

# More than a Million

Welsh language  
citizenship for all



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## Welsh language citizenship for all

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# Introduction

Five years have now passed since Cymdeithas yr Iaith published its vision statement ‘One Million Welsh Speakers’ and three years have gone by since the government announced its strategy for meeting that target.

Cymdeithas’s vision of a million speakers published in 2015 contained three objectives, asking the political parties to commit to the following:

1. Increase the number of Welsh speakers to one million
2. Stem out-migration and sustain communities while ensuring pathways to bring Welsh speakers back to their communities
3. Use the Welsh language in all walks of life to ensure it is the natural language from cradle to grave.

Since devolution, a number of language strategies have been adopted by successive governments, each of them laudable enough, only to be subsequently forgotten. On the whole, the story of these policies and strategies has been one of failure. This can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the rampant neo-liberalism that is almost unquestioningly accepted in our public discourse. Another factor has been the treatment of the Welsh language as an exception to the mainstream of administration and public life in Wales; as a peripheral, merely symbolic language to be treated tokenistically. One need look no further than the deliberations in our own Senedd to see, and clearly hear, that our public life is conducted almost entirely in English. This is a Senedd where some can be heard claiming that Welsh is not an inclusive language, and indeed that it excludes people. Without a doubt, now is the time to challenge this dangerous misapprehension, and we must do so urgently.

Over the past few months, Cymdeithas yr Iaith has consulted with people from all parts of Wales to gather their opinions on the state of the language, and the language strategies of the government and public authorities. Many of those we consulted over the past few months expressed a desire for the next government to focus on achieving one million Welsh speakers: an aim that has gained consensus across political parties and civic society.

After three years of pursuing this target as a nation, the consensus is that the actions of the current national government and other authorities are insufficient to make it a reality. There is therefore a danger that we repeat the story of previous language strategies: promising much, but failing to deliver, despite strong public support.

This document is an attempt to analyse and build on the consensus, highlighting opportunities to proceed further and faster by deepening and expanding the original vision.

Looking ahead, Cymdeithas is fully confident, if the next government is willing to follow the right steps, that the target of one million speakers will be achieved, by 2050 at the latest.

As we are confident that the next government can take the appropriate steps to achieve a million speakers, we believe the government should introduce a vision of ‘more than a million speakers’ in order to normalise the Welsh language as the language of our nation in all aspects of life.

‘More than a million’ as a vision does not refer primarily to increasing the target of the number of speakers (though there will be a need to focus on that as well) but rather to deepening the agenda by concentrating on everyday use of the language in our communities, workplaces and public services, and extending Welsh to all, and not just the lucky few. In our engagement process, many people have referred to the barriers that some groups face in gaining access to the language—including geographic, economic, informational or social class barriers. This is what leads us to further call for ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’ to ensure that everyone, without exception, can learn, experience and use the language in a meaningful way in their everyday life.

From the newly-arrived refugee, to long-established Eastern European communities, to the cleaner at a Welsh-medium school, neither the structures nor the policies are in place to ensure that everyone has meaningful access to learn, enjoy and use our national language. This pattern is a social injustice that must be tackled—Welsh language citizenship needs to be extended to everyone who sees Wales as their home, not just a select few. In the post-Covid age, with the breakdown of the current economic system and the rise of the far right, it is more important than ever to include people of all backgrounds in the language—the Welsh language will be a weapon for unity against an increasingly reactionary politics.

The other side of this coin is the failure to maintain, support and create Welsh language spaces; it is far too often said that Welsh is not an inclusive language. This results in a perception amongst Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers alike that maintaining spaces—from geographical communities, to workplaces, to events—that are entirely Welsh in language is unacceptable. Therefore, ensuring real access to the language for all is an essential part of the task of increasing the number of spaces where Welsh is the usual language medium.

