs

Youth clubs, sports, and community groups are important in young people's social and cultural development. They are opportunities for them:

- to form links with each other
- to develop friendships, skills, and confidence
- to relate to individuals of slightly different generations
- (if the Welsh language is part of the context) to experience the language outside of the classroom or school and in their daily lives

Such activities and contexts play a vital role as spaces for the maintenance and development of Welsh. We recognise their important contribution and appreciate the collaboration between societies, organisations, and organisations across Wales. But such clubs are not available in all parts of Wales or within a reasonable distance for everyone. In addition, real-term cuts to local government budgets have squeezed non-statutory services such as youth services. This has led to less support of this kind for young people and has limited the potential for opportunities to socialise through Welsh. The stakeholders working in the youth and Welsh language arena have common objectives: to strengthen the use of Welsh among young people and ensure that accessible, inclusive, and consistent youth provision is available across the country.

The success of this collaboration could be enhanced by ensuring closer collaboration between themselves and local authorities to co-develop strategies to strengthen the Opportunities (COM-B) for children and young people across Wales to be able to develop their interests using Welsh. These elements should be included as part of language strategies and youth strategies at local authority level. Extending such partnerships and disseminating the good practice that exists in places could contribute to strengthening the social use of Welsh while also strengthening young people's social capital and skills.

By co-ordinating resources, sharing good practice, and co-designing activities that place Welsh at their centre, these partnerships can further develop their contribution

to ensure that young people have opportunities to use Welsh outside the classroom, building confidence, motivation, and ownership of the language.

4.9 Welsh language music and gigs

Live music and events such as gigs play an important role in the social and cultural life of very many young people. We heard positive references to current initiatives such as Maes B and Tafwyl, and recognition of their value as models that combine contemporary music with the Welsh language in a lively and inspiring way. This is important because it enables young people to connect with Welsh in a positive and relevant way, outside school, where the language is at the heart of the event, and that other elements, such as the music, the fun, the socialising, the atmosphere, are central to the experience overall. This means that the Welsh language is an integral part of the events.

A young person from south Wales said:

I love [Welsh language] gigs

These types of events offer vital social opportunities. They allow young people to come together, to connect with peers and to share positive experiences through the Welsh language in an informal context even if they have not done so before. These events are spaces where young people can reconnect, reinforce or form a new relationship with the language.

4.10 Community development and the creative youth sector

In order for Cymraeg to be in every community, linguistic communities need to be developed in medium or lower density areas in Wales.

To this end, popular music has played a role in minoritised language communities across Europe and beyond. In the case of Irish, popular music attracts young people to the language in a way that is contemporary and relevant to those young people. This did not grow in a vacuum, and organisations such as Glór na Móna and Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich have played a prominent role in the community regeneration process, offering mentoring, training, cultural events, and community services through the medium of Irish. Schemes such as Fís an Phobail, a 7 year community language scheme for West Belfast, show how community development and urban regeneration can be intertwined with a minoritised language in a way where the language is ‘incidental but central’: it is not always a formal focal point, but is present in all aspects of the community work undertaken. This is more based on a wider community development vision, with the language forming an integral part of creating opportunities, capacity building and fostering community identity.

The examples of positive experiences at events such as gigs and the Eisteddfod show that the Welsh language can function as a platform to expand social capital. They give people the opportunity to:

- connect to wider networks
- forge new contacts
- strengthen a sense of belonging to Wales and experience its diversity first-hand

But for young people who leave Welsh-medium schools and are not part of Welsh-language networks or activities that use Welsh, it is often not clear where, or how, they could participate in Welsh-language life after leaving school. Without a bridge connecting education and the community, there is a risk that Welsh will be seen as something ‘to be left behind.’

Further consideration should be given to what the pathways into Welsh youth networks are, what kind of activities and how to fund them so that Cymraeg reaches every community of children and young people across Wales. Spaces that represent Wales’s social diversity should be created or developed, ensuring that Welsh is experienced as a living, accessible and open resource for all.

During our discussions with young people, we heard a clear desire for more accessible venues where they could attend live music, as well as having mentoring opportunities or developing skills to help them learn to play instruments, make music, and organise their own events through the medium of Welsh. These spaces can promote Welsh as a social language, and at the same time, spark a strong youth identity that sees the language as an integral part of personal and creative expression.

4.11 The Welsh language festival as a language planning tool

We have heard how Welsh-language festivals play an important role in creating opportunities for the language to be used, celebrated and experienced. Festivals can function as breathing spaces where the Welsh language can be the main medium. They are therefore opportunities to create linguistic, social, and cultural capital at the same time in a positive environment. Festivals also offer platforms for artists, performers, and practitioners to develop through the Welsh language, cultivating a new generation of cultural and linguistic leaders.

One of the prime Welsh language spaces that is also a festival, of course, is the National Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfod is also a strategic tool for maintaining and growing Welsh. This possibility should be fully exploited and firmly anchored in systemic planning for the Welsh language by local authorities the Eisteddfod will visit.

However, we heard that not all community festivals in Wales include Welsh. This is a missed opportunity for the language. We also heard that a lack of coordination between different festivals can lead to clashes in terms of the dates those festivals are held. A strategic and co-ordinated approach is needed to ensure that Welsh is included in more festivals than at present. By creating partnerships between Welsh language festivals and festivals that do not currently include Welsh, it is possible to share good practice, coordinate, and increase the use of the language in new spaces.

5 Workplaces and the Welsh Language

The contribution of workplaces to the future of our language was discussed during the Commission's first phase. The report noted that public sector organisations have a duty to support the Welsh language, to extend their internal use of the language and to continue to innovate and develop the use of the language internally. It proposed a number of recommendations to support those developments, (recommendations 18 to 20) which also apply to other workplaces, beyond the public sector, and within areas of medium or lower density.

In this section we build on the conclusions of the Commission's first phase. We start by considering why workplaces matter, and how workplaces of all kinds can contribute to the strategic objectives that are central to the Commission's remit. We then discuss approaches to creating change in workplaces, before examining the Welsh language standards; workplace culture; opportunities to mainstream language planning, and the potential for the adoption of linguistic corporate social responsibilities. We also consider the contribution of organisational leadership to workplace culture and address the need to plan the workforce in a way that leads to an increase in the use of Welsh. We conclude with a discussion on the range of technological tools that could facilitate and transform the use of Welsh in the workplace.

This chapter focuses primarily on public sector workplaces and recognises that these are the contexts in which there are the most direct policy levers. However, our analysis and suggestions are not limited to public sector workplaces. Rather, it explores how workplaces can function bilingually and how work environments can be created where the use of Welsh is reasonable, practical and benefits employees, organisations, and communities alike regardless of the sector.

5.1 Why workplaces are important in these areas

In medium and lower density areas, the workplace is often one of the main social spaces where adults can use Welsh on a regular basis outside of formal education. For many who have received Welsh-medium education but do not come from families where Welsh is used, a lack of opportunities to use the language in their daily lives can lead to a decline in use after leaving school and consequently their willingness and confidence to use it. This chapter explores the role of the workplace as a vital socialising space, and its potential to increase the use of Welsh in these areas.

In discussing workplaces and changes that are likely to increase the use of Welsh, we have found that a lot of work has been done over the past few decades. As with other areas discussed in the report, we are not by any means starting from nowhere. We recognise the significant role of the Welsh Government, the Welsh Language Commissioner and the former Welsh Language Board, local authorities, the wider public sector, private businesses, co-operatives, campaigning organisations, and

trade unions in this regard. However, while support and guidance are available to organisations wishing to increase the use of Welsh, organisational culture and established practices need further attention. One of our conclusions, therefore, is that efforts need to focus increasingly on the ‘people’ side of things. It needs to be recognised that people exist and live within power dynamics and that organisational culture is created and can be changed through deliberate interventions. This requires a change in situations and dynamics in order to help people change their behaviours, rather than expecting people to proactively change their behaviour of their own accord.

5.2 The bilingual environment in Wales

The current widespread practice in many workplaces in Wales is to rely on translating content from English into Welsh. Of course, for this to function effectively, it depends on translation services. But this does not empower individuals within the workplace, nor does it motivate them to use their Welsh language skills. It places the responsibility on the translation profession, which is dependent on the budgets and decisions of leaders, as well as what the Language Standards state, as to whether or not to translate.

