

# Welsh-medium Education Strategy: next steps

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## Audience

All bodies concerned with education and training in Wales; headteachers and governing bodies of maintained schools; regional consortia; local authorities; Welsh Language Commissioner; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; higher education institutions; further education institutions; CollegesWales; work-based learning providers; employer organisations and forums; Estyn; trade unions; Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol; Welsh for Adults providers; Sector Skills Councils/ standards-setting bodies; Careers Wales; National Institute of Adult Continuing Education; Welsh Local Government Association; Cymdeithas Ysgolion dros Addysg Gymraeg; Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg; Children and Young People's Partnerships; Mentrau Iaith Cymru; voluntary and community organisations.

## Overview

The Welsh-medium Education Strategy was published in April 2010. The initial five-year implementation period has now concluded and this document outlines the next steps for the development of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education for the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

## Further information

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## Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)

## Related documents

*Welsh-medium Education Strategy (2010); Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual report 2010–11 (2011); Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual report 2011–12 (2012); Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual report 2012–13 (2013); Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual report 2013–14 (2014); Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual report 2014–15 (2015); A living language: a language for living – Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17 (2012); A living language: a language for living – Moving forward (2014); Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (2016).*

These related documents were all published by the Welsh Government.

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## Ministerial foreword

We are embarking on a very exciting time for education in Wales, and the Welsh language is an integral part of the changes to be made to the education system. From the development of the new curriculum for Wales, the professional development of the education workforce through the New Deal to the reform of how we support our learners with additional learning needs; ensuring that the Welsh-medium sector is considered at the heart of these developments will be a key priority.

The publication of Welsh-medium Education Strategy in April 2010 was an important milestone in the history of the development of Welsh-medium education in Wales. For the first time, the Welsh Government set out its vision *to have an education and training system that responds in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education ...and enables an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh and able to use the language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.*

The Welsh Government recognised that the vision for the continuing growth of Welsh-medium education and training in all sectors and age ranges is a long-term agenda, and published a five-year implementation programme for the elements that could be worked on immediately. The key focus during the initial five-year period of implementation was to strengthen planning mechanisms across all phases, whilst also ensuring that the providers were supported through practitioner training, the commissioning of teaching and learning resources and grants to support specific interventions, for example, increasing the provision of late immersion opportunities and improving rates of linguistic continuity.

The important work of strengthening the infrastructure for developing Welsh-medium provision has moved forward, however, the final evaluation report of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy<sup>1</sup> included 21 recommendations for the Welsh Government and its stakeholders. These recommendations come under four headings:

- Planning provision
- Developing the workforce
- Central support
- Language skills and the use of Welsh.

The Welsh Government welcomes the report and will give full consideration to the recommendations as we continue to develop our policies.

It is also important to bear in mind that the Welsh-medium Education Strategy sits alongside the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, *A living language; a language for living*, 2012. There is a clear interdependence between the two as the education and skills sector has an important contribution to make to supporting the wider aim of seeing the Welsh language thrive and increasing Welsh language acquisition and use.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-medium-education-strategy/?lang=en>

The challenge now is to ensure that all new planning processes are embedded, implemented and realised and that all stakeholders play their part. We will also move forward to transform the way in which the Welsh language is taught in English-medium schools in order to ensure that all children and young people in Wales are given the best opportunity to become fluent in both English and Welsh. Work is beginning on designing a new curriculum for Wales which will include one continuum of learning for the Welsh language.

We are fully committed to the continued development of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education. This policy statement reaffirms our commitment and vision for the continuing growth of Welsh-medium education and outlines the key priorities for the next 12 months of implementation. During this period, the Welsh Government will work with its stakeholders to set-out the direction for Welsh-medium and Welsh language education as part of the development of the long-term Welsh language strategy.



**Carwyn Jones AM**  
**First Minister of Wales**



**Huw Lewis AM**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy statement is to set out our direction for the development of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the next 12 months while we develop our long-term Welsh language strategy.