The government is not only failing to support efforts to create and maintain Welsh language spaces; in many areas, it is intentionally and unintentionally undermining them—from denying the right for ancillary staff in Welsh-medium schools to have time and resources to learn the language, to the attempt to pressure the National Library not to make Welsh an essential skill for the post of National Librarian, in one of the far too rare institutions where Welsh is the language of internal administration. There is no real recognition by politicians or public institutions of the enormous qualitative difference that spaces which operate through the Welsh language make to increasing the use of the language, normalising it and creating confident speakers.

This attitude extends to the apathy we see towards the precarious situation of some of our communities where a large proportion speak Welsh and use it as an everyday language. No meaningful recognition exists of the value of Welsh as the main language of daily life, and neither are there socio-economic measures in place to deal with the structural problems driving the outward migration of young people, the decline of the local economy and the loss of community resources.

By focusing on the vision of ‘more than a million—Welsh language citizenship for all’ outlined in this document, we can ensure that Welsh becomes a language of everyday life for everyone in our country, and for people from all backgrounds.

With the next election coming after twenty years of devolution, it is high time to grasp the opportunity to show how self-government can make a real difference. Embracing and embedding Welsh language citizenship for all will go a long way towards building the kind of Wales we want: a country where every one of us, and every community, is on solid foundations towards a sustainable and just future, with the Welsh language at its heart.

## Summary: the way forward

In short, we believe we must distinguish between two aspects of aiming for ‘more than a million’ speakers and ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’, namely:

1. Creating speakers
2. Increasing the use of the language in all spheres of life.

Although this is fairly fundamental, some policymakers—intentionally and unintentionally—confuse these two important elements.

To make ‘more than a million’ speakers and ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’ a reality, action is needed in the following three areas during the next Senedd term:

- More than double the use of Welsh, by:
  - setting a target of creating one thousand new Welsh-language spaces, including geographical communities
  - establishing a Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg, a Welsh language digital enterprise, as a step towards transferring broadcasting powers to Wales
  - increasing investment on projects to promote the Welsh language from 0.15% of government spending to 1%, or £186 million<sup>1</sup> a year, by 2025/26.
- Create more than a million speakers by:
  - passing a Welsh-medium Education for All Act
  - investing £100 million over 10 years in language training for the education and childcare workforce
  - raising the current target for the percentage of newly trained teachers who can speak Welsh from 30% to 80% by 2026
- Implement the ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’ agenda by:
  - establishing a Welsh Language Access Fund, to support access to the language
  - establishing the right for everyone, whatever their age, to learn Welsh free of charge
  - attaching conditions to public grants to extend the language to groups who have been traditionally excluded

We appreciate that public investment may become more difficult during the post-Covid period, but we have identified ways of raising additional funds, through policies such as:

- a tax on AirBnB and tourism
- a super-tax on landlords’ profits and second homes
- a levy on digital and telecommunications companies

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1. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/final-budget-2020-2021-motion.pdf>

# 1. Creating speakers

Creating new Welsh speakers is the only way to achieve a million speakers and more. There are only four ways of increasing the number of speakers: in the family; at school; through adult learners; and through attracting Welsh speakers to return to Wales. Education policy gives the Welsh Government (and indeed any national government) more direct control in the process of creating new speakers than any other major policy area.

There have been many positive developments under the leadership of the current Education Minister in an attempt to achieve one million speakers, such as a commitment to abolish ‘Welsh as a Second Language’, imposing growth targets for Welsh-medium education on local authorities and setting soft teacher training targets for training centres. However, one need look no further than the recent Curriculum Bill to see the lack of any real effort to follow an ambitious agenda to normalise Welsh-medium education for all. The government is not taking the structural and transformational measures needed to achieve a million speakers and ensure that every child in Wales grows up speaking Welsh. Indeed, in many areas, a simple statistical analysis demonstrates clearly that the actions of our government and local authorities are totally inadequate.

