

National Assembly for Wales
Enterprise and Learning Committee

Bilingual training and skills in the workplace
and business interface with the public

February 2011



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Enterprise and Learning Committee

The Enterprise and Learning Committee is appointed by the National Assembly for Wales to consider and report on issues within the areas of economic development, transport, and education, lifelong learning and skills. In particular, the Committee may examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Welsh Government and associated public bodies.

Powers

The Committee was established following the National Assembly Elections in May 2007 as one of the National Assembly's scrutiny committees. Its powers are set out in the National Assembly for Wales's Standing Orders, particularly Standing Order 12. These are available at <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-assembly-guidance.htm>

Rapporteur Group membership

<i>Committee Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Constituency or Region</i>
Gareth Jones (Chair)	Plaid Cymru	Aberconwy
Jeff Cuthbert	Labour	Caerphilly
David Melding	Welsh Conservative Party	South Wales Central
Jenny Randerson	Welsh Liberal Democrats	Cardiff Central

Committee membership

<i>Committee Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Constituency or Region</i>
Gareth Jones (Chair)	Plaid Cymru	Aberconwy
Christine Chapman	Labour	Cynon Valley
Jeff Cuthbert	Labour	Caerphilly
Andrew Davies	Labour	Swansea West
Paul Davies	Welsh Conservative Party	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Brian Gibbons	Labour	Aberavon
Darren Millar (from 7 December 2010)	Conservatives	Clwyd West
Jenny Randerson	Welsh Liberal Democrats	Cardiff Central

The following Member was also a member of the Committee during this inquiry:

David Melding (until 7 December 2010)	Welsh Conservative Party	South Wales Central
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The Committee's Recommendations

The Committee's recommendations to the Welsh Government are listed below, in the order that they appear in this Report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions:

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the specific factors that affect the confidence of non-fluent Welsh speaking consumers to use Welsh when engaging with public and private sector organisations. (Page 16)

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the views of consumers in Wales should be represented on the Welsh Language Commissioner's advisory panel. (Page 17)

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the Welsh Government work closely with the Welsh Language Board to evaluate the outcome of its Research Plan. With the evidence gathered from this research, we recommend that the Welsh Government issue guidance on the commercial benefits of utilising staff with Welsh speaking skills to large multi-national organisations and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Wales. (Page 18)

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to provide adequate financial support through the Apprenticeships and SkillBuild schemes to fund programmes such as CADCentre's Welsh at Work Scheme. We also recommend that the Welsh Government be pro-active in sharing best practice gained by the Welsh in Work Scheme with other vocational training providers. (Page 19)

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Welsh Government commission further research and collate data on the usage of and attitude towards the Welsh language by young people going into employment in order to inform policy development. (Page 19)

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners to ensure that there is a coherent pathway through to training and employment for pupils from schools who wish to use their Welsh language skills in the workplace. (Page 20)

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government ensure that there is effective and strategic communication between education, training providers and workplaces to ensure that all stages of the skills development process provide individuals with continuity and that the needs of the workplace are met. (Page 21)

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the Welsh Government work closely with the Welsh Language Board and then the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure that all Sector Skills Councils adhere to the good practice guidance in developing Welsh language standards and that the implementation and outcomes of these standards is robustly monitored and regularly evaluated. (Page 22)

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the benefits that financial institutions have found in providing a bilingual service to their customers, and explore ways in which this good practice can be promoted to other customer service organisations in the private sector. (Page 23)

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Commissioner work closely with businesses in Wales to ensure that consumer demands for Welsh language services, including on-line and telephone services, are identified and robustly evaluated, and whether there are any barriers to people utilising those services. (Page 24)

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the Welsh Government collaborate with businesses and consumers to develop guidance on innovative approaches to promotion of the Welsh language in the workplace and in businesses and seek regular feedback from consumers on its effectiveness. (Page 24)

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the Welsh Government promote further the use of Welsh and its economic benefits throughout the implementation of the Economic Renewal Programme. (Page 25)

Recommendation 13. We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluate the success of the ‘Working Welsh’ badges and commission research into the feasibility of introducing a ‘have-a-go’ logo at the premises of customer facing businesses, which could be used alongside the Welsh Language Board’s ‘Working Welsh’ scheme logo to encourage consumers who lack confidence to use the language. (Page 25)

Recommendation 14. We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluate the outcome of the ‘Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces’ guidance and share examples of good practice to develop the Welsh language further in those workplaces and with other organisations. (Page 26)

Recommendation 15. We recommend that the Welsh Government should ensure that the evidence gathered by the Welsh Language Board to develop a network of businesses and public sector bodies is used to share good practice in developing Welsh language provision in the workplace. We also recommend that the operation of this network should be regularly monitored and evaluated. (Page 26)

