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**Written response to the Welsh for Adults Review Group
report 'Raising our sights' – November 2013**

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Written response to the Welsh for Adults Review Group report 'Raising our sights' – November 2013

Executive summary

The Welsh Government welcomes the report and its recommendations.

The aim of the Welsh for Adults programme is to provide opportunities for adults to learn Welsh in their local communities, in their workplaces or with their families to enable them to use the language and contribute to the Welsh Government aim of seeing the Welsh language thrive. The continuing importance of Welsh for Adults in offering opportunities for adults to learn Welsh is emphasised in the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The programme is also important in the context of the Government's Welsh Language Strategy, particularly following the 2011 Census results.

The majority of the recommendations contained in the report fit closely with our current policy direction as outlined in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy and the Welsh Language Strategy, and I am pleased to be able to accept the majority of them. Some require further consideration, but I support the intent of the proposed action. Having such unity of views on what needs to be done to improve the Welsh for Adults programme in terms of learner attainment, curriculum content, delivery structures and value for money is essential if we are to achieve these common objectives.

The Welsh Government sets out below its response to the Report's individual recommendations.

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government should set out a clear policy for Welsh for Adults and:

- establish a National Entity to be responsible for providing strategic leadership to the providers and undertake developmental duties at a national level in relation to the curriculum, tutor training, research, marketing and e-learning among others; and
- establish a clear and effective process of moving responsibilities and funding to the new National Entity in order to fund developments at a national level which will avoid duplication and ensure clear and sound leadership and consistency for the programme area.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh Government agrees that a National Entity is needed in order to provide strategic direction and leadership to the providers and to further develop the Welsh for Adults programme. Scoping work will now be undertaken to ascertain the best model for the National Entity taking account of legal advice and ensuring that the model is cost-effective. It is anticipated that the National Entity will not be in place until September 2015 at the earliest. Therefore, the Welsh for Adults Centres will continue to plan and deliver provision on a regional basis in the meantime.

Financial implications: None. The establishment of the National Entity will be undertaken within current budgets, based on legal advice.

Recommendation 2

The Welsh Government should:

- work with the National Entity and current providers to rationalise, with the aim of reducing the number of providers from the current 27 to around 10-14; and
- fund the providers.

Response: Partially accept

Comment: Welsh Government agrees that reducing the number of providers is likely to lead to improved standards, improved planning, reduced duplication and competition, and efficiency savings. It is foreseen that the number of Welsh for Adults providers will reduce from the current 27 prior to the establishment of a National Entity, and the Welsh Government will work with all providers to ensure that this is undertaken strategically and fairly. Further rationalisation may be undertaken by the National Entity in the future.

Although there are merits to the Welsh Government funding the providers directly, consideration needs to be given to whether it would be more appropriate for the providers to be funded through the National Entity rather than directly by the Welsh Government. Therefore I am partially accepting this element of the recommendation.

Financial implications: None. Funding for Welsh for Adults provision will continue to be included within the budget for post-16 funding.

Recommendation 3

The National Entity and the providers should plan provision with the aim of increasing numbers and meeting the needs of learners, by:

- using and refining Welsh for Adults data collection and analysis processes and tracking learners' progression from one level / year to the next;
- using market research to see why 2.1 million of the post-16 non-Welsh speaking population do not learn Welsh in order to identify and target prospective learners;
- using information gathered in the 2011 Census to target new learners;
- responding to learners' needs and developing flexible provision; and
- increasing the provision of intensive courses, developing a programme of intensive learning and trialling it to begin with in a small number of locations across Wales.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh Government agrees that there is further work to be done to ensure that the provision meets learners' needs. Until the National Entity is

established, the Welsh for Adults Centres should undertake further analysis of the 2011 Census data and carry out regular market research to inform the planning of provision.

The current Welsh for Adults data submitted to Welsh Government is limited and although work has been undertaken to improve the quality of the data, there is a need to make further improvements. The establishment of a National Entity and fewer providers should help to improve the quality of data and enable more detailed analysis, particularly to be able to track learners' progression.

Financial implications: None. All work to be undertaken by the National Entity, Welsh for Adults Centres and providers will be within current budgets.

Recommendation 4

The National Entity, in collaboration with the providers, should develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan which is new and exciting, based on data, market research and the experience of previous campaigns and use effective methods including social networks to promote the programme area.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh Government acknowledges that the absence of a national marketing strategy for the Welsh for Adults programme over recent years has meant that the provision has not always reached new audiences. The implementation of Recommendation 3 will support the development of a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to ensure that any activity reaches out to prospective and existing learners. Until the National Entity is established, the Welsh Government will move forward to implement this recommendation in partnership with providers.

Financial implications: None. All work to be undertaken by the National Entity and providers will be within current budgets.

Recommendation 5

The National Entity, in collaboration with the providers, should develop an accessible service for learners and prospective learners to provide full information about the provision across Wales and ensure there is information and an overview of learning Welsh beyond Wales, offering leadership and support as required.

Response: Accept

Comment: The implementation of this recommendation is crucial to ensure that prospective learners can access all the information about learning Welsh through one contact point. Reducing the number of Welsh for Adults providers

should facilitate the development of this service. The provision of this service would be part of the conditions of funding for the National Entity.

Financial implications: None. All work to be undertaken by the National Entity and providers will be within current budgets.

Recommendation 6

The National Entity should work with the Welsh Government and partners to develop and implement a Welsh in the Workplace strategy which will:

- be based on detailed and continuous research into the needs of different sectors in terms of Welsh in the Workplace;
- identify and replicate good practice at an international, national and local level;
- ensure that appropriate and flexible, tailor-made delivery models, assessment and resources are developed;
- enable collaboration at a national and local level; and
- develop Welsh in the Workplace provision to become a strong brand which is recognised by employers.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh Government agrees that a Welsh in the Workplace strategy is required to ensure that the provision meets employers' needs, is flexible and of high quality. Until the National Entity is established, Welsh Government will work with stakeholders to implement this recommendation.

Financial implications: None. Funding will be within current budgets. However, the implementation of this recommendation may lead to funding being reduced for the implementation of other recommendations in order to pump-prime any new developments for Welsh in the Workplace. Welsh Government will also explore the possibility of using European funding to support the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government should collaborate with the Welsh Language Commissioner to:

- ensure that the proposed Standards emphasise the contribution of Welsh in the Workplace language training and reflect the need for intensive and purposeful Welsh in the Workplace training;
- enable umbrella organisations and prominent employers to network and share good practice in relation to Welsh in the Workplace; and
- enable employers and organisations who have influence over employers to take strategic responsibility for developing their staff's Welsh language skills and develop and promote Welsh in the Workplace.

Response: Accept

Comment: This recommendation is important in the context of the Welsh Language Strategy. The Welsh Government in collaboration with the Welsh Language Commissioner and others will take this recommendation forward as part of a wider strategy to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace.

Financial implications: None.

Recommendation 8

The Welsh Government and the National Entity, in partnership with the providers and other organisations, should promote Welsh for the Family by:

- building on the Welsh for the Family scheme and increasing this provision;
- encouraging local authorities and schools to collaborate with Welsh for Adults providers in order to support parents to learn Welsh; and
- ensuring that Welsh for the Family is part of broader schemes and policies relating to children and families and family learning.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh for the Family provision has been and continues to be a strategic priority, especially in the context of developing Welsh-medium education and the Government's Welsh Language Strategy. Welsh Government will facilitate the implementation of this recommendation in partnership with stakeholders.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 9

The National Entity should develop an innovative e-learning strategy that will ensure e-learning is dovetailed with the learner's experience at all levels and is central to the entire programme area. The strategy will need to:

- be based on thorough research to develop an understanding of learners' and tutors' technical needs;
- consider the pedagogical aspects of e-learning for Welsh for Adults;
- be based on using the latest technology; and
- lead to the development of a single virtual site which is accessible on different platforms.

Response: Accept

Comment: Developing e-learning and the use of technology continues to be a strategic priority and there is a great deal of work to be done in this field. The Welsh Government has commissioned the development of a learning platform, based on 'moodle' software, and this needs to be developed further in the future in order to produce a single virtual site which is accessible on different platforms and is a home to various pedagogical and informal learning information and resources. Until the National Entity is established, Welsh

Government will take this forward in partnership with the Welsh for Adults providers.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 10

The Welsh Government and the National Entity should collaborate with partners to develop a curriculum framework for defining and measuring Welsh language skills and hold a national discussion on defining fluency as part of the framework.

Response: Accept

Comment: It is widely accepted that there is a need for a standard definition of fluency and a single curriculum framework for defining and measuring Welsh language skills. Welsh Government will lead discussions with key stakeholders.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 11

The National Entity, in collaboration with the Welsh Government, should implement the recommendations of Cardiff University research on the Welsh for Adults methodology, including:

- developing a national curriculum, ensuring there is an electronic version that tutors can adapt;
- discussing the development of a corpus of vocabulary in collaboration with the Welsh Language Commissioner and Universities' Departments of Welsh;
- ensuring that semi-formal learning activities are mainstreamed into courses;
- revisiting the number of expected hours on a pathway to learning Welsh and redefining the hours and levels according to need; and
- considering alternative methods for intensive learning.

Response: Accept

Comment: The Welsh Government commissioned this comprehensive research and it is important that the curriculum is revised in light of the findings. While the National Entity is being established, Welsh Government will take this recommendation forward.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 12

The National Entity should be responsible for developing the curriculum centrally and ensuring that resources that are compatible with the curriculum are developed, which are:

- attractive, innovative and diverse, to attract different types of learners and encourage the learners to practise different skills; and
- are authored by an experienced team which receives training, support and recognition.

Response: Accept

Comment: Whilst recognising that Welsh for Adults tutors need autonomy to develop their own teaching and learning resources, the duplication of curriculum development needs to be stopped. Welsh Government agrees that a national approach to curriculum development is needed and will facilitate this development in the absence of the National Entity.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 13

The National Entity and Providers should consult with other institutions to review provision at Proficiency level with the aim of ensuring that the provision is appropriately targeted.

Response: Accept in principle

Comment: Welsh Government is aware that there is duplication of provision at Proficiency level with a number of institutions providing courses. A national discussion is required with stakeholders to determine the most appropriate means of delivering provision at this level.

Financial implications: No additional funding implications.

Recommendation 14

The National Entity should collaborate with Welsh language course providers in the further and higher education sector, in line with Welsh Government guidelines, to avoid duplication and ensure value for public money; and establish a forum with private companies who provide Welsh language courses and include them in national discussions.

Response: Accept

Comment: There are many providers in the field which are not funded by the Welsh Government and it is important that collaboration between all parties is

encouraged. This recommendation will be taken forward once the National Entity is established, and Welsh Government has developed the guidelines.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 15

The Welsh Government and the National Entity should revisit Welsh for Adults qualifications:

- moving the emphasis from accreditation towards assessment for learning, and ensuring that national arrangements are in place to moderate the assessment, in order to ensure national consistency;
- providing training for tutors on assessment for learning;
- reducing the number of examinations in order to give the qualifications status and ensure value for money; and
- consulting with awarding bodies as appropriate.

Response: Accept

Comment: The need for major changes in Welsh for Adults qualifications and accreditation has previously been identified. The majority of Welsh for Adults learners are not interested in gaining credits or qualifications for their learning. Therefore, there is a need to develop a formative assessment process which provides more meaningful feedback to learners on their progress. Welsh Government recognises that some learners will want to gain a recognised qualification for their learning, therefore the Welsh for Adults examinations will be reviewed.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 16

The National Entity, in collaboration with the providers, should develop a training strategy for tutors which will include:

- the development of a national Continuous Professional Development framework;
- the provision of in-service training to meet tutors' developmental needs; and
- the provision of the National Qualification for new tutors or unqualified tutors.

Response: Accept

Comment: Welsh Government recognises that having a high quality workforce is key to the success of the Welsh for Adults programme. Welsh for Adults tutor training developments since 2006 have been successful. However, further work is needed to develop a national Continuous Professional Development framework to form a basis to all training.

Financial Implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budget.

Recommendation 17

Welsh for Adults Providers should:

- improve quality, ensuring they share and implement good practice in order to make quality consistent for the benefit of learners;
- plan the workforce for the future, endeavouring to ensure there are more full-time posts and career development opportunities for tutors in the programme area.

Response: Accept

Comment: The implementation of Recommendation 2 and the resulting reduction in the number of providers should help to increase the number of full-time posts. Welsh Government and the National Entity will need to work with providers to develop a workforce planning strategy.

There are opportunities to facilitate the sharing of good practice, particularly through the virtual learning platform for the Welsh for Adults providers.

Financial implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budget.