We are confident that we can reach more than a million Welsh speakers by 2050, but to achieve this target, the next government will need to:

- Increase the target for the percentage of Year 1 children receiving Welsh-medium education by 2040 to 77.5%<sup>2</sup> given the absence of national or international evidence that the government’s current pathway to achieve a million speakers is well-founded and reliable. Specifically:
  - i. the government has not presented a realistic plan to persuade us that they can ensure that half of children attending English-medium schools become Welsh speakers, which is crucial to their trajectory for achieving a million speakers
  - ii. there are no targets between 2020 and 2050 to increase the number of Welsh speakers created through English-medium schools
  - iii. there are also no realistic measures in place or in the pipeline to improve low levels of progression in the Welsh language between stages of education. For example, many children who attend Welsh-medium primary schools proceed to English-medium or bilingual secondary schools, resulting in children losing skills or leaving Welsh medium education, which is also critical to their projections.
- Revise the new Curriculum for Wales to create a single continuum of Welsh learning rather than the two pathways currently contained in the new curriculum which is essentially no more than a rebranding of ‘Welsh as a Second Language’. A single Welsh

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2. The government had Welsh language growth targets for 7-year-old pupils; they are now going to set a target for year 1. Cymdeithas yr Iaith’s statistical work suggests that 77.5% of 7-year olds will need to be in Welsh-medium education by 2040 to reach the target of a million speakers: <https://cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Targedau%20Addysg%20Lleol2.pdf>

language qualification for all will then need to be introduced in order to achieve real change.

- Undertake an unprecedented level of planning and investment in the education workforce to ensure that Welsh becomes the norm as a medium of teaching throughout our education system.

## **Welsh-medium Education for All Act<sup>3</sup>**

We agree with an expert report<sup>4</sup> commissioned by the government which said that new primary legislation was needed in order to create a framework that facilitates major advances as described above. The Act would:

- set in legislation a long-term aim to make Welsh the normative language medium of our entire education system and plan for full Welsh-medium education for all
- set a target of 77.5%<sup>5</sup> receiving Welsh-medium education by 2040
- replace the system of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) with a system that sets clear, irreversible statutory targets, nationally and locally, for the expansion of Welsh-medium education by specific date(s) to achieve the long-term aim; financial incentives would be attached to the local targets
- set targets for increasing the number and percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh in schools teaching mainly through English at present
- ensure free transport to schools and further education for all
- make Welsh language immersion centres a statutory provision in all local authorities to teach Welsh to all children moving into an area and to facilitate transfers from English-medium education to Welsh-medium education.

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3. <https://cymdeithas.cymru/deddfaddysg>

4. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/improving-the-planning-of-welsh-medium-education.pdf>

5. See page 15 'Polisiau Allweddol Addysg' Cymdeithas yr Iaith: [https://cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Polisiau%20Allweddol%20Grwp%20Addysg%20\(i%20Fwrdd%20Aled%20Roberts\).pdf](https://cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Polisiau%20Allweddol%20Grwp%20Addysg%20(i%20Fwrdd%20Aled%20Roberts).pdf)

## **Expansion of the Welsh-medium education workforce**

The next government will need to undertake an unprecedented level of planning and investment in the education workforce to address the current shortfalls, with the aim of ensuring Welsh-medium education for all. We recommend the following actions:

- through the new Welsh Education Act, establish statutory targets for the number of people training to become new teachers in order to ensure an increase in the percentage who will be teaching through the medium of Welsh
- increase the current target for the percentage of newly-trained teachers able to speak Welsh from 30% to 80% by 2026
- invest an additional £100 million over 10 years in teaching Welsh to a substantial portion of the education and childcare workforce who do not currently speak Welsh
- impose a duty on local authorities and education consortia to plan strategically and provide professional teaching programmes to increase the number of education workers improving their Welsh language skills.

## **Welsh-medium education workforce strategy**

As well as new legislation, we believe a dedicated national strategy is needed to coordinate the essential work of planning the workforce, to include:

- imposing the above-mentioned statutory targets on teacher training centres to increase the percentage of people teaching through the medium of Welsh
- delivering an intensive programme of customised in-work training, to provide training tailored to the needs of specific workers in their workplace
- ensuring that the aim of every course within the sabbatical scheme is that workers go on to teach through the medium of Welsh after the course, with a skills certificate as guarantee
- extending initial teacher training courses for up to an additional year to enable prospective teachers to learn and improve their Welsh
- scrapping tuition fees and establishing further financial incentives through grants for teacher training courses
- establishing a scheme to attract people who have left the education workforce back to the profession, to encourage Welsh-speaking teachers teaching in other countries to come back to Wales and to encourage people in other professions to retrain as teachers, including enabling retirees to teach part-time
- working with teachers' unions to increase education workers' salaries and reduce the stress that drives so many to leave the profession.



## One learning pathway and one Welsh language qualification for all

The government has announced that it aims to ensure that half the pupils attending English-medium schools leave school as fluent Welsh speakers by 2050. However, it has not brought forward any schemes or milestones to achieve that goal. In the absence of any meaningful plan or actions, the danger is that this aim will obscure and detract from the need to substantially expand Welsh-medium education.

In 2015, following the publication of Professor Sioned Davies's report and recommendations, the government announced that it was going to scrap the Welsh Second Language qualification. Since then, each Education Minister has reiterated the same commitment, and the current Education Minister has stated that she agrees on the need for a single Welsh language qualification for everyone. Indeed, politicians from all the main parties have called for the recommendations to be implemented.

Seven years since Professor Davies's urgent report, the next government must act upon the recommendations:

- **to implement a single path for learning Welsh and to replace Welsh as a Second Language with one Welsh qualification for all pupils. This would encourage change in how Welsh is taught in all schools and ensure that every single pupil leaves school fluent in Welsh.**

### Early years

If there is one field of education where it is essential that Welsh-medium provision is established as the norm as soon as possible, it is early years. At this age children can acquire languages freely as long as immersion methods, recognised worldwide as the best way of learning, are used. Current provision deprives the majority of children of fluency in the language from their early years. We therefore believe the next government should:

- provide 30 hours' free childcare per week to all families through the medium of Welsh
- adopt a plan to transition the entire early years sector, including childcare and nurseries, to exclusively Welsh-language provision by the end of the next Senedd term
- establish a new workforce skills fund, worth £100 million over a decade, to invest substantially in the sector's Welsh language skills
- invest in 'Cymraeg yn y teulu' (Welsh in the family) programmes to encourage parents to learn the language with their children and ensure language transmission within families
- establish a programme, run jointly by the National Centre for Learning Welsh and Mudiad Meithrin, to turn English-language nurseries into Welsh-language nurseries, supported by financial incentives.

## 2. Increasing the use of Welsh

Despite plenty of rhetoric from the current government about increasing the use of Welsh, there is little action and prioritisation, and any action is often in the wrong areas. The government's language strategy sets a target of doubling the percentage of the population who use Welsh every day to 20% by 2050. However, despite this commitment:

- there is a serious lack of investment in projects to extend the Welsh language and its use—for many years now, a failure to keep abreast with inflation has led to real term cuts to the few specific projects and organisations working to extend the language and its use
- there are no milestones for achieving the target
- government actions have focused mainly on counterproductive efforts to weaken regulation and divert the work of existing organisations.

There is considerable misunderstanding and confusion, caused both deliberately and unintentionally, about increasing the use of Welsh. Various politicians and policymakers have tried to establish false dichotomies between regulation and increased use, and between the attempt to create speakers and increase usage, asserting that the focus needs to be on increasing usage at the expense of other aims. Indeed, some argue that efforts to regulate or increase speaker numbers should be set aside in order to concentrate fully on increasing use. We reject this dangerous false dichotomy.

The current government, while claiming to concentrate on increasing the use of Welsh, has failed and indeed has refused to recognise that spaces which operate through Welsh are essential to the survival and growth of the language. Not only does the government have no strategy of substance for increasing the number of Welsh-language spaces, many of the actions of current Senedd politicians seem to be a deliberate attempt to undermine the few existing Welsh-language spaces, including:

- trying to persuade the National Library not to designate the post of National Librarian as one where Welsh is essential, despite the fact that 90% of the Library's workforce speak Welsh
- appointing non-Welsh-speakers to the Snowdonia National Park Authority, an organisation that operates in Welsh
- attempting to enforce English in the immersion period of Welsh-medium schools by default through the Curriculum Bill.