Recommendation 16. We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the use of bilingual signs and literature in workplaces and businesses including collating accurate data on the use of Welsh signs and literature and informing the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Commissioner of trends and examples of good practice. (Page 28)

Recommendation 17. We recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners to ensure that regulations in the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 are clearly enforced so that a minimum of courses available in the medium of Welsh is readily available. (Page 29)

Recommendation 18. We recommend that the Welsh Government monitor and assess guidance issued to Local Education Authorities to develop Welsh Education Plans for adults. (Page 29)

Recommendation 19. We recommend that the Welsh Government issue directives to local education authorities to ensure that they provide the Welsh Language Board and then the Welsh Language Commissioner with the necessary data, in particular birth data, to measure demand for Welsh language education services. (Page 29)

Recommendation 20. We recommend that the Welsh Government ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of our report will be reflected in the implementation of the Welsh language strategy ‘A living Language: A language for living’.

(Page 30)

1. Background to the inquiry

Purpose of the inquiry

1. At our meeting on 15 January 2009, the Enterprise and Learning Committee elected a cross party Rapporteur Group to consider different aspects of bilingualism in Wales and report its findings. The membership of the group was: Jeff Cuthbert AM; Gareth Jones AM; David Melding AM; and Jenny Randerson AM.

2. The Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism ('the Group') discussed its priorities at its first informal meeting on 5 February 2009. It decided to focus on the following three strategic areas:

- the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language;
- bilingual training and skills in the workplace; and
- business interface with the public.

3. We published a report on the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language in September 2010. This second report concludes the inquiry by examining bilingual training and skills in the workplace and business interface with the public.

4. The Group held an informal meeting in September 2010 and undertook visits in December 2010. A list of the activities undertaken by the Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism is at Annex A.

5. The Group is very grateful to everyone who sent information about bilingual training and skills in the workplace and business interface with the public as well as the many people who made time to meet the Group in person - they are also listed at Annex A.

6. We have directed the recommendations of our report to the Welsh Government, but it will be for the Minister to decide whether they should be followed up by the Welsh Language Board or the Welsh Language Commissioner.

laith Pawb

7. The Group worked within the context of laith Pawb, the Welsh Government's National Action Plan for the Welsh Language,¹ which was published in 2003. The action plan identifies the following key targets, which are to be met by 2011:

- the percentage of people in Wales able to speak Welsh has increased by 5 percentage points from the figure which emerges from the census of 2001;
- the decline in the number of communities where Welsh is spoken by over 70 per cent of the population is arrested;
- the percentage of children receiving Welsh medium pre-school education has increased;
- the percentage of families where Welsh is the principal language of conversation/communication between adults and children at home has increased;
- more services, by public, private and voluntary organisations are able to be delivered through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure

8. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure,² which was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 7 December 2010 aims to modernise the existing legal framework largely governed by the Welsh Language Act 1993 regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. The Measure includes provision with regard to the official status of the Welsh language and it establishes the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner which will replace the Welsh Language Board established under the 1993 Act.

9. The Welsh Language Commissioner will have the principal aim when exercising his or her functions of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language. The Commissioner will have the power to investigate alleged interferences with individuals' freedom to use Welsh with one another in certain circumstances. The Commissioner will be supported by an Advisory Panel.

¹ Welsh Assembly Government – laith Pawb: A national action plan for bilingual Wales

² The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2010

10. The Welsh Language Commissioner's Advisory Panel will be appointed by Welsh Ministers. In appointing members to the Advisory Panel, the Welsh Ministers will have to comply with appointment regulations which may make provisions about the knowledge and experience which members of the Panel are required to have.

11. The proposed Measure makes provision with regard to the development of 'standards' of conduct relating to the Welsh language which will gradually replace existing Welsh language Schemes provided for by the 1993 Act. Although Welsh Ministers' general policy is not to impose duties on the private sector, the Measure would enable the Welsh Language Commissioner to impose these standards on certain private sector bodies, namely telecommunications, water, electricity and gas companies. As our report was being prepared, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2010 was awaiting royal approval.

The Welsh-medium Education Strategy

12. In April 2010, the Welsh Government published its Welsh-medium Education Strategy, which sets out the Government's national strategic direction for making improvements in the teaching and learning of Welsh. In the context of vocational training, some of the main strategic objectives include:

- to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in further education and work-based learning and training in partnership through area networks;
- to plan provision that enables linguistic progression from the statutory education phase into the post-16 and post-19 phases with course options that maintain and strengthen linguistic skills in Welsh;
- to develop further opportunities for post-16 learners to maintain and improve their language skills in Welsh, in order to provide linguistic progression.³

13. The strategy also contains specific strategic objectives linked to increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace. These include:

- to raise standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh to adults so as to increase the number of people able to contribute to their communities and workplaces in Welsh;

³ Welsh Government, *Welsh-medium Education Strategy*, April 2010, page 15

- to promote recognition of Welsh as a skill in the workplace, and to develop opportunities for learning Welsh in the workplace;
- to expect that careers education, advice and guidance recognises and promotes the benefits of Welsh-medium education and Welsh-language study and the opportunities to use Welsh in further study or training and in the workplace.