This statement has been informed by a number of developments since we published the Strategy in 2010. These include the following:

- an externally-commissioned evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, published in March 2016
- the Children, Young People and Education Committee Report on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, published in December 2015
- the independent reports on various aspects of the education system in Wales, particularly Successful Futures and Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers, both published in 2015
- the publication of Estyn thematic reports, specifically on the Foundation Phase and linguistic provision and standards of Welsh
- reports of groups established to conduct policy reviews on the Welsh language, specifically the teaching of Welsh as a second language and Welsh for adults
- annual data on Welsh-medium provision through PLASC, LLWR and HESA
- the results of the 2011 Census on the Welsh language and the Welsh Language Use Survey 2013-15 published incrementally since December 2012.

In light of the above, we have identified three themes for our focus for the next 12 months:

1. the need to embed our processes for planning Welsh-medium provision
2. the need for improved workforce planning and support for practitioners
3. the need to ensure that our young people are confident to use their Welsh language skills in all walks of life.

## Planning provision

StrengtheningEstablishing strategic planning processes for all phases of education and training was an integral part of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, and continues to be a priority. In tracing the growth of Welsh-medium education, some local authorities and providers have shown a proactive approach to increasing opportunities for learners to access Welsh-medium education. Others, however, need to improve on strategic planning to facilitate Welsh-medium growth as part of coherent and coordinated policy development.

Since 2010, we have:

- placed local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans on a statutory basis
- supported the provision of Welsh-medium early years provision through Mudiad Meithrin
- facilitated the sharing of data for Welsh-medium provision in the early years to inform the planning of statutory provision
- required local authorities and further education colleges to submit annual plans to the Welsh Government indicating what post-16 provision will be made available through the medium of Welsh or bilingually
- ensured that all work-based learning providers prepare an action plan and set targets for the development of their Welsh-medium and bilingual provision and monitor their progress
- reviewed the delivery of Welsh for Adults provision and announced the way forward.

Over the next 12 months we will:

1. Develop a plan for increasing Welsh-medium provision in the childcare and early years sector.
2. Work with local authorities to strengthen the planning of Welsh-medium statutory provision, and the content and delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Where relevant, this will be in accordance with the recommendations of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy.
3. Publish best practice guidance on how local authorities should measure demand for Welsh-medium education.
4. Work with further education colleges to ensure that the work undertaken by the Bilingual Champions is embedded into their planning processes.
5. Continue to support and monitor work-based learning providers to ensure that learners have the opportunity and are encouraged to learn through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in the workplace.

6. Continue our discussions with the Coleg Cymaeg Cenedlaethol, Welsh Universities and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to secure sustainable Welsh-medium higher education provision, and consult on the vision for the Coleg in order to build on the initial success.
7. Work in partnership with the Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol to develop the Welsh for Adults field and implement the recommendations of the Welsh for Adults review group.
8. Review the data sources available and set revised targets for Welsh-medium and Welsh language education and training.



## **Workforce planning and support for practitioners**

Ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education and training is fundamental to the growth of the sector. In addition, ensuring that the workforce has the skills and resources needed to deliver high-quality education and training through the New Deal and other programmes is essential.

Since 2010, we have:

- delivered Welsh-language training to 1,097 practitioners as part of the Sabbatical Scheme
- commissioned approximately 250 projects to develop quality-assured teaching and learning resources in 28 subject areas
- undertaken an audit of the Welsh-language skills of the existing workforce and worked with the Education Workforce Council to improve the way in which data will be collected in the future
- provided funding to local authorities and regional consortia through the Education Improvement Grant, and previously the Welsh in Education Grant, to raise standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education
- supported student teachers wishing to train through the medium of Welsh with additional support to raise their confidence and linguistic skills through the Welsh-medium improvement scheme and worked with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to pilot a Welsh-language skills certificate for Newly Qualified Teachers
- supported the delivery of vocational training to increase the capacity of the childcare and early years workforce able to deliver provision through the medium of Welsh.