As language technology evolves and as our aspirations for the Welsh language increase, we believe that the challenge is to create situations that facilitate behavioural change and change the dynamic of Welsh in the workplace. Rather than working and producing through the medium of English and thereafter translating into Welsh, we should aim to facilitate bilingual working, enabling individuals to work and create content in Welsh, using technology to support this. We believe we need to move away from total reliance on translation services, and instead develop skills, supportive circumstances and motivation for individuals and workforces, and use technology to facilitate this. This will probably mean a shift in the type of translation work, toward more simultaneous translation, and more Welsh being used by the workforce in the workplace. Translators remain key to this.

5.3 The social and ‘people’ reasons for operating bilingually

The Commission considers it important to emphasise that bilingual operation should not be driven solely by compliance needs. Rather, it should be understood as a value-based choice that puts people at the heart of work and service arrangements. The work of Price, Ó Torna and Wynne Jones (1997) demonstrates that there are social and human benefits to organisations fostering a culture in which bilingualism is valued, normalised and seen as an integral part of professional life, rather than as an exception or burden.

Socially, bilingual workplaces can strengthen a sense of belonging among staff, and create an environment where individuals feel fully recognised and respected. Being able to use Welsh in the workplace contributes to self-esteem and linguistic

confidence. This is particularly relevant in medium or lower density areas, where the workplace can be one of the main spaces for adult language socialisation, and therefore key to maintaining daily use of the Welsh language and transmission of linguistic confidence between generations.

These benefits extend beyond the workforce itself. From a human perspective, operating bilingually can strengthen relationships between organisations, customers, and service users by building trust, empathy, and a better understanding of local contexts. From a business point of view, the use of the Welsh language is seen as a means of attracting customers and strengthening the business brand (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner, 2015). Price et al (1997) note that language is a fundamental medium for creating meaning and relationships, and therefore that organisations that operate in a linguistically sensitive manner are more likely to appear accessible, authentic and connected to the communities they serve.

In the private sector in particular, this can lead to customer loyalty, a positive reputation, and deeper ties with local communities (Welsh Language Commissioner, 2017). However, this is not just a commercial issue: it reflects respect for people's identity and recognition of the value of lived experience.

As a result, the Welsh language in the workplace should be considered not only as a statutory duty, but as a social and human resource that can add real value. Bilingual action can contribute to individuals' well-being, sense of control and agency, and to the creation of inclusive and resilient organisational cultures. In this context, the promotion of the Welsh language in the workplace is an investment in people and communities, as well as in wider organisational performance.

5.4 Objectives: the reasons for choosing workplaces

The use of the Welsh language by organisations and businesses expands and grows the civic and socioeconomic status of our language. This status, in turn, contributes to a positive identity among the community as a whole in relation to supporting the minoritised language. This is reflected in the increase in positive attitudes towards the Welsh language which has coincided with an increase in the language's public presence over the past decades. The visual use of the Welsh language by organisations and businesses can make an important contribution to the civic status of a language over time. Every effort must therefore be made to continue to increase the visibility of the language. In this regard, it is necessary to highlight the lack of Welsh on the high street in medium and lower density areas. Although policies, guidance and free resources available from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh Government encourage the use of Cymraeg in public places, these practices have not been implemented consistently or widely at the grassroots level. In responding to the Commission's report on planning, therefore, the Welsh Government should identify steps that can be taken to increase the visual presence of the Welsh language on the high street.

As well as external visibility, organisations can make a further important contribution to the future of the Welsh language because the workplace is a domain for language socialisation. The workplace is a space and context in which language usage practices can be established and reinforced, and can offer important opportunities and spaces for new speakers and for those who are less confident (Hodges, 2009). As a structured space with rules and practices that influence behaviour, the workplace can create opportunities and motivate people to make use of their Welsh easily, as well as establish language practices that have an influence beyond the workplace.

It is a space where individuals can negotiate, discuss and better understand the diversity of various attitudes in relation to the language. It is possible to challenge misconceptions, alleviate concerns and support individuals' language journeys. In so doing, a consensus can be developed regarding the contribution of organisations to the linguistic objectives of Wales.

However, workplaces are not currently facilitating these processes at an adequate scale. Therefore, the challenge within areas of medium or lower density is to develop the workplace to its full potential, and to ensure that organisations and businesses in Wales make a valuable contribution to the language's future. The Welsh Language Commissioner (2022) states:

There is potential for a significant increase in the use of Welsh as the language of work. With many people spending the majority of their waking hours at work, giving people opportunities to get into the habit of spending that time discussing and working through the medium of Welsh can have a significant impact on language practices in the workplace, the home and the community.

We believe that workplaces are spaces that support language socialisation and use within communities where, currently, there is a shortage of Welsh language spaces and opportunities. This can be achieved by following good practice based on the social and behavioural sciences, and by using technology to strengthen workforces and their ability to work together effectively through the medium of Welsh and bilingually.

Our conclusions apply to workplaces of all kinds, whether in the private, public or third sector. While implementation is likely to be easier within the public sector because the government has a direct influence over it, it should not be assumed that it is not possible to achieve the same progress in any other workplace.

5.5 Working patterns

Remote working has become well-established in the wake of COVID-19, especially in certain sectors and types of employment. More than a quarter (28%) of British workers worked hybrid between January and March 2025, a proportion that has steadily increased since March 2022. Workers with a ‘degree or equivalent’ qualification were 10 times more likely to work hybridly than those with no qualifications (Office for National Statistics, 2025). In some workplaces, therefore, the dispersed and less interpersonal nature of employment is likely to influence what is achievable for language in the workplace. We recognise this reality and are aware of the informal and social opportunities that have been lost among workforces as a result of these patterns, and the impact on the use of Welsh in such situations. However, technology also offers Welsh language opportunities to address this.

5.5.1 Attitudes to the Welsh language and culture in the workplace

Individuals’ attitudes and organisational culture in relation to the Welsh language, its use or relevance can be a barrier to efforts to create opportunities and encourage greater use of Welsh. We know that some Welsh speakers question the quality and ability of their formal Welsh language skills. This is often conveyed as a lack of confidence on the part of the individual. As we have argued in other parts of this report (e.g. 1.11, 3.5.1), the ‘individuals’ lack of confidence’ is a limited analysis of the context. We recommend creating and developing spaces that facilitate the use of Welsh where confidence, or lack thereof, is not a factor influencing language use. Again, we emphasise the need for situational change and not to expect individuals to proactively change the linguistic situation around them of their own accord.

Attitudes towards the language, particularly among organisational leaders, can be a barrier to the development of Welsh in the workplace. We heard evidence of the powerful influence of leaders’ views and experiences around the Welsh language. Many have strong opinions on the Welsh language, which have been formed by personal experiences, which influence their attitude towards and involvement with the language. These attitudes can be positive and stimulate Welsh language use within the workplace and among the workforce.

Of course, these attitudes can also be negative, which can hinder efforts, especially when these attitudes are present at the highest levels of an organisation. We hear that, at worst, negative attitudes could lead to indifferent compliance with linguistic regulations such as Welsh standards (i.e. doing ‘just’ enough to comply, without embracing the spirit of the regulation or legislation), or creating an atmosphere that does not encourage people to use Welsh. Iaith Cyf noted such aspects which suggested that these attitudes, which we heard about from Welsh language officers during the Commission’s work, had existed for a very long time:

In those organisations operating on both sides of the English/Welsh border, tensions were observed when the organisation did not identify to the same extent with the ethos and values of the Assembly Government [in relation to the Welsh language], or with efforts to promote the Welsh identity of the devolved or 'regional' parts of the organisation in Wales, and thus did not acknowledge the value of the Welsh language (Iaith Cyf, 2010)

We acknowledge the contribution of Welsh language standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 (National Assembly for Wales, 2011) to the current status of the Welsh language. To build on this, we believe that one challenge in relation to creating workplaces that support Welsh language ability, create opportunities and motivate people to use Welsh, is the use of organisational development methodology and the creation of Welsh language spaces.

5.6 Spaces in workplaces: the vision

How can a workplace build Welsh language ability, create opportunities, and motivate people to use Welsh? We understand that, just as with English, the Welsh language can be used in diverse ways. It can be used internally between staff, and externally with clients and customers when providing services. It is possible to use Welsh formally, for contracting, when dealing with technical matters or within project and people management processes. The Welsh language can also be used informally; in conversations among staff, when communicating with clients or when posting on social media. Formal and external use often requires accuracy and a high level of linguistic skills compared to informal and internal use (see also Lewis (2023)). We believe that informal use within the workplace is equally important, if not more important, in relation to socialisation, establishing and maintaining the linguistic practices of the workforce and the creation of Welsh language spaces. Depending on the language skills of the workforce, a workplace (or part of a workplace) can function as a Welsh language space, where Welsh is used both formally and informally; internally and externally. This may also extend to work-related social activities, including informal interaction between staff outside the workplace, where language habits and confidence can continue to develop.

