



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

7 April 2026

Dear ,

ATISN 26787– British Sign Language and First Aid in the Curriculum for Wales

Information requested

Thank you for your request which was received in the Curriculum for Wales mailbox on 6 March 2026.

You asked for confirmation as to whether British Sign Language and First Aid are statutory elements of the Curriculum for Wales, and if not, to outline the evidence base that informed decisions to not include them as statutory elements of the curriculum.

Our response

The information you requested is enclosed.

British Sign Language (BSL)

Your response does not confirm whether any Equality Impact Assessment or internal analysis was undertaken before deciding not to make BSL statutory.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide:

- **Any Equality Impact Assessments, Children’s Rights Impact Assessments, or internal analyses relating to the decision not to make BSL a statutory language.**
- **If no such assessments exist, please confirm this explicitly and explain why no equality analysis was undertaken, given the clear implications for Deaf learners.**

Your letter refers to developing an understanding of how many practitioners can sign BSL, but this does not address the circular problem: BSL is not statutory because the workforce is insufficient, and the workforce remains insufficient because BSL is not statutory.

Please provide:

- **The evidence base used to conclude that statutory status is not currently feasible.**
- **Any modelling or projections on workforce development timelines.**
- **How the Government intends to ensure national consistency without statutory entitlement.**

This is the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 impact assessment:
[the-curriculum-and-assessment-bill-impact-assessment.pdf](#)

While this does not reference British Sign Language (BSL) specifically, it notes the decision to provide schools greater autonomy in a range of subjects and more parity between languages:

- *The Bill is intended to provide legislative support for the Curriculum for Wales framework. It ensures that every school will have the opportunity to design and implement their own curriculum within a national approach that ensures a level of consistency.*
- *By legislating for a framework curriculum that will be designed and implemented locally by schools and settings means that it will be better attuned to the needs of children and better meet the Article 29 rights than the current National Curriculum.*
- *A single continuum for learning languages, including Welsh, is reflected in the Languages, Literacy and Communication AoLE.*

Our consultation on the draft Curriculum for Wales guidance for BSL ended March 2021, and we published the guidance in September 2021, while the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

Your letter refers to developing an understanding of how many practitioners can sign BSL, but this does not address the circular problem: BSL is not statutory because the workforce is insufficient, and the workforce remains insufficient because BSL is not statutory.

Please provide:

- **The evidence base used to conclude that statutory status is not currently feasible.**

- **Any modelling or projections on workforce development timelines.**
- **How the Government intends to ensure national consistency without statutory entitlement.**

BSL was not referenced in the Successful Futures (2015) report that followed the review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. Nevertheless, during the development of Curriculum for Wales, the decision was made to include BSL specifically in statutory guidance, unlike specific international languages.

With regard to legislation, Successful Futures made the following recommendations:

63. The principle of a national curriculum for Wales should be reaffirmed, and legislation should define a broad set of duties rather than detailed prescription of content.

64. Where necessary, specific requirements in relation to curriculum and assessment should be described in regulation and guidance, and subject to regular review.

In line with these recommendations, statutory guidance was published for BSL learning and teaching.

The Curriculum for Wales enables all schools to choose to teach languages that are most appropriate to their school, learners and resources. Schools will need to have due regard to the proposed statutory guidance for the Language Literacy and Communication Area which will include progression in International Languages for all learners from primary school until the end of Year 9.

As with any other language, the choice of BSL will depend on individual schools' circumstances. As noted previously, as with other innovative aspects of the curriculum, it will take time to develop capacity in the system and to develop provision in schools. The decision regarding how languages are offered rests with individual schools - the Welsh Government is unable to intervene in or influence such matters.

You note support for the BSL (Wales) Bill, but do not explain whether statutory curriculum entitlement is being considered.

Please confirm:

- **Whether the National BSL Strategy will include a review of statutory curriculum status.**
- **Whether statutory entitlement is being actively considered as part of that process.**

The British Sign Language (Wales) Bill, brought forward by Mark Isherwood (Member in Charge of the Bill) was passed by the Senedd on 11 March 2026. The Bill has not yet received Royal Assent.

The legislation establishes a new framework to promote and support the use of BSL in Wales. It places duties on Welsh Ministers to develop a National BSL Strategy, informed by a BSL adviser and an assisting panel, alongside BSL guidance. The guidance will set the direction for local BSL plans to be developed by the public bodies set out in the Bill.

It will be for a future incoming Government to develop and determine the content of the National BSL strategy.

Information in relation to the BSL (Wales) Bill [has been published on the Senedd website](#).