A living language: A language for living – A strategy for the Welsh language

14. During the course of our inquiry, the Welsh Government issued a consultation on ‘A living language: A language for living’⁴ which is a strategy to ensure that the Welsh language thrives in Wales.

15. The consultation document states that, as a result of the Welsh Language Measure, a range of services available to the public in Welsh...

“...will be achieved by creating standards which will impose duties on organisations to:

- provide services in Welsh.
- consider the effect of policy decisions on the Welsh language.
- promote the use of Welsh in the workplace.
- promote and facilitate the use of Welsh more widely.
- keep records of compliance with standards and of complaints.”⁵

16. The main elements of the strategy include the following objectives:

- an increase in the number of people who speak and use the language.
- an increase in the opportunities to use Welsh, allied with initiatives aimed at raising people’s confidence and fluency in the language.

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government – A living language: A language for living – Consultation document

⁵ Welsh Assembly Government – A living language: A language for living - Consultation document – Page 5

- an increase in people's awareness of the value of Welsh, both as part of our national heritage and as an important skill in modern life.
- directed initiatives throughout Wales to strengthen the Welsh language at community level.

17. The strategy also aims to focus on increasing the use of Welsh in the community, amongst children and young people, in the workplace and in services to the citizen. In doing so, it aims to strengthen the infrastructure that supports language use.

2. Challenges and Opportunities

Confidence to speak Welsh

18. As with its inquiry into the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language, the Group heard that there was a lack of confidence in Welsh speaking people to use Welsh in the workplace. This view was expressed by all of the witnesses who appeared before the Group.

19. The term "Welsh speaker" covers a wide-range of linguistic skills and needs, e.g. some individuals who are completely fluent and confident in speaking Welsh can lack confidence when it comes to drafting formal reports or correspondence in Welsh. The Welsh Language Board (the Board) believes that this lack of confidence can be derived from a real need to strengthen skills or a different need to practise and put into practice their hidden skills.⁶

20. The Welsh Language Board also highlighted the results of a representative survey which found that 82 per cent of people in Wales felt that the Welsh language is something to be proud of and 76 per cent agreed that bilingual adverts and marketing are important factors in making Welsh speakers feel more confident to use the language.

⁶ Welsh Language Board - written evidence - 29 September 2010 - page 11

The workforce

21. The Welsh Language Board stated that:

“Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the workplace is a key part of the efforts to promote and encourage the Welsh language in general.”⁷

They also stated that:

“Business culture in the UK is monolingual, and few businesses have experience in providing services in more than one language. This is in contrast to standard international practice, where most countries have more than one language in common use.”⁸

22. The Language Use Survey, which was conducted by the Welsh Language Board between 2004 and 2006, found that 58 per cent of those who could speak Welsh considered themselves to be fluent in the language. Of those fluent Welsh speakers, 87 per cent said that they used the language daily. The survey found that when used in a workplace where the majority of people speak Welsh, 73 per cent of employees speak Welsh to fellow Welsh speakers. Only 25 per cent of fluent Welsh speakers write in Welsh regularly. The Group heard that there was a strong positive association between frequency of speaking Welsh and the frequency of writing in Welsh.⁹

23. The Group heard that attitudes and perceptions played a big role in the “confidence factor” to ensure greater use of the language in the workforce. Evidence from the Welsh Language Board stated that in order to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace careful consideration needs to be given to:

“Ensure clear and strategic methods of defining or describing the types of skills needed for the workplace [...]

“Ensure a range of training available to meet these needs [...]

“Ensure effective and strategic communication between education, training providers and workplaces, to ensure that all stages of the skills development process provides the

⁷ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 2

⁸ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 8

⁹ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 13

individual with continuity and meets the needs of the workplace [...]

“The Welsh-medium Education Strategy, which makes specific reference to the importance of developing language skills for the workplace [...]

“Institutional attitudes towards the Welsh language [...]

“Attitudes of colleagues (and external customers) towards the use of the language: the workers who object to its use, attitudes of workers on issues such as linguistic accuracy.”

24. The Group heard that, although there was clearly room for improvement, there was some good practice being undertaken by businesses in Wales. The Group visited the NatWest Headquarters in Cardiff, which has implemented a policy in branches throughout Wales of encouraging the members of staff who speak little Welsh to use the language with customers more regularly. Since the implementation of this policy, they have found that many Welsh speaking customers appreciate staff who make an effort to converse in Welsh, whatever their level of attainment.