However, it is also possible for any workplace to use both languages easily, and to be a space where both Welsh and English are used. The ARFOR programme, for example, has identified how a number of businesses already operate in this way. It found that some businesses' internal and external formal dealings with customers, such as payments, agreements or legal work is done through the medium of English, while the informal dealings, such as conversations with customers, takes place through the medium of Welsh (Wavehill, 2021). Our challenge, therefore, is to

encourage leaders to understand the potential contribution of the workplace to the use of language and to recognise that it is not a matter of choosing one over the other.

5.6.1 Formal use, informal use

We believe that opportunities need to be created for organisations to use the Welsh language formally and informally, both internally and externally.

The Welsh Language Standards, together with the Cynnig Cymraeg, i.e. recognition by the Welsh Language Commissioner for organisations that have developed a Welsh language development plan, as well as the efforts of organisations themselves, have driven an increase in the formal use of Welsh, and continue to do so. We heard that the expectation to increase formal use of Welsh has sparked discussions in some public sector workplaces around linguistic culture and practices.

We believe that more emphasis is needed on the informal use of Welsh in order to normalise the Welsh language within the workplace. Creating opportunities for staff to chat with each other, and with clients or customers in Welsh, can be an effective way to ensure language socialisation and increase use. Informal use can also be more easily encouraged socially and conveniently, in line with behaviour change principles and the FEAST model.

However, informal use and formal use should not be considered as 2 completely separate phenomena. They are interrelated, and both are relevant to linguistic sustainability in the workplace. Formal use promotes status (and supports public services), and informal use supports internal socialisation processes. We believe that important work has already been done to lay solid foundations for increasing the formal use of Welsh in organisations, and that it is time to build on this success. There is now an opportunity to develop ways of promoting the informal use of Welsh, and of turning workplaces into spaces that facilitate the interpersonal use of our language.

Although much attention has been paid to the development of individuals' Welsh language skills through adult education, greater consideration needs to be given to the transition between learning Welsh and using Welsh in the workplace. For many, the main barrier is not a lack of linguistic ability, but a lack of clarity about when, how and where those skills can be put to practical use. In this context, the workplace is a key linguistic socialisation site, where customs, norms and expectations can either facilitate or hinder the use of Welsh.

5.7 Making the change

So how do we turn workplaces into spaces that build Welsh language ability, opportunities and that motivate individuals to use the Welsh language? In gathering evidence and listening to the experiences of those involved in workplace language planning, one consistent theme emerged. While a variety of techniques, support and even statutory duties are available to assist efforts to increase Welsh language use,

factors such as human behaviour, organisational culture and lack of motivating factors can hinder progress.

Therefore, we believe that the most crucial step in the workplace is to develop stronger leadership for the Welsh language, and to make internal use of the language a central part of organisational development. Such leadership would be able to inspire organisations of all sizes to use the support and guidance available and contribute to a positive future for the language. In order for Cymraeg to reach every community, we have also considered other ways to help organisations create opportunities, encourage individuals to use Welsh, and take advantage of technology.

5.7.1 Language in leadership: culture first, Cymraeg after

We heard from organisational leaders who have transformed culture in terms of the Welsh language, laying a solid foundation for increasing its use and the number of speakers within their workforce. Common to this was a tendency to focus primarily on culture change within the organisation and ensuring that everyone recognised the purpose of using Welsh. Where change has been successful, a supportive formal and informal culture for the Welsh language was developed. There was respect for diverse attitudes towards Welsh, and the organisation was open to discussing these attitudes.

Culture changes also involved setting a vision for improving and increasing the provision and use of Welsh, rather than being content with just publishing a policy. The vision was often supported by an empathic cross-organisational team and effective communication with staff and stakeholders, creating a foundation for the achievement of organisational objectives. However, to change organisational culture, leadership culture must change first (HICO, 2024).

We heard that a number of organisations have been supported and inspired by programmes such as the Academi Wales and Cymraeg 2050 programme, 'Leading in a Bilingual Country.' The programme is based on research and the behavioural sciences, and the role of empathic leadership (see Lencioni, 2002; Brown and Treviño, 2006; Carroll, E and Mackie, 2016). It seeks to develop empathic leadership with a critical understanding of the Welsh language, its position in Wales, and the complex range of emotions, experiences and opinions that people have towards it. It emphasises the role of leaders in creating an organisational culture, rather than relying on the attitudes and confidence of individuals within the workplace to increase the use of Welsh. Linguistic leadership in organisations applies to the whole of Wales, but specific leadership needs to be developed in social contexts where the opportunities to speak and hear the language are less apparent.

Leading in a Bilingual Country aims to support leaders, regardless of their Welsh language ability, to cultivate an organisational culture in which bilingualism can flourish. It seeks to do this by:

- supporting leaders to reflect on and understand their subconscious views
- the psychology of formal and informal Welsh language use
- ascertaining how to listen to and understand the opinions of others about language
- finding out how to communicate positively, effectively, and inclusively
- finding out how to create the right conditions to start making positive changes through small steps

The programme is one that emphasises the need for empathic leadership and supports its development. This is the kind of leadership and organisational development that is most likely to be able to lead and set a suitable path for organisations in relation to the Welsh language.

[...] ethical leaders are characterised as honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions. Ethical leaders also frequently communicate with their followers about ethics, [and] set clear ethical standards

(Brown and Treviño, 2006)

Empathic leadership contributes to processes of establishing psychological safety within the workplace, where members of the workforce can freely voice, discuss, and challenge ideas (see Edmondson, 2018). Establishing psychological safety is vital to creating an atmosphere in which experiences and attitudes towards the language can be discussed. In addition, empathic leadership often influences the broader workforce, making them more likely to go above and beyond to support their leaders, show trust in the leadership, and achieve greater satisfaction in their work (Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., and Bachrach, 2000). According to a Leading in a Bilingual Country case study:

There is a will, and a need, and an ask and an inclusion, now more than ever before, which does make you feel more comfortable to have a go at saying [something in Welsh], without being judged. Because I think cultures are changing.

We believe that this, in turn, creates organisational leaders who support and drive positive change, who empower officers and language amateurs, and who formalise and adopt the techniques and support available. Again, according to a Leading in a Bilingual Country Case Study:

I think the course just gave us a little bit of a nudge to make things more convenient with the Welsh language, to make it more accessible to everyone and to show that it's not just about the rules. That's the shift I've had.

We believe that more organisations need to be encouraged and supported to develop a suitable organisational culture. One way to do this is to continue to develop Leading in a Bilingual Country, promoting discussion on the Welsh language and the diversity of perspectives. The course and opportunities for dialogue and fostering empathic leadership among all leaders in Wales, from the public, private and third sectors, should be developed. To support the objectives of Cymraeg 2050, leaders, whatever their level of Welsh—or even if they have no Welsh at all—should be able to appreciate and display the leadership qualities needed to lead in a bilingual country.

5.8 Standards, culture, and compliance

The Welsh language standards (under the 2011 Measure) ensure that organisations increase the opportunities available to use Welsh. It was not our intention to scrutinise the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Indeed, we recognise the importance of the current process of regulation and standards. The work of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government in terms of the standards, as well as the help and support for organisations to be able to comply with them, has increased the availability of services and opportunities to use the Welsh language. This legislative approach continues to have a positive influence on the formal use of Welsh and in terms of increasing opportunities to use the language in dealing with organisations. We note that the standards do not reach the private sector and this section therefore focuses on the public sector.

However, in gathering evidence from organisations, it became clear that some practices relating to the compliance process are likely to function as barriers to the use of Welsh. We heard of examples of staff members, including executive-level leaders, ignoring, and refusing to engage with the standards. We also heard that some staff members and leaders only conform to the minimum standards and a culture of 'just doing enough.' Indifferent compliance like this, in our view, is unlikely to positively influence language use beyond the service in question. We heard that in some workplaces there are strong, and often negative, views about the Welsh language and its use, views that could drive indifferent compliance.

In addition to, or possibly due to, indifferent compliance practices, work related to the standards and the provision of specific services through the medium of Welsh would fall primarily on members of the workforce who have Welsh language skills.