We are concerned that if things continue along this path, Saunders Lewis will be proven correct in his analysis in his Tynged yr Iaith lecture in 1962:

*“In my opinion, if any kind of self-government for Wales were obtained before the Welsh language was acknowledged and used as an official language in local authority and state administration ... then the language would never achieve official status at all, and its demise would be quicker than it will be under English rule.”*

Although the current government has a target to double the use of the language, it has no clear strategy and is not operating in a way that will achieve that laudable aim.

We propose the following steps to start turning the tide in the Welsh language's favour, and to instigate a process of normalising its use in all aspects of life.

- **The next government should set a clear goal of creating 1,000 Welsh-language spaces within the next five years.**

In consultation on the contents of this document, we heard of a number of spaces—from sports clubs to workplaces—which are very influential in people's daily lives, but where there is no incentive, encouragement or goal to make them spaces which operate through the Welsh language. Examples exist where small changes, or ensuring that one worker improves their Welsh, could change the language of administration or of activities to Welsh, and substantially strengthen the use of the language.

We believe that setting a goal in this field is vital, as this would change the discourse regarding making Welsh essential. Furthermore, this target could give bodies like the Menterau Iaith a clearer direction in their important efforts to increase the use of Welsh at grassroots level.

The government itself is far behind with regards to internal administration in Welsh. For example, not a single government department conducts its internal administration entirely in Welsh. Three years since the government's commitment in its language strategy of 'leading by example by promoting and facilitating increased use of Welsh by our own workforce', it has only recently published the policy, after repeated delays. There is also a serious lack of use of the Welsh language by Members of the Senedd and in the internal administration of the Senedd Commission. The non-use of Welsh in our national government and Senedd is harmful not only to the use of the language within those institutions but also sets a poor example which negatively influences other bodies.

Furthermore, there is no real encouragement or support for employers like Carmarthenshire County Council who have set themselves a goal of establishing Welsh-language internal administration, or for their staff and potential staff to work towards achieving this policy change. Nor has anything been done to stop the housing association Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd, which used to operate in Welsh as part of Cyngor Gwynedd, from turning to carry out its internal administration in English.

We believe there are many new and effective methods that could be used in order to meet this target. The following contexts offer some of the most obvious areas for creating Welsh-language spaces:

- communities such as towns and villages where over 70% of the population speak Welsh, including, if decisions are made to build new large housing estates, establishing brand new ones where Welsh is spoken by over 70% of the population
- Welsh-language sports clubs and arts centres whose activities are conducted through the medium of Welsh
- moving bilingual and English-medium schools along the linguistic continuum to become Welsh-medium schools
- workplaces and bodies whose administration takes place solely through the medium of Welsh.

Through a combination of focusing existing efforts and establishing financial incentives and new policies, the next government could implement the following policies over the next Senedd term in order to reach the target of creating and maintaining a thousand new Welsh-language spaces:

- establish an incentive in the local government funding formula to ensure that Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Councils move to conduct their administration entirely through the medium of Welsh, and that every local authority starts by having at least two departments run solely through the medium of Welsh
- a grant condition for sports governing bodies and their sponsors to designate more clubs as ones whose activities are conducted entirely through the medium of Welsh
- a grant condition for public bodies and bodies in receipt of public funds to ensure that more departments operate through the medium of Welsh
- where decisions are made to build new housing estates or new towns, prioritise and facilitate their establishment as new Welsh-language developments
- tax incentives for small businesses and town centres to administer their businesses in Welsh
- tax incentives for gig venues administered in Welsh who hold Welsh-medium activities.

