

Welsh Language and the education workforce

1. The third sector welcomes the Welsh in Education Policy and Delivery Plan which aligns Cymraeg 2050 - one million Welsh speakers and the primary objective of the Education in Wales: Our national Mission for young people in Wales to be bilingually competent and to develop a transformational approach to the learning and assessment of Welsh with the aim of ensuring that, in future, all learners will be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school. The third sector believes these plans should also encompass professionals and delivery and support staff from partners outside of the core education workforce.

2. Recruiting and qualifications in the Early Years

Robust third sector partnerships are essential to ensure transition to and delivery of statutory services and both sectors along with private and community entrepreneurial initiatives assist significantly to provide the best possible offer for our communities across Wales.

With the Welsh in Education Strategic plans nearly at completion stage with Local Authorities, it will be vital that the planning and equipping of the non-statutory Early Years workforce and auxiliary education workforce is considered as a priority for future development and that this is reflected within the plans as they are agreed by the Minister in early 2018.

The new qualifications framework (2019+) will be a key vehicle to ensure the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications at all levels and we welcome the recent announcement on the Coleg Cymraeg extending to the FE sector. Will planning for the bilingual early years workforce be a priority for the project?

The 30 hours childcare offer is welcomed all over Wales. For the successful delivery and most effective outcome, the proposal requires more not less qualified workforce with suitable Welsh language skills. It is a constant challenge for the Cylchoedd Meithrin voluntary management committees to recruit staff. They are in shorter supply therefore what action can we see Welsh Government taking to address this need in preparation for the national roll-out of the scheme?

There are existing examples of good practise within the sector:

- Through the 'Cam wrth Gam' training scheme Mudiad Meithrin have qualified over 3,000 individuals across Wales to a level 3 recognized qualification. Having a national Welsh-medium scheme is crucial with an emphasis on Welsh medium verbal assessment (and more flexibility with written). The 'Cam wrth Gam' scheme was recently evaluated by the CACHE validation body and was awarded the highest score ever awarded to any training centre.
- A national scheme with an emphasis on immersion is needed to be rolled out across Wales - such as "Croesi'r Bont". There's a risk to the sector that the immersion workforce cannot be effective if they are not provided with training and 'Cam wrth Gam' is the only scheme where an immersion module is mandatory. Beyond that, Mudiad Meithrin provide a module to our workforce through 'Academi' but in

qualifying and training it is easier to include it as the norm. Are there plans to look at the mainstreaming of Welsh into all level 3/5 qualifications in key areas?

3. Breakfast and Afterschool Provision - Play Work qualification

Increasingly, third sector organizations - especially Mentrau Iaith, have been working with schools to establish breakfast and afterschool clubs across Wales through the medium of Welsh. Childcare Sufficiency Assessments acknowledge the need to develop sufficient Welsh medium offers. Those in the South East report on difficulty in combining Welsh language proficiency and play work qualifications to be able to plug the gap in service and provide an equal service to what's available in English. English medium small private enterprises are able to provide extended provision in these areas but there's a distinct shortage of Welsh Medium provision.

Again, the sector is addressing the challenge and conversations are ongoing with key partners. Some challenges that need addressing are:

- CSSIW registration needing Welsh speaking qualified play workers
- The need to promote and teach Welsh medium play work earlier in the curriculum - especially at KS4 and 16+ to raise the profile of this essential sector.
- Ensuring that the Welsh language is a core consideration as childcare and play qualification standards are reviewed and implemented.
- A need to conduct a national baseline assessment of play/care workers and create a national strategy to ensure sufficient numbers are qualified across Wales to address the need gap. Where will the workforce come from and how?
- A need to ensure the Cymraeg 2050 is included as a focus and actions implemented in the effort to tackle poverty within initiatives such as Communities First, Flying Start and projects such as the Valleys Taskforce.

4. Youth Work

Urdd Gobaith Cymru note the need for youth workers to be able to up-skill and act within the demands and spirit of professionalism of the education workforce to ensure the success of the new curriculum. The Urdd is in discussion about this directly with Welsh Government youth work officials and through youth work networks.

Mental health specialists are needed within schools - again they need to speak Welsh. Urdd Gobaith Cymru has presented a paper on the use of Urdd staff to assist in dealing with stress with mindfulness and well being activities and be there on a school site if a young person wants to talk and share a burden.

5. Community Enterprise and developing the bilingual workforce

A recent project that has developed between Welsh Government and the Mentrau Iaith is the Welsh in Business project that has been welcomed by all Mentrau Iaith following a successful pilot. A bilingual workforce is essential to achieve Cymraeg 2050 across all sectors and to address varying needs across Wales. There is an opportunity to use the Welsh in Business model to look at establishing a Community Enterprise project to address the workforce needs at the heart. Mentrau Iaith is working with partners to look at the childcare sector at the moment and would welcome the opportunity of explaining and exploring how to develop this further in the near future with the Minister.

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