Nevertheless, we heard examples where their compliance with statutory requirements had improved, as well as examples of improvement in the use of Welsh, both internally and externally. Organisational culture and leadership were central to those transformations. The use of Welsh increased, as did the numbers who declared that they had Welsh language skills, and we heard that there was enthusiasm about using the language in the workplace. We heard that Leading in a Bilingual Country was the driving force behind these positive developments, but also that the standards themselves were a prompt for conversations about the Welsh language and cultural change. Again, according to a Leading in a Bilingual Country case study:

[...] We would be in a completely different situation without the standards. Taking inspiration from the theory of cultural and institutional change does not detract from the implementation of standards. My experience is that the two [Leading in a Bilingual Country and the Standards] complement each other

We believe that one challenge for language planners in Wales is to equip organisations and their leaders with the capability and the tools to give appropriate consideration to their organisational culture in relation to the Welsh language. Those organisations need to be supported to embrace the spirit as well as the wording of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 by fostering a culture that creates opportunities and spaces and encourages the use of the Welsh language.

5.8.1 Business support and enforcement through terms and conditions

The standards are for a range of public organisations, as well as bodies such as universities and water companies. Statutory mechanisms do not apply to most private or third sectors. Other ways are needed to help motivate these organisations to consider their organisational culture and linguistic leadership, and the spaces they could create to use the Welsh language. It is important that this process recognises that organisations are at different points on their linguistic journey, and that there are opportunities to engage through small, flexible steps, rather than expecting full commitment from the outset.

We believe therefore that there is an opportunity to review and develop the Cynnig Cymraeg further, incorporating behavioural elements into it, gradual levels of commitment, and a clearer approach to signing up businesses—especially small businesses—to practical support such as that offered by mentrau iaith and support services such as Helo Blod.

Furthermore, involvement with the programme is dependent on the good will and willingness of organisations to change and to engage constructively with the Welsh

Language Commissioner. We understand that one challenge to the broader success of the Cynnig Cymraeg is raising awareness and persuading businesses and organisations to collaborate with the Commissioner. We believe that levels of engagement can be improved through terms and conditions or as part of public grant processes. Similar to its Green Growth Pledge, Business Wales can promote the Cynnig Cymraeg when engaging with businesses by proactively offering the opportunity to commit to creating opportunities to use Welsh.

In order to receive the ARFOR Challenge Fund grant, for example, businesses were expected to engage with the Cynnig Cymraeg, and to increase the use of the Welsh language. As a result, there has been an increase in internal and external formal use (Wavehill, 2025). As well as the increase in the use of Welsh, almost half (48%) of businesses reported that the improvement to their Welsh language offer had helped to attract new customers.

The functions of Business Wales should be reviewed to maximise its relationship and influence on Welsh organisations and businesses in order to increase the use of Welsh in the private sector. Improvements should be made to the way in which it directs businesses to support for using Welsh, and how it engages with them to encourage greater use of the language within and through businesses. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting businesses to ensure that Welsh is a core part of their work, i.e. corporate social responsibility. We now turn our attention to this.

5.9 Corporate linguistic responsibility

As well as setting conditions for the receipt of public grants, organisations may adopt corporate linguistic responsibility. This can be a means for businesses and organisations to ensure consideration of the Welsh language as a central element of their social impact. Research on language policies found:

[...] that robust policy guidance, setting out clear expectations for employees, is absolutely crucial for creating a permissive corporate atmosphere, [and that robust policy leadership is] [...] ‘...a means of facilitating projects, practices, and arrangements to that end.

(Iaith Cyf, 2010)

A ‘Corporate Linguistic Responsibility Model’ (Galarraga and Uranga, 2021) proposes a model for integrating linguistic commitments into corporate social responsibility strategies. Their work is based on environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles. The model outlines a 6-step process for companies to consider language as an element of cultural diversity and social impact.

We agree that there is a 'precedent in Wales to further develop the idea of encouraging companies to use Welsh in relation to their corporate social responsibility' (Royles, 2025). Furthermore, Corporate Linguistic Responsibility should be seen as a natural outcome of a positive culture around the Welsh language; a process of formalising an organisational commitment to the language. In practice, this could mean that organisations start with simple and visual steps to support the Welsh language, before moving over time towards more formal commitments as part of their corporate social responsibility strategy. To facilitate and support organisations in Wales to do this, work from the Basque Country should be modelled, and organisations and businesses should consider language as an element of their social responsibility. Business Wales and others can promote this model in their engagement with businesses.

Economic development organisations play an important role in setting norms and expectations regarding businesses and organisations. They have a much wider corporate responsibility to the society and communities they serve. One example is the City and Growth Deals which create jobs and invest in the economies of the Welsh regions. Nevertheless, recent research found that: 'the Welsh language has been a marginal consideration in the development of the North Wales Growth Deal, the Mid Wales Growth Deal and the Swansea Bay City Deal' (Lewis, 2025). These types of organisations must aim higher and ensure that there is support for workplaces and workforces to increase the use of the Welsh language. As well as expecting individual leaders to be able to lead in a bilingual country, the functions and role of the Growth Partnerships, the Development Bank of Wales and the Corporate Joint Committees should be reviewed in relation to the Welsh language, in order to maximise their relationship and influence on organisations and partners. In order for the Welsh language to reach every community, these bodies should be expected to provide progressive leadership on the Welsh language in relation to their functions, and they should have suitable language planning expertise to inform their involvement with partners and execute their functions appropriately. The bodies should be effective signposts for practical support and advice regarding the use of Welsh by organisations and within them. Of course, they should also exercise social linguistic responsibility throughout all their work.

5.10 Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is needed so that individuals and teams are able to benefit from a positive organisational culture and make greater use of the Welsh language. This means that Welsh speakers need opportunities, spaces, and incentives to communicate and work together, and to do so through the medium of Welsh. To achieve this, it is necessary to:

- recognise and understand the linguistic skill levels of the workforce
- assist individuals in improving their Welsh language skills
- enable teams to work together and increase the use of Welsh

- recruit appropriately to respond to the language skills needs of the workforce over time
- establish new language use practices in the workplace

We are aware of a wide range of support programmes for all types of organisations to develop the use of Welsh in the workplace. We are eager, however, to see the range of workplace support effectively packaged or co-ordinated, from the perspective of the organisation concerned. A ‘user journey’ methodology (Centre for Digital Public Services, 2025) should be used to achieve this. When an organisation engages in one of these programmes, it is important that it is informed, directed, and encouraged to participate in wider programmes around developing the use of the Welsh language. Leading in a Bilingual Country is one example of this.

5.10.1 Measuring workforce Welsh language skills

In order to establish a basis for greater use of Welsh, both formally and informally, it is necessary to understand the Welsh language skills of the workforce. The Commission’s first phase report noted that there was inconsistency in language proficiency measurement practices. By measuring the skills and proficiency of the workforce, efforts to develop those skills and proficiency can be planned and supported more effectively. The report concluded that it is important for public institutions to measure proficiency, using a common framework for doing so, based on the CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*). We believe that this recommendation is relevant to organisations across Wales, and consistent measurements using a common framework will be the foundation for effective workforce planning. We are also aware that many developments regarding the CEFR are under way as part of the implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 (Welsh Government, 2025b).

5.10.2 Developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce

The 2019 to 2020 Welsh Language Use Survey reported that only 33% of Welsh speakers said that their employer offered training or support to improve their Welsh (Welsh Government, 2023b). Organisations, and public bodies in particular, need to promote opportunities to develop the language skills of their workforces. When Swansea Bay University Health Board offered opportunities to learn Welsh, over 400 people expressed an interest in enrolling on an entry-level course.

In 2020, 73 of approximately 5,700 Welsh Government staff members were taking a formal Welsh course. As a result of the Welsh Government’s strategy for the Welsh language in its internal administration, ‘Cymraeg: it belongs to us all’ (Welsh Government, 2020a), the number of those learning at the time of writing this report was 643 members of staff, with 173 part of a Welsh language colleague mentoring programme. This proves that there is demand and desire from staff to develop skills when the workplace culture is supportive and the offer is proactive.

Programmes such as Cymraeg Gwaith by The National Centre for Learning Welsh offer diverse, flexible, fully funded training for employers. Support and resources are available to develop the skills of the workforce. The challenge is to change the culture within the workplace and make the offer proactive so that staff can take advantage of it.