In addition, and as noted above, efforts to increase the use of Welsh are hampered by already-limited budgets which have been frozen or cut over recent years. Raising the level of investment to a level similar to that seen in the Basque Autonomous Community is a fundamental and essential step in order to increase the use of the language at grassroots level. We therefore recommend that:

- **investment in specific Welsh-language projects be increased to £186 million a year<sup>6</sup> (or 1% of the entire government budget) by 2025/26.**

This extra investment would enable a number of developments, including:

- the establishment of a Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg, a Welsh language digital enterprise, to increase online use and visibility of Welsh, especially for age groups where evidence indicates a fall in the use of the language
- a new Welsh-language bands' circuit
- the establishment of 'Ymgyrch y Glust' based on a campaign in the Basque Country, to encourage those who understand Welsh but lack the confidence to speak it to wear a badge

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6. Based on 1% of the government's final budget for 2020/21 as passed in February 2020

urging people to speak the language with them, and supporting the efforts of voluntary bodies to grow and develop ‘Diwrnod Shwmae Su’mae’

- a Welsh-language Leisure and Outdoor Initiatives fund to normalise Welsh as a language of leisure activities
- under the auspices of the Coleg Cymraeg, establish a national training college, the Coleg Hyfforddi, to undertake bilingual workforce planning for the civil service and other public services
- establish an ‘amateur linguistic agitators’ programme that would place employees as provocateurs to change the language habits of bodies within the body itself, from the bottom up.

As well as establishing new initiatives and projects, there is a need to mainstream and encourage behavioural change through other budgets and departments. We recommend:

- the creation of a Welsh-language film fund, targeting films for young people in particular
- the establishment of a system similar to that in Catalonia to ensure translation of films aimed at children and young people, such as Frozen
- through their usual funding formulae, the provision of a bonus for local authorities and other bodies whose administration is carried out in Welsh
- £20 million to be allocated for Welsh-medium apprenticeships in 2021/22 from the current apprenticeships budget
- £6 million a year to be allocated to the Coleg Cymraeg to implement the agreed plan to expand Welsh-medium further education
- at least 50% of the government’s national youth work budget<sup>7</sup> to be earmarked for Welsh-medium youth work
- business rates reductions for music venues where more than 50% of their gigs are Welsh language gigs
- the establishment of a new rule for Band B investment under the 21st Century Schools programme, that at least 50% of the programme total will be allocated to Welsh-medium education projects, establishing a specific fund for Welsh-medium projects if that level cannot be reached within the constraints of the programme. The programme’s Band C should place a condition on any investment to encourage the movement of schools along the linguistic continuum to provide more teaching through the medium of Welsh
- a requirement on all bodies in receipt of public funding to spend 1% of their budgets on specific projects to promote the Welsh language, including projects that extend the language to excluded groups as part of the vision of ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’
- increase and reprioritise the resources of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to focus on the education workforce, ‘Cymraeg yn y teulu’ (Welsh in the family) programmes, education bodies, support for the creation of Welsh-language internal administration,

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7. <https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-10/youth-work-april-2018-march-2019-289.pdf>

support for the target of creating Welsh-language spaces, and health and social care as important strategic fields

- rate reductions for entire areas, such as high streets or villages, along with individual small businesses, that administer internally and externally through the medium of Welsh.

## **Mentrau Iaith**

Without a doubt, the work of the Mentrau Iaith should be one of the most important policy interventions to increase the use of the language at grassroots level. During our consultation period, we heard concerns about the work of some Mentrau, and it is felt that the work of these organisations needs a clearer focus.

We believe that the vision proposed in this document, ‘More than a million—Welsh language citizenship for all’, offers an opportunity to set a new mandate for the Mentrau, namely:

- to create and maintain more Welsh-language spaces in every part of the country; and
- to widen access to the language, e.g. by providing community translation for events and developing community provision with the specific aim of reaching out to disadvantaged and minority groups.

## **Welsh Language Measure (extension)**

The suggestion that weakening and reducing regulation can increase the use of the language has no basis in reality. Robust regulation is needed in fields where regulation is possible, with investment increasing in those areas where regulation is not possible. Large businesses should not be paid to do what they could easily afford to do without a penny of taxpayers’ money.

The next government should set a principle of not spending on projects where regulation can achieve the same aim. We propose that the work of a dedicated unit to promote the use of Welsh, outlined later, will be vital in this regard, maintaining an overview of the need to spend on areas where regulation is not possible.