25. NatWest also highlighted the importance of the language to building brand loyalty with its customers. The Group heard that in recent years, the bank’s customer service scores in Wales were higher than anywhere else in the UK. It believes that its Welsh Language policy was a key element of the quality customer service ethos surrounding this achievement. This has led to NatWest creating a media relations role specifically for Wales, which is responsible for profiling all aspects of the bank’s activities in Wales adopting a fully bilingual approach.

The consumer

26. Written evidence provided by Consumer Focus Wales¹⁰ highlighted the findings of its survey ‘Gwasaniaithau: Consumers and the Welsh Language’, which questioned 759 Welsh speakers across Wales, varying in fluency, on attitudes to and use of Welsh language services in the public and private sectors.

¹⁰ Consumer Focus Wales – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 2

27. Key findings from the survey found that confidence to speak Welsh to public and private sector organisations was a major barrier for consumers who speak little Welsh. Written evidence provided by Consumer Focus Wales stated that:

“...understanding of confidence is vital to inform the future service development. The environment in which services are delivered doesn’t seem to inspire confidence amongst users, especially those who don’t speak Welsh.

“It’s not just about delivering the right services, it’s about helping businesses and organisations create a supportive culture for non fluent Welsh speakers. This step cannot be taken without greater understanding of what confidence means to the people who lack it.”¹¹

28. As part of its evidence gathering, the Group visited CADCentre UK, which is an approved government training provider in several industrial sectors including ICT, AutoCAD (Computer Aided Design), Business and Administration, Customer Services, and Engineering and Manufacturing. Written evidence provided by CADCentre UK stated that:

“Consumers are unaware of the ability of a company to respond to their queries in Welsh and therefore take the easiest and quickest option which is to communicate in English. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of a separate Welsh language telephone number or point of communication.”¹²

29. From the evidence that the Group received, it was clear that consumers expect a quality face to face service irrespective of what language they speak. Businesses have a role to play in addressing issues for non-fluent Welsh speakers if they intend to support and encourage consumers to become more confident to use the language.

We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the specific factors that affect the confidence of non- fluent Welsh speaking consumers to use Welsh when engaging with public and private sector organisations.

¹¹ Consumer Focus Wales – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 4

¹² CADCentre UK – written evidence – 1 December 2010 - page 7

We recommend that the views of consumers in Wales should be represented on the Welsh Language Commissioner’s advisory panel.

Training and continuous professional development

The use of Welsh in the workplace

30. The Group heard evidence that many employers had no recognised approach to assessing and developing Welsh language skills as part of recruitment or the continuous professional development of their staff. Research conducted in 2005 for Future Skills Wales surveyed over 2000 employers in seven business sectors and found that:

“Only 2 per cent of businesses with a need for Welsh language skills have a formal method of identifying the Welsh language skills and training needs of their existing staff.

“Welsh businesses seem to view the ability to speak, read or write Welsh not to be a skill as such, but more of a naturally occurring attribute.”¹³

31. The Group heard that the Welsh Language Board has administered a ‘Bilingual Workplaces Scheme’ to give financial and practical support to public bodies for pilot projects to develop new and innovative approaches to develop Welsh in the workplace and in 2009/2010 supported applications from nine organisations.

32. Similar views were expressed by Consumer Focus Wales who stated that some organisations are unaware of the linguistic skills available in their workforce and that those skills are not utilised to their full potential.

33. The Group heard that there is a need for clear and co-ordinated strategies for collating and disseminating information on careers where Welsh language skills are required. This would involve marketing Welsh as a work-related skill to employers and to pupils in secondary education.

34. The Group heard that, in an attempt to understand more about the factors that influence Welsh in the workplace, the Welsh Language

¹³ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 10

Board¹⁴ is undertaking a Research Plan giving particular attention to language skills and how those skills are put into practice.

We recommend that the Welsh Government work closely with the Welsh Language Board to evaluate the outcome of its Research Plan. With the evidence gathered from this research, we recommend that the Welsh Government issue guidance on the commercial benefits of utilising staff with Welsh speaking skills to large multi-national organisations and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Wales.

Welsh language training

35. Written evidence provided by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre highlighted vocational Welsh language training as a considerable challenge for employers and employees. It recommends that there must be a “National co-ordinated multimedia campaign that emphasises competence in Welsh as a skill in order to raise the status of Welsh.”¹⁵

36. The NatWest language policy¹⁶ stated that:

“NatWest recognises its role in the training and development of staff and encourages them to exercise and improve their fluency in Welsh.”

37. During its visit to NatWest, the Group heard that many of its staff who were learning Welsh were doing so during their lunch breaks and after work.

38. During its visit to CADCentre UK, the Group met with employers and learners who are receiving learning and skills in the medium of Welsh through a variety of programmes.