Over the next 12 months we will:

1. Continue to work with WJEC and publishers to increase and improve the provision of teaching and learning resources to meet qualifications and curriculum requirements.
2. Rollout the Welsh-language sabbatical scheme to include teaching assistants from Welsh-medium schools and consider options for developing online Welsh-language modules.
3. Continue to work with the Education Workforce Council and regional consortia to collect information about the Welsh-language skills of practitioners and their ability to teach through the medium of Welsh.
4. Undertake research to gain a more in-depth understanding of how immersion education is delivered.
5. Work with regional consortia to ensure that Welsh-medium schools can work together to identify and share best practice and receive specialist

support through the medium of Welsh to raise standards of teaching and learning.

6. Continue to support student teachers through the Welsh-medium improvement scheme and consider the outcome of the pilot Welsh-medium competency certificate work undertaken by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and look at ways to introduce the Welsh-language skills certificate for all Newly Qualified Teachers
7. Provide further opportunities to expand the number of workers within the childcare and early years sector able to deliver provision through the medium of Welsh.

## **Young people who are confident to use their Welsh language skills in all walks of life**

There is no question that the education system has a vitally important role in securing the future of the language. It is the provision of Welsh-medium education that has generated the greatest gains in the number of young people fluent in their Welsh language skills. However, education and training alone cannot guarantee that speakers become fluent in Welsh, or choose to use the language in their everyday lives.

Since 2010, we have:

- promoted language transmission within the family
- reviewed the teaching and learning of Welsh as a second language and agreed that changes to the curriculum over the next few years will mean ultimately replacing the concept of second language Welsh teaching and introducing one continuum of learning for the Welsh language in the new curriculum for Wales
- expanded the Welsh language charter, developed by Gwynedd Council, to Welsh-medium primary schools across the north Wales region to provide a clear framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh by children in a social context
- expanded the Supporting Young People's Language Practices project to increase the use of Welsh socially amongst young people in secondary schools
- supported opportunities for learners in Years 10-13 in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and further education colleges to develop their understanding of continuing to use their Welsh-language skills as they progress into post-16 and post-19 education, training and for the workplace
- implemented a communications and marketing campaign to raise awareness of Welsh-medium education and the benefits of Welsh language skills in future employment.

Over the next 12 months we will:

1. Refocus how we facilitate language transmission within the family.
2. Develop our long-term policy for teaching Welsh in English-medium schools, which will include one continuum of learning Welsh.
3. Roll-out the Welsh language charter to Welsh-medium primary schools across Wales.
4. Support secondary schools to embed the Supporting Young People's Language Practices project.

5. Continue to promote linguistic continuity from one phase of education and training to the next in partnership with schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.
6. Continue to raise awareness of Welsh-medium education and the benefits of Welsh language skills in future employment by working in partnership with key stakeholders.

## Next steps

It is important to note that the Welsh-medium Education Strategy has not been implemented in isolation. Whilst the Strategy has led to the development of policies designed to support the planning and delivery of Welsh-medium education, these policies have existed alongside other initiatives, aimed at raising standards of attainment and improving the education experiences of learners in Wales. We will continue to consider the needs of the Welsh-medium sector as we develop our wider education policies, particularly as we develop the new curriculum and the New Deal for practitioners. We will also ensure that Welsh-medium delivery is at the forefront of any upcoming legislation, particularly the proposed Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

Over the next year, other elements of the strategy will continue to be implemented in partnership with our key stakeholders. For example, we will continue to fund Mudiad Meithrin to provide early years education through the medium of Welsh and will consider how best to increase Welsh-medium provision as part of the expansion of Flying Start. We also expect local authorities and regional consortia to continue to increase the provision of late immersion education and improve rates of linguistic progression between key stages, in addition to giving due consideration to school transport arrangements.

We want to ensure that there is widespread agreement to our vision for the continued development and growth of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education. Therefore, we will establish a working group of experts from the sector, consult with our key stakeholders, and consider international best practice.

There are challenges ahead but the infrastructure which has been put in place by the Welsh-medium Education Strategy over the past five years means that we have a framework in place to move forward with this important work.