First Aid

Please provide:

- **The policy rationale for rejecting statutory First Aid education.**

The Curriculum for Wales Framework (Framework), determined nationally, includes both the curriculum requirements set out in legislation, and a range of supporting statutory guidance.

As set out in Successful Futures' legislation recommendations –

'63. The principle of a national curriculum for Wales should be reaffirmed, and legislation should define a broad set of duties rather than detailed prescription of content.

64. Where necessary, specific requirements in relation to curriculum and assessment should be described in regulation and guidance, and subject to regular review.'

The existing Curriculum Framework is as described in point 64 above and therefore First aid content to be considered is within the statutory guidance for the Health and well-being Area of Learning and Experience, which schools must have regard to. This ensures that First aid forms part of the recommended learning within the Health and Well-being Area, while still empowering schools to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners and local context. This reflects the policy rationale set out in Successful Futures of reducing national prescription and enabling schools to make professional, informed choices about how best to deliver learning within the statutory framework.

During the course of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act through the Senedd; and recognising the responses received to the 'Curriculum Consultation - summary of response: Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum Proposals for a new legislative framework – 2019', (link below) there was agreement that the statutory guidance would read as follows; '*Schools should also consider what strategies their learners will need to be able to safely intervene to support others who may be at risk, and this should include lifesaving skills and first aid*'. This was included in the Framework for the Area of learning and experience for Health and well-being [here](#).

- **Any cost, capacity, or curriculum modelling that informed this decision.**

Because the policy intent was not to mandate or prescribe a new subject or qualification requirement (but to embed First aid within the Health and Well-being Area), no separate, standalone national cost model for making first aid a distinct statutory subject was commissioned. Delivery is met through existing school planning, professional learning routes and partnership offers, rather than through a centrally specified programme that would require funding lines.

No specific modelling was undertaken. The framework's design places responsibility on schools to organise learning time within the statutory guidance expectations so that delivery is proportionate to need and context, rather than imposing a fixed national time allocation that would displace other priorities.

“The Welsh Government has not undertaken assessments relating to the impact of non-statutory provision on learner safety or public health outcomes.”

Given this admission, please provide:

- **Any internal discussions, minutes, or advice that led to the decision not to conduct such assessments.**

The Welsh Government undertook an assessment on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill: Impact Assessments
[The Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill: impact assessments | GOV.WALES](#)

Whilst not directly referencing First Aid, references are made to developing and maintaining learners' physical health and well-being and supporting their mental health and emotional well-being through their experiences.

- **Any evidence used to justify the assumption that non statutory provision is adequate**

If no documents exist, please confirm this explicitly under FOI.

First aid is specified as an expectation for schools within the statutory guidance for Health and well-being; - the Curriculum for Wales framework empowers schools to include content such as First aid within a broad Health and Well-being Area, aimed at developing “healthy, confident individuals.”

Your reply refers to working with “a range of key stakeholders” but does not identify them.

Under FOI, please provide:

- **A list of all organisations consulted specifically on whether First Aid should be statutory.**

The British Heart Foundation, The Red Cross, and St John Ambulance were stakeholders consulted during the development of the new curriculum for Health and well-being.

In addition, there was opportunity for comment as part of the Bill process; and in response to the ‘Welsh Government Consultation - Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum - Proposals for a new legislative framework’.

- **Any written advice, recommendations, or consultation responses received.**

Links to consultation and responses:

Welsh Government Consultation Document
Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum
Proposals for a new legislative framework
2019
[consultation-document-transformational-curriculum-v2.pdf](#)

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response
Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum
Proposals for a new legislative framework
2019
[summary-of-responses-our-national-mission-a-transformational-curriculum_1.pdf](#)

- **Any internal summaries or analyses of this advice.**

No further additional internal summaries or analyses were conducted.

Your letter states that the Curriculum for Wales Framework will be “kept under review” but does not confirm whether First Aid will be reconsidered.

Please confirm:

- **Whether First Aid statutory status is scheduled for review.**

As part of an ongoing cycle of review and refinement, annual updates are made to the curriculum Framework. The Welsh Government considers how well curriculum and assessment requirements and expectations are articulated in the Curriculum for Wales Framework and how best to support a shared understanding across the education system.

- **The timetable, process, and criteria for that review.**

At present, there is no timetable process or criteria for reviewing First Aid. Future review of the curriculum will be considered in due course.

- **Whether external evidence (e.g., survival outcomes, international comparisons) will be considered.**

The process and criteria for a potential review will be considered when any review goes ahead.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government’s handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government’s Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

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Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner.
The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely