



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Response to the recommendations of the rapid review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh

A response to the recommendations of the 'Rapid Review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh' which was conducted by Steve Morris and his review team.

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The Centre as a strategic influencer

Recommendation 1

A primary focus for “Phase 2” should be to develop and strengthen the Centre as a powerhouse and strategic influencer in the acquisition of the Welsh language. The Estyn inspection calls on the Centre to share their expertise in successful teaching and second language acquisition with other relevant sectors. The Centre should be encouraged to work with partners to identify those areas of pedagogy and curriculum where it excels with a view to becoming a national hub for development and innovation regarding methodology, pedagogy, and curriculum in language learning.

Accept

The Government is satisfied that, since its inception, the Centre has established a national structure that has provided a sound basis for the Learn Welsh sector. This Review, coupled with the Estyn report published in March 2021, confirms

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that the Centre and the Learn Welsh sector as a whole contribute effectively to the Cymraeg 2050 strategy and successfully introduces the Welsh language to new speakers.

We agree with this first recommendation, and in planning the Centre's work for the second period from August 2022 onwards we will look for opportunities to further develop the Centre and strengthen its influence in the field of Welsh language acquisition. We are pleased that the Centre has formed effective partnerships with stakeholders in the language teaching field, and with community partners. These partnerships have given learners a greater choice of courses, and have facilitated opportunities for new speakers to use their Welsh in scenarios beyond the classroom. During the second period from August 2022 we will work with the Centre to expand on these partnerships and create formal partnerships with stakeholders from the statutory education field, thereby contributing its expertise in language learning to the efforts to teach Welsh within the statutory education age as part of the new curriculum. We are pleased that the Centre has already worked with education consortia to adapt some of its resources to be used to teach Welsh in schools, and we will ensure that this collaboration continues and is strategically expanded at a national level.

Recommendation 2

The Centre should develop itself as a hub for research innovation in language acquisition. Identifying and funding areas of research that have the potential to inform its provision will be another key indicator of the Centre's focus in "Phase 2".

Accept

We agree with this recommendation. During the first grant term between 2015 and now the Centre has conducted occasional research to steer its provision, including market research and evaluations of some elements of the provision. During Phase 2 the Government wishes to see the Centre strengthen and expand its research role in language acquisition for adults. We will work with the Centre to implement this. We will also ensure that the Centre's research and

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evidence role in language acquisition is developed through strategic collaboration with stakeholders and other research networks.

Recommendation 3

A clear process for enabling conversations between the Centre and Welsh Government about 'strategic targeting' of provision needs to be in place in time for "Phase 2" of the Centre's development.

Accept

We will deal with this recommendation alongside recommendation 4, below. There is a need to ensure that the Centre's governance models allow for an ongoing and effective policy discussion between the Welsh Government and the Centre to ensure that the Centre's provision is aligned with Government policy priorities. This discussion should help to ensure that the Centre continues to respond quickly and effectively to new needs for interventions as they arise (for example when it is identified that provision needs to be targeted to specific groups within society, or specific sectors within the workforce).

Recommendation 4

In consideration of the recommendations above and the Centre entering into "Phase 2", it would be timely for it and Welsh Government to consider whether the current model of governance is appropriate.

Accept

We agree that consideration should be given to whether the current governance arrangements are appropriate, and if changes need to be made to those arrangements from August 2022. As part of this work, we will consider the role and remit of the Welsh Government Welsh for Adults Scrutiny Committee, and will discuss with the Centre the role and remit of its Advisory Board.

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Broadening the remit of the Centre

Recommendation 5

The Centre and Welsh Government to explore how in “Phase 2” its remit might expand into areas such as training the education workforce, sharing resources and good practice with the second language sector in schools and developing language skills for further education subjects.

Accept

The Centre already contributes to the training of the education workforce by providing tailored online courses at Entry and Proficiency levels. We will continue to work with the Centre and other stakeholders who provide language training to the education workforce to ensure a full programme of language courses for education practitioners across all levels.

Recommendation 6

The Centre and Welsh Government should scope expansion of provision and remit to those between 16 to 25 years of age who have studied Welsh as a subject in the English-medium school sector.

Accept

We have already committed to implementing this recommendation within the [Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021 to 2026](#). The Plan includes the following action point:

To build on skills acquired within statutory education, develop proposals for guaranteeing that 16 to 25 year olds can have free access to Welsh for adults courses so that every young person has the same opportunity to become a confident speaker.