39. The Group heard that CADCentre UK has implemented a ‘Welsh at Work’ Scheme which promotes recognition of Welsh as a skill in the workplace and aims to “develop and deliver high quality learning programmes through the medium of Welsh in the workplace.”¹⁷ Its written evidence stated that:

¹⁴ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – September 2010 - page 15

¹⁵ Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre – written evidence – page 4

¹⁶ NatWest language policy – page 7

¹⁷ CADCentre UK – Written evidence – 1 December 2010 - page 2

“The CADCentre’s approach is to deliver learning and skills programmes through the medium of Welsh. This is particularly important if the intention is to develop a bilingual workforce equipped with work skills, terminology and nomenclature in the medium of Welsh which is often absent from the learner’s work experience. This (absence) can lead to a lack of confidence and a tendency to switch to English in new situations as well as a general lack of literacy in Welsh.”¹⁸

40. The Group heard that the Scheme, which receives funding from Welsh Government Apprenticeships and SkillBuild schemes, “uses a work-based approach which delivers a purposeful improvement in Welsh language standards amongst the workforce. The new Welsh language terminology and linguistic skills are delivered as part of a skills based framework.”¹⁹

We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to provide adequate financial support through the Apprenticeships and SkillBuild schemes to fund programmes such as CADCentre’s Welsh at Work Scheme. We also recommend that the Welsh Government be pro-active in sharing best practice gained by the Welsh in Work Scheme with other vocational training providers.

41. During its visit to CADCentre UK, the Group heard from people learning Welsh in the workplace that amongst young people, perceptions of the language were not on a par with English. This view in particular was shared by the Welsh Language Board which has heard from young people in education that Welsh was not seen to be as “cool” as English. They stated that there was a need to ‘normalise’ the use of Welsh in predominantly English speaking areas and to have a positive and appealing portrayal of the language in the media.

We recommend that the Welsh Government commission further research and collate data on the usage of and attitude towards the Welsh language by young people going into employment in order to inform policy development.

¹⁸ CADCentre UK – written evidence – 1 December 2010 – page 4

¹⁹ CADCentre UK – written evidence – 1 December 2010 – page 4

The continuity of the Welsh language from education to employment

42. Although the Welsh Language Board's written evidence acknowledged that the Welsh-medium Education Strategy was a significant step forward, the Board²⁰ emphasised the need for further discussion and research into the concept of a language continuum which would encompass all educational phases.

43. Evidence from NatWest stated that continuity of learning the language after a pupil leaves school was a concern. Many who leave school with the ability to speak Welsh are often employed by firms that operate in the medium of English and they rarely get the opportunity to use their linguistic skills in the work environment. The lack of regular use can lead to diminishing linguistic skills.

44. Similar views were expressed by CADCentre UK who stated that:

“There is often a gap in the Welsh language experience as pupils leave Welsh speaking schools and areas to follow courses in Higher Education Institutions. This is then carried forward into the workplace because new skills learned in higher education are usually the ones used at work.”²¹

45. One of the key features of the evidence that the Group received relating to the development of linguistic skills in Welsh was the need for a planned transition from education to employment.

46. In its inquiry into the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language,²² the Group found that there were concerns regarding the current levels of continuity from one Key Stage in education to the next. The Group also heard that problems with language continuum also continue into employment.

We recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners to ensure that there is a coherent pathway through to training and employment for pupils from schools who wish to use their Welsh language skills in the workplace.

²⁰ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 - page 14

²¹ CADCentre UK – written evidence – 1 December 2010 - page 5

²² Enterprise and Learning Committee – The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language – September 2010

We recommend that the Welsh Government ensure that there is effective and strategic communication between education, training providers and workplaces to ensure that all stages of the skills development process provide individuals with continuity and that the needs of the workplace are met.

The role of Sector Skills Councils

47. The Welsh Language Board stated that it had worked closely with 17 of the 23 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to develop Welsh Language Schemes.²³ The schemes were produced using a template formulated by the Board, which indicates the commitment of the SSCs to investigate and respond to the needs of Welsh language skills within each sector and to advise learning providers to identify and explore the training needs of a bilingual Wales. This commitment is monitored by annual reports submitted to the Board by each SSC. The Group heard that the annual reports and discussions had raised a number of concerns with SSCs not fulfilling the requirements of these measures in their plans. Written evidence from the Welsh Language Board²⁴ stated that:

“On what is reported, it appears that there is no clarity among the Councils regarding 1) measuring the needs for Welsh language skills within the sector, 2) measurement of the need for vocational training through the medium of Welsh and 3) conduct any other research through the medium of Welsh...

“The Councils have acted independently to create a method to measure these needs but they have no common framework. Of course, recent research by Merfyn Morgan on behalf of DCELLS has produced good practice guidance in this area which will be of use to the Councils...

“The councils have been through the process of re-licensing lately which meant substantial consultation with employers. These measures have not therefore had priority.

“Achieving the other requirements of the statutory language schemes (i.e. the commitments relating to the administrative

²³ The proposed Welsh Language Measure makes provision with regard to the development of ‘standards’ of conduct relating to the Welsh language which will gradually replace existing Welsh language Schemes provided for by the 1993 Act.

²⁴ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 7

and visual elements) has been a challenge for councils who are led on a British level, where institutional awareness of the bilingual nature of Wales is low. These elements have therefore been a priority during the initial period. In addition, the councils have reported to us that the staffing resources and funding allocated to Wales is insufficient to enable them to fulfil requirements e.g. many councils have only one staff member to work all over Wales. It is noteworthy that it is those councils with a higher rate of staff in Wales that have the most activity in assessing skills.”

48. Having heard the evidence, the Group were concerned whether the outcomes of these plans were being rigorously identified and evaluated.

We recommend that the Welsh Government work closely with the Welsh Language Board and then the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure that all Sector Skills Councils adhere to the good practice guidance in developing Welsh language standards and that the implementation and outcomes of these standards is robustly monitored and regularly evaluated.

Terminology

49. During the visit to CADCentre UK, the Group heard that terminology in some professions has caused complications for some Welsh learners in the workplace, particularly in the medical and optical industries. However, it was also felt that terminology formed another part of the learning process and generally caused few problems for language attainment.

50. NatWest also shared this view and stated that the technical language used in branches was provided to Welsh learners by in-house contextualised training and was not seen as an area of concern.

The demand for bilingual services

51. The Group found that there was an increasing demand for Welsh language services in customer service industries, particularly in the financial industries. Evidence from NatWest stated that its bilingual call centre in Parc Menai, Bangor had experienced a recent increase in demand. Current figures show that during the last quarter of 2010,

approximately 9000 calls had been made in Welsh and 17,000 in English.

52. Research undertaken by Consumer Focus Wales showed that 37 per cent of those who responded to their 'Gwasaniaithau: Consumers and the Welsh Language' survey suggested that businesses could make improvements by increasing the number of Welsh speaking staff available. Its written evidence²⁵ stated that:

“For fluent Welsh speakers, it appears businesses and organisations are not meeting the demand for Welsh speaking staff.

“Within the private sector, banks, building societies and financial institutions are rated as the best providers of Welsh language services.”

We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the benefits that financial institutions have found in providing a bilingual service to their customers, and explore ways in which this good practice can be promoted to other customer service organisations in the private sector.

53. The issue of competition was raised by NatWest. It felt that the provision of Welsh language services by private sector companies should be market driven, rather than enshrined in legislation.

54. Although NatWest provides a Welsh language 'information' page on its web-site, the Group heard that there were no plans in place to develop a fully bilingual on-line banking service alongside the existing service for English speaking customers. The Group also heard that NatWest had no plans to undertake television and press advertising campaigns in the medium of Welsh. Both developments would depend on commercial and economic benefits.

55. The results of the 'Gwasaniaithau: Consumers and the Welsh Language' survey conducted by Consumer Focus Wales also showed that there was a lack of demand for on-line services in Welsh. Their written evidence stated that:

“It is likely that there will be consumers who prefer to use online services considering 69 per cent of people in Wales

²⁵ Consumer Focus Wales – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 3

personally access the internet, including 67 per cent of the fluent speakers surveyed and 76 per cent of non fluent Welsh speakers.

“Simply assuming this part of a service is not needed without probing further into the reasons why could be a missed opportunity for service improvement.”

We recommend that the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Commissioner work closely with businesses in Wales to ensure that consumer demands for Welsh language services, including on-line and telephone services, are identified and robustly evaluated, and whether there are any barriers to people utilising those services.

Promotion of Welsh language services

56. Written evidence provided by Consumer Focus Wales stated that:

“According to our research, 11 per cent of people feel that the private sector could improve its Welsh language service by promoting it more.”²⁶

57. It also stated that:

“Welsh learners face issues of confidence and fluent speakers find it difficult to find someone else to speak Welsh. Intrinsically linked to both of these issues is the need for businesses to have an effective promotion strategy that is built on an understanding of the person using any Welsh language services they offer and those who may use them in future.”

We recommend that the Welsh Government collaborate with businesses and consumers to develop guidance on innovative approaches to promotion of the Welsh language in the workplace and in businesses and seek regular feedback from consumers on its effectiveness.

58. Evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board stated that although the Welsh Government acknowledges the economic benefits of the Welsh language, there was very little reference to the promotion of the language in the Economic Renewal Programme.

²⁶ Consumer Focus Wales – written evidence – 29 September 2010 - page 4

We recommend that the Welsh Government promote further the use of Welsh and its economic benefits throughout the implementation of the Economic Renewal Programme.