It is also beneficial for organisations to create opportunities and spaces for staff members to use the language, whatever their level of Welsh, in informal and fun ways. Case studies from the Leading in a Bilingual Country programme show that informal activities and opportunities to converse in Welsh build confidence and encourage greater use of the language among the workforce. By emphasising individuals' strengths, celebrating small successes, and encouraging open discussions about Welsh language experiences, it is possible to create a work culture where the Welsh language is an integral part of everyday life within the workplace. Encouraging informal use also helps to reduce anxiety and encourages everyone, including learners, to take part in Welsh language activities, strengthening the linguistic culture within an organisation. Encouraging informal use of Welsh also turns the workplace into a space for socialisation of the language. It is essential that such activities are included as part of an organisational development programme aimed at transforming organisational culture in relation to the Welsh language.

5.10.3 Team architecture

In order to promote the internal use of Welsh by staff, whether formal or informal, the workforce must be planned so that individuals have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues who are proficient in Welsh. If Welsh-speaking staff are dispersed across an organisation, the use of the language will be dependent on chance or coincidence that Welsh-speaking staff members happen to communicate with each other. By designing teams with a consideration for language skills, over a period of time it is possible to structure opportunities for the workforce to interact formally and informally in Welsh.

As well as formal workforce planning, creating informal opportunities for the use of Welsh at work is an important element of increasing practical use of the language. Low-risk spaces such as chat sessions, lunch clubs or informal social activities can provide valuable opportunities for new and less confident speakers to try their hand at using Welsh without the pressures often associated with formal contexts such as meetings or presentations. This type of activity aligns with the behavioural insights i.e. creating favourable circumstances where the use of Welsh feels easy, social and enjoyable, and can lead to small positive experiences that build confidence over time. As a result, informal opportunities can play an important role in normalising the Welsh language as part of the everyday culture of the workplace.

5.10.4 Recruitment of staff who will work through the Welsh language

As well as developing proficiency, and structuring opportunities to work in Welsh-speaking teams, it is possible to increase capacity at an organisational level by recruiting individuals with Welsh language skills. The Welsh Language Commissioner has emphasised that addressing Welsh language skills in recruitment is a way of:

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- *improving Welsh language services and creating opportunities for users to speak Welsh*
 - *providing more opportunities for workers to use Welsh at work*
 - *increasing organisations' awareness of issues that affect the Welsh language in terms of policy making and promoting Welsh in the community*
-

(Welsh Language Commissioner, 2020)

5.10.4.1 Challenges of recruiting staff who will work through the Welsh language

It is clear from the evidence we have heard that organisations often face challenges in recruiting staff who can speak Welsh. Further, we note Royles' argument that such guidance 'also applies to the business sector and social enterprises sector' (2025), not just the public sector. The challenge is to ensure that the spirit and letter of the guidance is fully implemented throughout Wales. However, anecdotal evidence shows that this may sometimes reflect recruitment methods rather than a lack of suitable candidates. In particular, failing to automatically advertise jobs through channels where Welsh speakers look for work—such as Welsh-language media, specific job platforms or Welsh-language networks—can limit the reach of advertisements. In this context, recruitment is part of the wider linguistic ecosystem: targeted, Welsh language-aware approaches can increase the likelihood of attracting Welsh speakers and therefore contribute directly to workforce planning and creating favourable conditions for the use of Welsh in the workplace (see also Prys, Bonner and Hodges, 2024).

5.10.5 Increasing the number of people able to work through the medium of Welsh

As well as developing organisations' recruitment methods, there is a need to increase the number of people who can work through the medium of Welsh. The deficiency in the further education offer means that children can leave Welsh-medium education and attend further education only to fall out of the habit of

speaking Welsh, especially if they come from a non-Welsh speaking household. This reinforces the perception that Welsh is a school language, but not the usual language for other contexts including post-16 education and the world of work. It is unreasonable to expect a workforce that has qualified for a job in English to work through the Welsh language immediately, without aid or a wider culture to build confidence and practice in supportive and encouraging circumstances. These individuals must be supported by the creation of spaces and opportunities, and by encouraging them to use their Welsh within further education and the workplace.

We believe that there is a need to develop the provision of training courses of all kinds that equip learners with the linguistic and technical ability to work in a bilingual country. This was underlined when we heard from youth officers about the lack of vocational courses and apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh. This in turn has an impact on businesses that are trying to recruit employees who have Welsh language skills and who are used to using their Welsh within the workplace.

Implementing such plans will result in more former pupils of Welsh-medium schools continuing to use the language within further education, and more people in vocational jobs who are able to use Welsh beyond school and are accustomed to doing so.

5.10.6 Establishing new linguistic practices

Whilst setting up teams that are willing and able to increase the use of Welsh, even on a small scale, certain techniques can be used to help this aim.

5.10.6.1 *Innovative international techniques*

Innovative techniques that offer ways of establishing language practices within workplaces have been implemented internationally. The Eusle methodology focuses on a group or team that wishes to increase the use of another language, such as Basque or Welsh, within the workplace. It was developed as part of the Aldahitz Research Project and was implemented in public organisations and private companies. The methodology is dependent on having some team members playing the role of 'Eusle' (the 'anchor') The rest of the team have to agree not to ask the 'Eusle' to change their language medium (Basque) for a specified period of time. The methodology is simple and cost-free and has led to an increase in the use of Basque by the team during and after the specified period. This model also builds on a consensus among the team that they want to achieve the goal of increasing their use of the language in the workplace, and that everyone has their role in the project. In that respect the 'language anchor' performs a function on behalf of the whole team, rather than making a personal stance not to change language. Since all team members need to be proficient in the minoritised language to some extent, the model is dependent on:

- effective workforce planning and team architecture

- a wider context including an education system where the language is a medium of learning for the majority of the population

5.10.6.2 *Innovative techniques in Wales*

The ARFer app, which has been funded by the Welsh Government and developed by Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University, is designed to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace by changing language practices among staff. Based on behavioural science and Eusle’s methodology, ARFer encourages colleagues to make:

- behavioural ‘pledges’
- commitments to use the Welsh language in certain situations or with certain colleagues

We believe that such a methodology, where people commit to change, especially for a certain period of time, is an effective means of motivating and sustaining change. By making the use of Welsh a shared team goal—rather than an individual challenge—ARFer helps to normalise the language in work settings. It replaces the need for individuals to be bold and confident within an organisation and ensures that the member of staff can easily use whatever Welsh they have. These commitments are supported by language agreements within teams.

The approach is dependent on a culture within the workplace that respects and supports those teams and individuals who are eager to change their language practices. It is a flexible and inclusive approach, catering to all abilities, from beginners to fluent speakers, and is designed to be easy and enjoyable to implement. ARFer is designed for use within virtual workplaces as well as in offices. It also lends itself to the concept of bilingual conversations, where an individual commits to ‘understanding’ Welsh by someone else, but to answering in English or in Welsh.

Since its introduction, ARFer has shown measurable impact. Participating teams have seen a significant increase in the use of Welsh at work. The Commission heard about the results of a trial, where 82% of 704 responses, including teams from the Welsh Government, reported that undertaking a task within the ARFer app had significantly increased their use of Welsh. 57% of the pairs using ARFer in this trial included at least one person who indicated that they ‘spoke Welsh frequently.’ This suggests that ARFer is meeting the demand among this cohort of speakers for support to use Welsh at work.

More practical support and guidance is needed to assist organisations in establishing new linguistic practices. There is a need to support businesses and organisations to adopt the ARFer programme and other innovative approaches that increase the informal and internal use of the Welsh language. This strengthens the linguistic culture within the workplace and encourages staff to use Welsh in their daily interactions.

5.10.6.3 *Welsh Language officers and organic language planners*

Welsh Language officers as well as a host of committed individuals leading language change within organisations less formally—animateurs for the purposes of this report—are central to efforts to increase and normalise the use of Welsh in the workplace. Often, these individuals function as catalysts for change. They:

- support and inspire colleagues to adopt new linguistic practices
- support individuals to improve their skills
- promote bilingual initiatives
- facilitate the implementation of language policies

There is, however, currently no accredited or standardised training available for formal language officers or a source of practical help and support to the language animateurs in workplaces. We heard from Welsh language officers who expressed concern about a lack of guidance in implementing the requirements of the standards. We also received evidence regarding the diversity of approaches towards the Welsh language found in organisations across Wales. Without guidance, training, and support, these individuals operate, to some extent, in isolation.

This underscores the need for specific support for language officers and any unofficial language animateurs or planners operating in organisations. As with many of our conclusions, the behavioural sciences should be central to this.