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Currently, only providing Learn Welsh lessons for adults over the age of 18 is within the Centre's remit. To ensure that the Centre can play a full part in implementing this policy, we will look to extend the Centre's remit to include 16 to 18 year olds. We will discuss the implementation of this policy with the Centre to ensure that other stakeholders from the school, further and higher education sectors are included in the planning. We will also ensure that appropriate child protection / security arrangements are in place to enable the Centre to teach persons under 18.

Recommendation 7

The Centre should explore with appropriate language planning agencies and partners how advice might be offered on strategies for changing the language used with a particular person, for example within the family or with a partner / children.

Accept

It is important that new Welsh speakers are supported and are equipped by methods and tools to support them to use Welsh. We will work with the Centre to ensure that it contributes to the implementation of our national policy on the transmission of the Welsh language and its use in families.

In addition, we will continue to implement other interventions to facilitate the use of Welsh in other areas, for example continuing to use the "Iaith Gwaith" scheme in workplaces and places where people receive a service as a means of identifying that a Welsh language Service is available.

Recommendation 8

The Centre's role in facilitating the learner's journey from the classroom to the community needs to be more clearly defined. It should be recognised that opportunities to use Welsh in the community can be a challenge not just for adult learners of Welsh but also for those who have received Welsh-medium

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education as well as Welsh speakers moving into these areas. Holistic planning to realise and expand these opportunities needs to be undertaken with appropriate partners.

Accept

One of the biggest challenges in the Learn Welsh sector is to ensure that new speakers have the confidence to use their new Welsh language skills in other areas such as in the community, in workplaces and in homes. The integration of new speakers into community groups is an issue that extends beyond the responsibilities of the Centre.

We already encourage collaboration between our partners and the Centre through the Government's Language Promotion Group. Through that Group we will ask the Centre to work with other partners to ensure that all partners plan for attracting new speakers to their activities. The Centre and the Mentrau Iaith have already launched the **Mwynhau'r Gymraeg** scheme which is targeted at new speakers, and provides opportunities for them to use Welsh outside the classroom with local people.

In addition to working with community partners, the policy outlined in the response to recommendation 6 above will also contribute to giving young people the confidence to use Welsh in the community.

Recommendation 9

The Centre to look into expanding the 'Siarad' scheme into the creation of communities of practice putting individuals with common interests (for example sports, hobbies, cultural activities) in touch with each other.

Accept

We wish to see as many methods as possible in place to provide opportunities for new Welsh speakers to use Welsh beyond the classroom. We accept that

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using interests and hobbies is an effective way of bringing people together and a way of encouraging long-term partnerships between new Welsh speakers with communities of interest. We believe that specific efforts should be made to bring Welsh speakers and new Welsh speakers together to use the language in the context of interests and hobbies. We will discuss this recommendation with the Centre, with a view to its full implementation during Phase 2.

Recommendation 10

The Centre and Welsh Government to evaluate how much investment in staff time and other resources would be needed to allow for this expansion of the Siarad scheme and to allocate them accordingly.

Accept

We will discuss this with the Centre as part of the response to recommendation 9, above.

The Centre's provision

Recommendation 11

The Centre to evaluate the success of using methods such as blended learning, the virtual classroom and self-study to optimise provision as we move on from the period of the pandemic by using appropriate research methods.

Accept

We are aware that the Centre is already considering what lessons have been learned from the changes made to provision during the pandemic. They have been gathering the views of tutors and learners on the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning, and are reviewing information such as class

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attendance rates. We will continue discussing with the Centre to ensure that provision is evaluated by appropriate means, and developed on the basis of the evidence.

We wish to see the Centre and providers build on the innovative work that has taken place during the pandemic in terms of providing blended and virtual lessons, and expanding self-study provision. We welcome the fact that learners have as wide a choice as possible of methods to learn Welsh, and are keen for the broad offer to continue.

Recommendation 12

The Centre to develop resources, provision and partnerships to expand provision at C1+ Gloywi (Hyfedredd) level.

Accept

We accept this recommendation and agree that there is a need to develop resources, provision and partnerships to deal with these advanced levels of learning, to ensure that new speakers feel confident to use Welsh orally and in writing in places such as workplaces and in the home. Developing the provision of gloywi courses would also contribute to the implementation of recommendation 6, above, and would be suitable for young people who have learnt Welsh as a second language at school, or who have moved away from Wales for a period and lost confidence in their Welsh. Suitable C1 or gloywi provision can give them the boost they need to be able to use Welsh in the workplace or speak Welsh at home.