Recommendation 18

The Welsh Government should ring-fence recurrent funding for Welsh for Adults within the budget for post-16 education, ensuring:

- that the new recurrent funding method is compatible with the principles outlined in this report;
- that funding for semi-formal learning is mainstreamed so that it is an integral part of any courses; and
- that top-slicing levels in Welsh for Adults are consistent, fair and transparent and ensure value for money across Wales.

Response: Accept

Comment: Officials are discussing changes to the recurrent funding model as part of the wider review of the post-16 planning and funding system. This work will continue over the next year to ensure that the funding model for Welsh for Adults is fit for purpose.

Until the National Entity is established, Welsh Government will continue to work with providers to ensure that top-slicing levels in Welsh for Adults are consistent and fair and deliver value for money.

Recommendation 19

The National Entity, in collaboration with the providers, should:

- create a strong and consistent governance arrangement model; and
- continue with efforts to make fees consistent across Wales in order to ensure the lowest possible fee and equity for learners.

Response: Accept

Comment: Some Welsh for Adults Centres already have governance arrangements in place. However, further work is needed to strengthen the models used and to ensure that all future providers have arrangements in place.

Welsh Government agrees that consistent and reasonable fees are important to ensure that learners from all backgrounds can access courses.

Financial Implications: None.

Recommendation 20

The National Entity, along with Welsh for Adults providers, should develop various methods of bringing Welsh speakers and learners together, including:

- organising engaging and regular informal learning activities across Wales;
- building a national network of volunteers;
- collaborating closely with Mentrau Iaith and clubs and societies of all types to assist them in welcoming learners;
- making the widest possible use of modern technology;
- sharing good practice;
- considering the advantages of badges to identify Welsh speakers and learners; and
- collaborating with the National Eisteddfod's local committees to ensure continuity for the activity once the National Eisteddfod has left the area.

Response: Accept

Comment: The implementation of this recommendation ties in with the recent discussion on the future of the Welsh language as part of *Y Gynhadledd Fawr: Iaith Fyw, Iaith Byw*. The need for Welsh speakers and learners to have access to opportunities to use the language informally is key to the future of the Welsh language. In addition, the need for Welsh speakers to welcome and support Welsh learners to use and practise their Welsh has been widely discussed recently. This support is invaluable to learners and ensures that they can integrate into Welsh-speaking societies.

Financial Implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budget.

Recommendation 21

Key partners such as the *Mentrau Iaith* and *papurau bro* should extend their support for learners in creative and engaging ways.

Response: Accept in principle – recommendation for partners

Comment: It is agreed that all partners who promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language have a role to play in supporting learners. Welsh Government, the National Entity and Welsh for Adults providers will work with partners to provide guidance and access to the learners.

Financial Implications: None.

Recommendation 22

The National Eisteddfod should work with the National Entity to ensure a promotional role for *Dysgwr y Flwyddyn* / Learner of the Year and recognise the success of Welsh speakers who help learners.

Response: Accept in principle – recommendation for partners

Comment: I was privileged to meet the finalists of the Learner of the Year competition recently to discuss their experiences of learning Welsh. It is important for the Learner of the Year competition finalists to have a promotional role to share their experiences and to encourage others to start learning Welsh. The National Eisteddfod should work with providers to facilitate a promotional role for the Learner of the Year finalists on an annual basis.

Financial Implications: None. Any costs will be drawn from existing programme budget.

Recommendation 23

S4C and BBC Cymru Wales should collaborate closely with the National Entity and learners to develop and implement a strategy that would ensure that their provision attracts new Welsh learners, supports existing learners and helps to develop the relationship between Welsh speakers and learners.

Response: Accept in principle – recommendation for partners

Comment: It is important to ensure that there are opportunities for learners to access the language through the media, and S4C and BBC Cymru Wales have a key role to play. Welsh Government has already commenced discussions with S4C and BBC Cymru Wales on how their services can support learners. The National Entity will be asked to continue this work.

Financial Implications: None.

Recommendation 24

Welsh Speakers should take pride in their language and acknowledge the key role learners play in modern Wales, taking their responsibility for welcoming and supporting the learners seriously, at an individual level and at a society and club level.

Response: Accept in principle

Comment: The Welsh Government will encourage Welsh speakers to welcome and support Welsh learners so that they can integrate fully into local communities and cultural activities.

Financial Implications: None.