In order for Cymraeg to reach every community, the work, experience, and infrastructure that have already been established should be built upon and enriched by bringing in ideas and approaches from other disciplines. One example (among many) of this is organisational development methodology. Organisations themselves should lead this work, supported by experts in organisational development and behaviour change. Of course, the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner have an important role to play in supporting this work, but each organisation's 'journey' towards the Welsh language should be viewed through the lens of the organisation itself. The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner should form a partnership to facilitate this approach.

Language is essentially a sociological issue, and therefore a user journey principle should be adopted, focusing on how to bring people on the bilingual journey. A central space to find relevant materials and information is a small element of this picture, but we need to think more ambitiously than a 'one-stop shop' model. Importantly, this should not just be an accredited course or qualification. It should be a source of support to enable animateurs and individual language officers to actively bring about change within their workplaces. Emphasis must be placed on processes that are easy, convenient, social and timely, that is, those that follow COM-B and FEAST first mentioned in sections 3.4 a 3.5.

5.11 Technology in the bilingual workplace

Recent technological advances have created opportunities to support and encourage an increase in the use of Welsh in the workplace. These enable individuals to undertake their work through the medium of Welsh as well as allowing teams to work bilingually (e.g. through machine translation). Technology is also a means of supporting individuals who perceive a lack of confidence in their language skills to use more of their Welsh in the workplace. Such technology already exists and is continually improving.

The challenge is to ensure that workplaces and workforces take advantage of it to facilitate and support teams and individuals to make increasing use of their Welsh. Along with this, it must be ensured that the technology continues to develop and improve (in a way that is accessible to all and is compatible with the Disabled People's Rights Plan).

In so doing, it is possible to move from a situation where content is originated primarily in English to thereafter be translated into Welsh, to one where content is originated in Welsh (using the skills of individuals and supporting technology), to thereafter create the corresponding English language versions.

The language requirements of documents vary by context, audience, and content. In some cases, only a Welsh language version may be required (e.g. when responding to an internal Welsh language document), while in other cases a full English language or bilingual version will also be required. Recognising this diversity is important from the perspective of the COM-B behaviour change model, as it informs the 'Opportunity' that individuals have to use the Welsh language in practice. When expectations are flexible and context-compatible, the circumstances are more favourable to use Welsh as a normal part of a workflow, rather than as an additional task.

Where the appropriate language skills and ability exist, drafting directly in Welsh can be an effective way to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace, strengthening individuals' 'Capability' through regular practice. Supporting language technology and text checking can play an important role in lowering the barrier to an action-first approach, especially in low-risk or in-house contexts. However, in cases where documents are long or complex, or where workloads are heavy, it may be more realistic to call on professional translation services—enabling drafting in Welsh in the first place, before translating into English where necessary.

Expectations of linguistic accuracy are also context-dependent, and this can affect the 'Motivation' of individuals to use Welsh. In internal documents, accepting a reasonable level of imperfection can create a more risk-free environment that encourages the use of Welsh. In external or sensitive contexts, such as policy documents or public statements, the risks are higher, and therefore the assistance of translators or professional editing may be appropriate. Making these distinctions

clear helps organisations to balance quality and risk, and to create a system where Welsh is used more often because the behavioural conditions are supportive.

One of the main barriers to increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace is established linguistic practices, in particular, individuals who are used to not using their Welsh language skills, especially for formal tasks. Technology can help to build new practices in easy and convenient ways among the workforce, supporting them to use their skills with the help of machine translation or artificial intelligence (AI) assistants. It is important that the technology is accessible and simple to use so that it is easy for people to use more of their Welsh and gain confidence in doing so. This means more work with major software companies to help them understand use cases in bilingual countries, and work to ensure that the language technology that already exists reaches the end user.

5.11.1 Navigating technological advances

We acknowledge the work of the Welsh Government, in line with the Welsh language technology action plan (2018 to 2024) and now, under its Welsh language technology and artificial intelligence (AI) priorities, to drive increased use of technology in the workplace and beyond (Welsh Government, 2024). As well as increasing daily use of Welsh, there is an emphasis on ensuring that Welsh language technology reaches the user and developers as well as improving artificial intelligence. The Commission's first phase report stated that the Welsh Government should continue to provide leadership in language technology. Emphasis also needs to be placed on supporting and encouraging organisations to adopt and use technology in order to facilitate the use of Welsh in the workplace.

The Basque Country has done similar work through their Basque Language Technology Action Plan (2021 to 2024). It wishes to secure a central place for the Basque language in the digital age by developing and deploying technologies such as machine translation, voice recognition and linguistic resources (Eusko Jauriaritza Gobierno Vasco, 2022). It is led by the Government of the Basque Country which, like the Welsh Government, collaborates with the private and academic sector on the creation and open sharing of resources.

5.11.2 Technology that supports individuals' language use

Recent technological advances support individuals to use whatever amount of Welsh they have in the workplace. For example, with Welsh Government funding, Cysgliad (a Welsh spelling and grammar checker originally commissioned by the Advisory Welsh Language Board in 1989) is now available free of charge to:

- individuals
- the third sector and the education sector
- organisations with fewer than 10 members of staff

The Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) have published 'Trio writing' which also outlines a new approach to working collaboratively to create bilingual content that is easy to read (Centre for Digital Public Services, 2023).

Under a partnership with Microsoft, the Welsh Government has also collaborated to create a simultaneous translation facility in Teams. That partnership now includes work on Copilot, Microsoft's artificial intelligence tool. The Copilot licence now also includes the translation of live captions that transcribe Welsh and English at the same time. All of this facilitates bilingual communication in the workplace, allowing individuals to contribute to conversations and meetings in both languages.

Overall, these developments reduce barriers and make it easier for individuals to use more of their Welsh language skills in the workplace.

5.11.2.1 Technology to facilitate use

In order to support and encourage the use of Welsh language technology, we heard that it is important to ensure that those technological services are accessible and easy to use. The opportunity and the offer to use the language must be proactive, and that responsibility should be on manufacturers.

For example, during the lifetime of the Welsh Government's Welsh language technology action plan, the Government changed the Microsoft 365 interface on the HWB platform to Welsh, meaning that around 80,000 users are now using the Welsh language interface without having to request it. Another internal example within the Welsh Government is the 'Cymraeg mewn clic' app, which provides a full Welsh language experience on a work laptop via a single click (interfaces, keyboard and Welsh language accents etc) (Welsh Government, 2024).

These are some examples of how technology can make it easier for individuals to use their Welsh in the workplace. The next challenge is the need for behaviour change to adopt and make best use of this technology. We believe that this responsibility should lie with manufacturers and organisations to recognise the bilingual culture of Wales and proactively offer language choices without expecting consumers to do this on their own.

5.12 Social organisations and enterprises as workplaces

The Commission's first phase report recommended that the Welsh Government should: 'devise and support a programme to disseminate successful community development models across areas of higher density linguistic significance by drawing on existing local expertise and good practice. (Recommendation 21).' We also believe that social organisations and businesses have an important role to play in areas with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers. In the course of our work, it became clear that social organisations and businesses play an important role in communities across Wales, filling gaps in services or provision that have been lost due to financial constraints and lack of investment.

Because of this, we are of the view that social organisations and businesses have a unique and valuable role to play not only in contributing to the Welsh economy, but also in supporting and maintaining the linguistic landscape of areas, including areas with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers. As we discussed with social organisations and businesses in north west Wales, it became apparent that they were filling gaps in services, leisure activities, and community resources in general. However, in addition to this, the Welsh language is a core part of their work and their provision. As one enterprise in north Wales stated:

We operate through the medium of Welsh without thinking about it.

5.12.1.1 *Examples of social organisations*

In this section, we explain the work of two social organisations. Although they are located outside the geographical remit of the Commission's second phase, we use them here as conceptual examples to show how the processes of language socialisation, linguistic norms and 'Welsh language spaces' of Welsh social organisations operate in practice—processes which, although rooted in higher density contexts, offer transferable and relevant lessons to communities across the whole of Wales, including medium and lower density areas. One notable example is Cwmni Bro in Blaenau Ffestiniog, an ambitious social organisation that works across a wide range of sectors. These sectors include:

- youth work
- hospitality
- property
- the creative industries
- education
- food
- health
- fuel poverty

The company employs around 160 people from the local area on fair terms, including the real living wage. The majority of the work is done through the medium of Welsh, ensuring that the language remains relevant and visible in everyday life and within various professional fields and sectors.