59. Since 2006, the Welsh Language Board has supported specific projects and has collaborated with organisations to find effective ways of promoting the use of the language in workplaces. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board²⁷ stated that:

“The Welsh Language Board’s Working Welsh scheme helps to promote Welsh language services by using a small icon to denote services that are available in Welsh, and staff who are able to speak Welsh. The Board distributes about 10,000 badges per annum to individuals, schools and employers, and also uses an annual promotion tour to raise awareness of the scheme.”

60. In interviews conducted by Consumer Focus Wales following the collation of data for its ‘Gwasaniaithau: Consumers and the Welsh Language’ survey, it discovered from some respondents that the use of the Welsh Language Board’s ‘Working Welsh’ bilingual badge was scarce.²⁸ In some organisations, it found that hearing the language being spoken gives consumers and staff the impetus to initiate contact in Welsh rather than English. Consumer Focus Wales believes that guidance on innovative approaches to promotion needs to be developed in order to support organisations and businesses.

61. The Group heard anecdotal evidence that consumers who speak little Welsh often feel intimidated by the ‘Working Welsh’ badge as they are not confident in their linguistic abilities. The Group heard that ‘Welshness’ in a business could be implemented into the working environment. As well as staff wearing the ‘Working Welsh’ badges, businesses could also display a ‘Working Welsh’ sign encouraging consumers, visitors and staff to use the language no matter what their level of attainment.

We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluate the success of the ‘Working Welsh’ badges and commission research into the feasibility of introducing a ‘have-a-go’ logo at the premises of customer facing businesses, which could be used alongside the

²⁷ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 - page 12

²⁸ Consumer Focus Wales – written evidence – 29 September 2010 - page 5

Welsh Language Board’s ‘Working Welsh’ scheme logo to encourage consumers who lack confidence to use the language.

62. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board stated that:

“...the Board has been supporting specific projects and has collaborated with public bodies in order to find effective ways of increasing the use of the Welsh language in workplaces.”

63. The Board launched guidance ‘Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces’ in January 2009, which is based on perceptions and experiences of pilot projects for different methods of increasing use of the language such as internal meetings, a network of language champions, opportunities for informal chats, increasing written Welsh, and Welsh forms and templates.

64. Written evidence provided by CADCentre UK stated that:

“Work-based documentation, the visual environment and IT based resources are mostly in English which makes working entirely through the medium of Welsh an impossibility and there is a tendency therefore to deal with these matters in English as the easiest and quickest option.”²⁹

65. The Group heard that the Welsh Language Board’s ‘Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces’ provides advice to organisations on how to promote the internal use of Welsh and contains guidance on producing policy statements, objectives, language awareness and building on skills. The Group felt that this guidance and support could go some way to creating a bilingual internal culture in organisations for both the public and private sectors.

We recommend that the Welsh Government evaluate the outcome of the ‘Promoting and Facilitating Bilingual Workplaces’ guidance and share examples of good practice to develop the Welsh language further in those workplaces and with other organisations.

We recommend that the Welsh Government should ensure that the evidence gathered by the Welsh Language Board to develop a network of businesses and public sector bodies is used to share

²⁹ CADCentre UK – Written evidence – 1 December 2010 – page 5

good practice in developing Welsh language provision in the workplace. We also recommend that the operation of this network should be regularly monitored and evaluated.

Bilingual signage in the workplace and in businesses

66. The Welsh Language Board emphasised the importance of signage in the workplace/business. Written evidence provided by the Board stated that:

“From a language planning perspective, prominent bilingual signage is important for a number of reasons, including:

“Language profile – visible use of Welsh on signage raises the prestige and status of the language. This is particularly important where it is used by well-regarded businesses and is a part of respected brands. This has a legitimising effect, which contributes to ‘normalising’ the use of Welsh.

“Language use – using Welsh on signage invites and encourages people to use Welsh in their interaction with a business. As bilingual signage becomes more common, the absence of Welsh on signage can sometimes be taken to indicate that a business does not welcome the use of Welsh by staff and customers.”³⁰

67. The Group heard that bilingual signage is important for businesses, particularly those in financial institutions and retail as it gives them the opportunity to demonstrate that they understand the value of the language and its importance to Welsh culture.

68. The Group heard that as well as installing bilingual signage in external and internal public areas, NatWest also produces a range of financial literature in Welsh. Bilingual brochures and posters present each language equally in terms of format, size, quality and prominence of display in branches throughout Wales.³¹

69. Written evidence provided by CADCentre UK stated that:

“There is a general lack of Welsh language use in the built environment, in the media and business. This establishes

³⁰ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 16

³¹ NatWest – Welsh Language Policy – page 4

English as the ‘normal’ means of communication and Welsh as a social language for use with acquaintances, friends and family.”³²

70. The Group heard that there had been a trend towards more visible and universal use of bilingual signs, although the Welsh Language Board was not aware of data which demonstrate an increase in bilingual signage in businesses.