Recommendation 13

The benchmark of completion of B1 level (Canolradd) as a marker of fluency needs further research and the criteria used outlined.

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Accept

As part of the Centre's research programme from 2022, we agree that further research is needed as a basis for assessing and recording linguistic attainment in Welsh. As part of that it should be explored whether specifying B1 as an indication of fluency in Welsh is appropriate. We recognise the importance of having clarity on attainment levels in Welsh. This is important for being able to track a speaker's journey along a linguistic continuum. This research could be dealt with as we discuss the implementation of the response to recommendation 2 with the Centre.

Whilst there are advantages to determining a level of attainment that is synonymous with being "fluent", it is also important that we recognise and celebrate the skills of all speakers. Reaching fluency is not necessarily an aim for all individuals who start to learn Welsh. We encourage all learners to use whatever Welsh they have.

It should also be remembered that any data based on self-assessment of fluency may well be influenced by the respondent's personal perception or interpretation. This needs to be taken into account when interpreting information about linguistic ability based on self-assessments.

Recommendation 14

The Centre and Welsh Government to plan to ensure that full-time career paths are available to create a critical mass of experienced Welsh for Adults practitioners (and administrators).

Accept

We agree with this recommendation and are keen to ensure that there is a professional and adequate workforce within the Learn Welsh sector. The Centre has implemented a plan to develop the skills of the Learn Welsh workforce (Cynllun Academi). As part of the implementation of the Centre's workforce

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development plan they have produced a national programme of training available to tutors and administrative staff in the Learn Welsh sector. The Centre has begun the work of preparing a recognised national qualification; we welcome that and believe that it is a major step forward in professionalising and increasing the status of the sector. We will be in discussion with the Centre to ensure that these arrangements continue after August 2022 to ensure that the sector's workforce is appropriately trained, and to ensure that the workforce is trained in the latest developments, for example digital / distance learning.

In addition, the Centre has a scheme in place to recruit new tutors. We are pleased that the Centre recognises that there is value in having a variety of different types of jobs within the sector - including full-time tutors, and part-time and fractional tutors. This increases the appeal of the sector to potential employees and increases flexibility in the search for tutors to work various hours, such as learning evening classes.

The Centre's knowledge management

Recommendation 15

The Centre to tie strategy more closely to evidence from its own data and findings from gap analysis, thereby strengthening its ability to drive forward policy priorities such as creating more speakers and users of Welsh.

Accept

We are very pleased with the steps the Centre has taken over recent years to establish a robust data collection system. The Centre now publishes data regularly in accordance with the Code of Practice on Statistics. Now that data collection and reporting systems are in place we agree that the Centre should use the available data to review if the people learning Welsh are in line with Cymraeg 2050 priorities, and use data to identify gaps in the audience and if targeted recruitment campaigns are needed to any specific groups. We will also discuss with the Centre how they can use data about learners' journey through

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the Learn Welsh levels, and whether they can use information about learners who are lost from the system between levels to improve progression and increase the numbers that completes the Learn Welsh journey.

Recommendation 16

The Centre to use the data now available to them to better understand who those engaged in learning Welsh are and how this fits in with “Cymraeg 2050” targets. This should inform the recruitment, monitoring and targeting of specific groups seen as important in the context of “Cymraeg 2050” and relates to Recommendation 3.

Accept

The response to this recommendation is included in the response to recommendation 15, above.

Developing partnerships

Recommendation 17

The Centre’s partnerships with private providers such as SSiW (Say Something in Welsh) and Duolingo should be continued. Making learners aware of these three types of provision (SSiW, Duolingo and Learn Welsh) and facilitating movement between and across learning providers would benefit them through making progression routes clear.

Accept

We are pleased that formal partnerships are in place between the Centre and SSiW, and Duolingo. For some years, the Centre’s Learn Welsh providers have been encouraging learners to make the most of the provision of these

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companies as they learn Welsh. The partnerships with SSiW and Duolingo have gone a long way towards creating a single community of learners, and have increased the range of resources available to help people to learn Welsh.

In May 2020 the Centre agreed a formal partnership with SSiW which involves sharing learning resources; and the Centre now provides SSiW content to 2,000 of its learners free of charge to complement the learning undertaken in class. In the background, the Centre and SSiW are also able to benefit from each other's expertise and share good practice leading to better provision for learners.