Partneriaeth Ogwen in Bethesda is a community organisation that works to regenerate and strengthen the area through projects based on the principles of sustainability, local economic development, and the promotion of the Welsh language. Partneriaeth Ogwen has been at the forefront of initiatives such as creating green jobs, developing affordable housing, and supporting local small businesses, all in a context that puts the Welsh language at the heart of their work.

5.12.1.2 Example of social enterprises

Social enterprises have been working as part of Cymunedoli Cyf, a network of 22 social enterprises across Gwynedd which was established in 2023. As part of Cymunedoli, a collaborative network was formed that shares experience and resources for mutual support. By working together under this umbrella, the organisations are able to strengthen their local impact and develop working methods that put communities at the heart of every decision while working together. By sharing experience, resources, and expertise, Cymunedoli empowers enterprises to create solutions that work directly for the benefit of the community. Cymunedoli is a community of communities that support each other to create a more sustainable and self-sustaining future.

5.12.1.3 Positive impacts of social organisations and businesses

These examples clearly show that the positive impact from social organisations and businesses is not limited to the local economy alone. They also contribute practically and meaningfully to the future of the Welsh language, by making it relevant, visible and an integral part of everyday life. There is acknowledgement that models such as this can be successful in areas of medium and lower density and Rhwyd (a network that supports community initiatives working across areas of economic regeneration and linguistic regeneration, with a particular focus on promoting the Welsh language) is one example of this.

Rhwyd is not a commercial company, but a collaborative platform that aims to foster core approaches to community development. It is a joint project between IAITH: the Centre for Language Planning and Cymunedoli Cyf. and is funded by the Building Communities Trust (BCT). The main objective of Rhwyd is to function as a bridge between different community initiatives so that they can share experiences, support each other and develop sustainable solutions that meet the needs of each community. The network facilitates creative and constructive discussions between diverse enterprises, fostering collaboration and innovation.

Through this work, Rhwyd seeks to foster a community model of economic and linguistic regeneration that is suited to a variety of local contexts. One of its wider aims is to ensure that the voices of these initiatives have a prominent place in policy discussions at Welsh Government and local government level. To this end, Rhwyd argues for a community development approach based on bilingualism and on empowering communities themselves as a sustainable and valuable way of supporting the Welsh language and local economic strength. As a Rhwyd representative pointed out:

Impact on the Welsh language? It's central to everything we do

5.12.1.4 *How social enterprises and businesses incorporate the Welsh language*

While Social Enterprises and Businesses in Wales are not, as a rule, under statutory language requirements, Royles (2025) shows that they incorporate the Welsh language by:

- having a clear language policy that is understood by staff and volunteers
- treating language and culture as one of the 4 pillars of sustainability, alongside the economy, community, and environment, with this principle rooted in an internal strategic plan
- having a public image that emphasises administration naturally through the medium of Welsh
- a requirement for staff to be able to speak Welsh, with Welsh language training and induction to identify and support any skills gaps
- investing in the development of staff language skills through courses and learning opportunities
- translation arrangements for projects or volunteers who are not confident in Welsh, including simultaneous/whisper interpretation where necessary
- developing Welsh language workspaces, such as units and co-operatives, to foster a Welsh language working environment

In addition, we heard about the need to build linguistic resilience consistently within social enterprises (see '[LISTEN: Linguistic assertiveness for minoritised language speakers](#)'). While individuals, especially leaders, play an important role, we heard that the Welsh language needs to be rooted within the culture of the organisation itself. To achieve this practically, the suggestion was to include regular questions in project meetings about how the Welsh language is used and what steps are being taken to integrate it systematically (Royles, 2025).

5.13 From principles to practice: workplaces as language socialising spaces

In workplaces where Welsh is not the main everyday language, gradual pathways to use the language can be particularly effective. This may include, for example, encouraging Welsh learners to start with simple Welsh language phrases (such as greetings, thanks or short responses), before moving on to contributing more gradually according to their confidence and experience. This type of 'action-first' approach fits in with the behavioural sciences we have outlined elsewhere in this report, where confidence comes from small successful experiences, rather than from formal mastery before action.

In order to avoid treating the workplace as a purely theoretical space, we highlight practical examples of how the use of Welsh in the workplace can be normalised. This may include:

- teams or departments that operate by default through Welsh, even within more English-speaking organisations
- leadership that models the use of the Welsh language rather than relying solely on formal policies
- using technology (internal systems, collaboration tools, artificial intelligence) to reduce the burden on individuals
- recognising and supporting staff's Welsh language skills as part of professional development, not just as a statutory requirement

In medium or lower density areas, such actions can turn the workplace into an important adult language socialisation space, bridging the gap between education and community use.

6 Conclusion

This report has addressed the situation of the Welsh language in medium or lower speaker density areas, starting from the social reality of communities that are diverse in terms of geography, class, identity, and languages. It does not offer simple solutions or claim that complex trends can be reversed through individual interventions alone. Rather, it lays an analytical foundation for policy development that is realistic, coherent, and responsive to these contexts.

The Commission is clear about the central role of the education system in increasing the number of Welsh speakers and increasing the use of the language. The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 will be a major contribution to this. However, there is a need for social, cultural, and work spaces where the language can be used automatically after school age. The interventions in this report should therefore be seen not as an alternative to the education system, but as the next crucial step to ensure continuity of use.

In chapter 1 ('Introduction to the report'), the context of our work was set by locating the Welsh language within the social and linguistic territory of the whole of Wales. Welsh is a language that belongs to everyone in all parts of Wales—and beyond—but in the areas that the report addresses, Welsh is very often not the default social language. One of the key contributions of the report is to move the discussion from ideas linking community use of the Welsh language to geographical density alone, and towards a wider understanding of the language as a national resource belonging to bilingual and multilingual communities across Wales.

In chapter 2 ('The social context of the Welsh language in medium or lower density areas'), the wider social context that shapes the use of the Welsh language in such areas is examined. The role of social class, deprivation, cultural capital, and access to local opportunities is highlighted, showing that the use of the Welsh language (or lack thereof) does not result solely from a lack of will or personal confidence. This chapter emphasises that a language policy that ignores these structural factors is likely to have a limited impact, no matter how robust its intention. The Welsh language does not exist in a vacuum, but is part of a wider linguistic, cultural, and social ecosystem that includes diverse languages, identities, and experiences. The aim of this report is therefore to firmly embed the Welsh language within the multilingual fabric of Welsh communities, in a way that promotes social cohesion, linguistic respect and belonging. The Commission is clear that strengthening the Welsh language in bilingual and multilingual communities is not about creating parallel systems. Rather, it requires spaces where children, families, and communities can form relationships across languages and backgrounds.

In this context, the Welsh language should be seen as a social resource that contributes to cohesion. Only by embedding the Welsh language in the wider community experience can it be ensured that it reaches all communities.

Chapter 3 ('Welsh language transmission and socialisation') presents one of the main conceptual shifts of the report by re-framing the transmission of the Welsh language as a wider socialisation process. Drawing on statistical evidence, behavioural research and international experience, the chapter argues that focusing solely on the family is insufficient in medium or lower density areas. In particular, the use of COM-B (Capability/Opportunities/Motivation = Behaviour) and FEAST (Fun, Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely) offers a different way of thinking about confidence: not as a prerequisite for language behaviour, but as something that develops through an 'action-first' approach. There are clear policy implications for this, suggesting that small, practical, and supportive interventions—which make the use of the Welsh language easy, timely, enjoyable, social, and fun—are likely to be more effective than methods that seek to persuade or raise awareness alone.

In chapter 4 ('Welsh language socialisation beyond school: culture, leisure, and young people') the idea of Welsh language socialisation is taken into the culture, leisure and the lives of young people. Sport, music, youth activities, and digital spaces are discussed as settings where Welsh can be normalised as a social language, especially in contexts where English or other languages dominate everyday life. This chapter does not imply that these areas are solutions in themselves, but it does demonstrate their importance as part of a broader socialisation ecosystem.

Chapter 5 ('Workplaces and the Welsh Language') focuses on workplaces and offers a discussion that complements the work already being done on formal compliance with regulations and/or language legislation in relation to the workplace. Here, the report highlights the role of organisational culture, leadership, and workforce planning methodologies in creating conditions in which the use of Welsh in the workplace is easy. Again, the emphasis is on enabling behaviour, rather than expecting individuals to overcome systemic barriers under their own steam.

Across the whole report, one message emerges: increasing the use of Welsh in medium and lower density areas requires a change in policy thinking. That means moving from persuasion to enabling, from a focus on individuals to a broader understanding of social ecosystems, and from expecting confidence as a starting point towards creating the conditions in which confidence can grow through action, in line with the principles of COM-B and FEAST.

Our recommendations, together with those of the Commission's previous work aim to ensure that the Welsh language is a living, relevant and integrated part of the life of the whole of Wales in all its forms. Put into practice, with the appropriate resources and the will to succeed, together we can ensure that Cymraeg reaches every community.

7 List of recommendations

- 1) Welsh is a national language that belongs to everyone in Wales as well as to its speakers in the rest of the world. To strengthen Welsh as a living national language, it needs to be strengthened as a community language. Welsh-speaking communities across Wales should be empowered, and the sustainability of the Welsh language strengthened in Welsh-speaking communities, and public policy should fully reflect these aims.
- 2) As the Welsh language belongs to us all, from all backgrounds, the Welsh language should reach every community. No one should be unable to access opportunities to use the Welsh language on the basis of social deprivation. This means ensuring appropriate provision, resources, and circumstances for the language to be part of everyday life for children, people, and communities. Too often, individuals have to make an effort to access the Welsh language—in their communities, in their social and digital spaces, their workplaces and in their practical and leisure activities. This is the change that needs to be implemented in areas of linguistic significance of medium and lower density.
- 3) The current budget for revitalising the use of the Welsh language at a community level is based on historical precedent, and it does not meet the long-term policy goal of creating a bilingual Wales. The Welsh Government should substantially increase the budget allocated to this work so that it is commensurate to the task at hand.
- 4) Community language planning should be strengthened in order to extend and expand the use of Welsh. Local authorities in medium and lower density areas should strengthen their own language planning capabilities, alongside that of sector stakeholders and in partnership with the Welsh Government, to further develop and deliver Welsh Language Promotion Strategies.
- 5) In establishing a task and finish group to examine issues of diversity and inclusion in relation to the Welsh language, the Welsh Government should expand its remit to include areas of medium and lower density.
- 6) The Welsh Government, other appropriate organisations and community development umbrella organisations should prepare guidance for the community development sector to incorporate language socialisation within their work in medium or lower density areas.
- 7) In this report, we refer to the contribution that the behavioural sciences can bring to this field. The Welsh Government should integrate behaviour change models that we outline (such as COM-B and FEAST) across language policy and planning.
- 8) The Welsh Government should undertake, and commission, detailed local social research to understand the composition, dynamic and patterns of language use in communities. This should also include establishing a longitudinal language use survey for the Welsh language.

- 9) The Welsh Government should commission a review of how Local Authorities and other relevant organisations embed (and how they could embed) the Welsh language (in a context-appropriate manner and in addition to statutory duties) as part of welfare, social or community services in medium or lower density areas, in a way that adds value to those services and to the user experience.
- 10) The Welsh Government should establish a fund to support the use of the Welsh language in community spaces, such as libraries, community hubs, and other meeting places. Through Welsh language promotion strategies, and through local partnerships between key stakeholders, there should in medium and lower density areas be at least one social space, other than schools, within easy reach where the Welsh language can be used by the community.
- 11) The Welsh Government should ensure that its strategic interventions in socialising newcomers to Wales from outside the United Kingdom allow for sufficient opportunities to access the Welsh language and to acquire skills in the language. This should include opportunities for newcomers from outside the UK to learn Welsh (WSOL or Welsh for Speakers of Other Languages) alongside the existing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh (and the national Institute for Learning Welsh (yr Athrofa) which is due to be established in 2027) should establish programmes aimed at newcomers to the UK, which could include complementing the current 'Siarad' scheme. They should also consider how these schemes could link to the Cultural Ambassadors Scheme.

- 12) The Welsh Government should disseminate the findings of the behavioural scientific research it is conducting into the intergenerational transmission of Welsh to inform policy and public debate. It should also implement the findings of the research as part of its National Policy for Welsh Language Transmission and Use in Families This should be done via all relevant grant recipients and partner organisations.
- 13) The Welsh Government should further analyse best practice of Basque language transmission and adopt, where appropriate, similar, context-specific approaches for the Welsh language.
- 14) Local authorities and the Welsh Government should support schools and their parent and carer communities to play a central role in language socialisation beyond formal schooling. The Community Focused Schools and Sustainable Communities for Learning programmes should be central to this work. This should include:
 - a. capital and revenue funding being earmarked for language socialisation
 - b. family engagement officers (often based in schools and/or community hubs) being trained in Welsh language socialisation relevant to their communities

- c. parent and carer communities being supported as ‘in-situ language planners’ by providing them with practical tools, such as digital resources, and peer networks to socialise their children in Welsh (whether they themselves speak Welsh or not).
- 15) The Welsh Government should ensure that the Welsh language is embedded in its programmes to provide childcare or pre-school education. The Welsh Government should work with key stakeholders in the sector to ensure that children and families across Wales have fair access to the Welsh language in their communities in early years provision.
- 16) The Welsh Government should establish a fund to strengthen the presence of the Welsh language in digital spaces and in social media content to reflect the contemporary social use of Welsh. This should include focus on (a) enhancing the production and visibility of Welsh language content on social media, (b) developing digital production skills in Welsh among young people and other target groups (c) supporting the contribution of social media influencers to the Welsh language digital ecosystem.
- 17) The Welsh Government should intensify its strategic discussions with relevant technology companies and other stakeholders with the aim of making Welsh as easy to use as possible for the end user.
- 18) Culture—and music in particular—are important social activities in which the Welsh language can be enjoyed by wide audiences. The Welsh Government should ensure that its strategies and programmes to support culture recognise the powerful role that these sectors have in the social use of the language amongst young people in particular. This includes making new provision where needed for appropriate infrastructure (such as accessible venues, talent development programmes, school engagement etc) so that more communities can access culture in the Welsh language.
- 19) The Welsh Government should support Sport Wales, in partnership with relevant organisations, to develop a strategy to enhance the use of the Welsh language across all sports and to further the contribution of sports to language socialisation across Wales.
- 20) The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 is an important strategic milestone and a vital opportunity to transform access to the Welsh language. The Commission heard of unreasonable travel times to reach Welsh-medium education and associated Welsh-language extra-curricular activities. Therefore, the Welsh Government should require local authorities to:
- a. map travel times to Welsh-language extra-curricular activities, including those provided on site at schools;
 - b. consider the impact of travel time on participation in Welsh-medium extra-curricular activities, located in, or organised by schools;
 - c. set a reasonable travel time for Welsh-medium education and the extra-curricular activities.

- 21) Where current travel times are unreasonable, the Welsh Government should require local authorities to ensure that Welsh-language education and the associated extra-curricular activities are available within reasonable travel time.
- 22) The Welsh Government should significantly expand the 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' programme so that it reaches the majority of Welsh leaders whether senior or middle tier managers, from the public, private and third sector. It should also set a definite timetable and clear targets for this.
- 23) The Welsh Government and relevant partners should use a 'user journey' approach to ensure that all support for increasing the use of Welsh within the workplace in medium or lower density areas is available as a single experience, regardless of who the provider is. This work should focus on cultural change, organisational development, workforce planning, behaviour change and language technology.
- 24) The Welsh Government should undertake a review of the functions of Business Wales in order to make the most of its relationship and influence on the private sector to place the Welsh language at the core of its work in developing Welsh businesses.
- 25) The Welsh Government should place the Welsh language at the core of the work programme and role of the Growth Partnerships and Joint Corporate Committees.
- 26) The Welsh Government should review its procurement processes to ensure that the services and goods they provide, where relevant, drive forward the Cymraeg 2050 agenda.
- 27) In its response to the Commission's report on planning, the Welsh Government should consider how local development plans in medium or lower density areas might be adapted to give due consideration to ensuring opportunities and spaces for the use of the Welsh language.
- 28) In implementing the Commission's report on planning, the Welsh Government and local authorities should take steps by which the visual presence of Welsh on the high street can be significantly increased.
- 29) The Welsh Government should undertake a review to see to what extent its grant award processes are being used to improve the social use of the Welsh language in an appropriate manner and should act on the findings of that review.
- 30) The Welsh Government should seek input from the Welsh Youth Parliament, the Future Generations Leadership Academy and other relevant youth fora as it reviews and/or refreshes Cymraeg 2050. The Welsh Government should also establish a continuing dialogue with both to ensure that the views of younger people are reflected within language planning and policy delivery in Wales.

31) The behavioural sciences should be used to frame the recommendations of all the reports of the Commission, as well as a review and/or refresh of Cymraeg 2050.

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