We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the use of bilingual signs and literature in workplaces and businesses including collating accurate data on the use of Welsh signs and literature and informing the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Language Commissioner of trends and examples of good practice.

The role of local authorities

71. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board³³ stated that there are 206 qualifications and 60 National Occupational Standards (NOS) available through the medium of Welsh. After the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, secondary schools in general have had to expand their vocational provision and the Welsh medium / bilingual sector had to offer more courses through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Its written evidence stated that:

“... there is not a clear picture currently available of the extent to which local authorities and individual schools can meet the requirements of the [Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009] regulations to provide a minimum of courses in local curriculum through the medium of Welsh, nor information regarding the linguistic experiences of pupils following courses offered in collaboration in the Welsh-medium sector.”

72. Evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board stated that there was no lack of commitment within Local Education Authorities to assess demand. They stated that the lack of accurate data needed to be addressed, in particular the inconsistencies in collating birth data from all authorities. The Group heard that in order for local authorities

³² CADCentre UK – written evidence – 1 December 2010 – page 7

³³ Welsh Language Board – written evidence – 29 September 2010 – page 1

to meet demand for Welsh-medium education, access to accurate birth data was critical.

We recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners to ensure that regulations in the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 are clearly enforced so that a minimum of courses available in the medium of Welsh is readily available.

We recommend that the Welsh Government monitor and assess guidance issued to Local Education Authorities to develop Welsh Education Plans for adults.

We recommend that the Welsh Government issue directives to local education authorities to ensure that they provide the Welsh Language Board and then the Welsh Language Commissioner with the necessary data, in particular birth data, to measure demand for Welsh language education services.

3. Conclusions

73. The Group was encouraged by the good practice that has been undertaken by some organisations and was particularly impressed by the commitment and drive of the individuals that it met while compiling evidence. The Group heard that many Welsh language policies implemented by private sector organisations were produced by staff on a voluntary basis. Although this should be commended, the language cannot rely on good will alone to thrive and meet the objectives of Government strategies.

74. The Group was encouraged to hear that attitudes towards the Welsh language by public and private sector organisations have become much more positive in recent years, although evidence also showed that the language needs to be 'normalised' in predominantly English speaking areas so that it has an integrated presence in a public and work environment.

75. It is important that the Welsh Government continue to exploit positive attitudes towards the language to ensure that Welsh language Strategies are effective. The Welsh Government must also ensure that informal networks at community level are sustained and that opportunities to use the language, in education, leisure, social situations and in the workplace in particular, are enhanced as these

are essential to ensure that the people of Wales feel a sense of ownership of the language and to ensure that they can feel more confident to use their Welsh language skills regardless of their levels of attainment.

76. Throughout its inquiry, the Group noted that many different bodies have taken responsibility for promoting the Welsh language. The Welsh Government, the Welsh Language Board, further education and higher education institutions, Welsh for Adults Centres and the Sector Skills Councils all have objectives to promote the use of and the learning of Welsh. It became clear to the Group that although there was work being carried out, there was very little co-ordination and evaluation and that there needed to be more tangible outcomes. We expect this issue to be addressed by the Welsh Language Commissioner and his/her advisory group.

77. Throughout this inquiry, the witnesses that the Group met praised the guidance and support offered by the Welsh Language Board. In particular we noted how many organisations had found their relationship with the Welsh Language Board useful and effective. If the current good practice is to be continued and developed, it is imperative that the experience, expertise and commitment of the Welsh Language Board is utilised to full effect by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

We recommend that the Welsh Government ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of our report will be reflected in the implementation of the Welsh language strategy 'A living Language: A language for living'.

Annex A – witnesses, evidence and activities

The Committee is grateful to the following witnesses who provided oral and written evidence to the rapporteur group on bilingualism. Written evidence may be viewed in full by clicking on the attached links.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
29 September 2010	<p>Welsh Language Board</p> <p>Ifan Evans, Director, Private Sector and Business Keith Davies, Education Unit</p> <p>Consumer Focus Wales</p> <p>Rebecca Thomas, Senior Policy Advocate</p>
1 December 2010	<p>NatWest</p> <p>Mark Douglas, NatWest Regional Director, Wales Andrew Lewis, Senior Bank Manager Jane Hughes, Team Manager, NatWest Menai Retail Customer Service Centre Alaw Evans, Team Manager, NatWest Menai Retail Customer Service Centre Emma Hughes, Regional Communications Manager, RBS Communications</p> <p>CADCentre UK</p> <p>Ali Anwar, Managing Director, CADCentre UK Employers and Learners engaged with the vocational training provided by CADCentre UK</p>
Written evidence provided to the group	<p>Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre</p>