With regards to Duolingo, work has taken place to bring Duolingo's content in line with the Centre's curriculum, which means that learners can use the website as a resource between lessons, and to do homework. From October 2021 that partnership will develop further as the Centre has reached an agreement with Duolingo to take responsibility for the Duolingo Welsh course. This includes responsibility for the content and monitoring the use of the resource. The Duolingo course will include a reference to the Centre's Learn Welsh provision and will share branding.

It is important that the provision of the different providers supports each other and facilitates the learning of Welsh. We are open to the Centre forming partnerships with other private companies in the future should opportunities arise.

Recommendation 18

The current partnership with the WJEC to provide examinations and qualifications for those learners who want them should be maintained. Further investigation into ways of linking these qualifications to language requirements for a bilingual workforce should be undertaken.

Accept

The Centre has developed a good relationship with the WJEC and have developed an examination system that addresses all levels along the Learn

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Welsh provision. Since the Centre was established, the number of learners deciding to sit exams and apply for formal qualifications through the Learn Welsh system has increased. We agree with the Review's conclusions that it is important to recognise that not all learners want to sit examinations and obtain formal qualifications; however the relationship with WJEC needs to continue so that a robust exam and qualifications structure is in place for those who want to.

Now that the Cymraeg Gwaith project is well established in the language acquisition field, and that a significant number of employers and learners are using the courses provided, we will ask the Centre during Phase 2 to ensure that examinations and the qualifications structure are suitable for the needs of workplaces from an employer and employee perspective.

Recommendation 19

The Centre to continue to work constructively with the Mentrau Iaith and other relevant bodies to offer support to learners. In particular, partnerships that would provide opportunities for learners to work with Papurau Bro should be investigated.

Accept

We already encourage and facilitate collaboration between our partners and the Centre through the grant agreements and will ensure that that continues. We are pleased that the Centre and the Mentrau Iaith have launched the **Mwynhau'r Gymraeg** scheme. It has been targeted at new speakers, and provides opportunities for them to use Welsh outside the classroom with local people. It is important that our partners work together to facilitate opportunities to use Welsh in communities, and new Welsh speakers need to be part of that.

Some Learn Welsh providers are already working with Papurau Bro and that is a good way of celebrating the efforts that people are making to learn Welsh. We will discuss with the Centre how that practice can be shared so that readers of Papurau Bro across Wales have the opportunity to read about the success of local learners, and so that those learning Welsh use Papurau Bro to practise

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reading Welsh and help them to integrate into the local community.

Recommendation 20

The Centre to look at further collaboration with the media in Wales, in particular using the English language media (for example commercial radio) as both a marketing and an awareness tool.

Accept

We will discuss with the Centre to ensure that it uses the media effectively in marketing, and targeting new learners. The Centre has noted in our discussions that some providers have already built relationships with local commercial radio stations and are using that to raise awareness of local Learn Welsh provision. The Centre will ask those providers to share the experience of working with local commercial radio with other providers.

Recommendation 21

The Centre to facilitate discussion with other Welsh language or international institutions / bodies to identify examples of good policy / practice that have resulted in assimilation of new speakers.

Accept

We always welcome organisations sharing good practice with each other, and networking to avoid duplication of work. The Government provides regular opportunities for that to happen through meetings of our main partners, and we will ensure that we continue to provide those opportunities.

We would also welcome the Centre networking and sharing good practice with partners from other linguistic communities to benefit from lessons arising from

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efforts to assimilate new speakers in those communities. We will consider whether the NPLD (Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity) can be used to facilitate this.

Recommendation 22

Welsh Government to discuss and define with the Mentrau Iaith their role as a key partner with the Centre in assimilating learners into their local Welsh-speaking community.

Accept

We agree that integrating new Welsh speakers into their communities and providing opportunities for them to use and practise their Welsh in a natural environment is vital in realising Cymraeg 2050 targets. Once learners have acquired some Welsh in formal classes, we have a number of community partners who can facilitate that, especially through the Mentrau Iaith.

The Centre and the Mentrau Iaith have already launched the **Mwynhau'r Gymraeg** scheme which has been targeted at new speakers, and provided opportunities for them to use Welsh outside the classroom with local people.

We are already encouraging collaboration between our partners and the Centre through the grant agreements and will ensure that that continues.

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