Therefore, as well as new incentives and initiatives to increase the use of Welsh, the next government should bring forward a new Welsh Language Bill which would:

- extend the Welsh Language Standards to the entire private sector, including the ability to issue one compliance notice to an entire sector
- set out basic rights to use the Welsh language on the face of the legislation in order to improve use and understanding of the rights as well as organisational compliance
- establish the right of workers to learn Welsh in all sectors, not just the public sector
- improve workforce planning by facilitating quotas and other measures
- provide a statutory defence to expand Welsh-language spaces and recruitment policies
- provide broader and more robust regulatory powers for the Welsh Language Commissioner.

## Broadcasting and communications powers for Wales

The media have a massive influence on our daily lives, including our use of Welsh. The paucity and lack of visibility of the language on existing media platforms is therefore a matter of considerable concern. The failure to develop Welsh-language media under Westminster rule is quite evident to all. There is no question that more Welsh-language media platforms, TV and radio channels are needed—a single radio station and a single TV channel cannot possibly be everything for everyone. On online media platforms, Welsh is almost invisible, and not nearly enough is being done to change this.

To strengthen the Welsh language and, indeed, to protect and ensure our democracy, the only solution is to transfer broadcasting and communications powers to the Senedd. It will then be possible to use financial and legislative powers to establish a broadcasting and telecommunications system that scrutinises our democratic systems, improves understanding of devolution, ensures a much-needed increase in the use and presence of Welsh in the media, and improves media plurality.

Our main proposals:

1. Responsibility for broadcasting and communications, namely regulatory powers over the whole spectrum of broadcasting, should be transferred in its entirety to the Senedd, including responsibility for the licence fee. A statutory index-linked financial formula should be established for our Welsh-language channels and platforms, which would offer long-term financial security to Welsh-language broadcasters and broadcasting. The new platforms could include:
  - a new independent Welsh-language news service
  - a new Welsh-language national radio station
  - a new Welsh-language multimedia platform for children and young people
  - a new bilingual TV channel for Wales.
2. We recommend charging a levy on broadcasting and telecommunications companies, and on corporations selling advertisements, such as Google and Facebook, in order to fund public broadcasting.
3. A ‘National Communications Council’ should be created to regulate the media nationally, replacing Ofcom in Wales. We believe that the new Council should have regulatory functions and powers in order to:
  - normalise the Welsh language on all media platforms, from commercial radio and local television to digital platforms
  - strengthen Welsh-language community media and digital content
  - strengthen Welsh democracy by ensuring media viability and plurality.
4. We believe that, under a devolved system, the remit of the National Communications Council should include the establishment of a content-creating entity that would produce multi-platform programmes including a multi-platform news service, tools and skills that would enable people at grassroots level to participate on digital platforms, and own studios and broadcasting infrastructure. This new model could improve working terms

and conditions in broadcasting. Resources would also be made available at a fair price for the use of smaller production companies.

## **Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg: promoting Welsh in online media**

New media platforms, such as YouTube, have a major impact on the use of language, especially amongst young people. Our members, especially those who have children, have noticed this impact as content, which in many cases is very inexpensive in nature, is not produced in Welsh, and the Welsh-language content that does exist is often invisible due to the algorithms of those platforms.

We believe that £9 million a year should be spent on establishing and maintaining ‘Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg’, a digital initiative whose aim would be to:

- increase opportunities to see, hear, create and use Welsh-language material on the web and digitally, across online platforms
- empower and equip people on the ground to create materials rather than focusing only on creating materials itself.

We propose that funds could be raised for this project and other expenditure by charging a new levy on digital and telecommunication companies; we estimate that about £50 million a year<sup>8</sup> could be raised by this new levy.

## **Language use promotion unit**

We appreciate that what we are asking for—additional spending, major interventions in the way mainstream budgets are spent along with the new financial and policy incentives—requires action in new robust ways. Processes will be needed to ensure that funding is spent strategically and in a way that leads to satisfactory outcomes on the ground. We therefore believe a Language Use Promotion Unit should be set up.

This Unit will sit within a powerful new directorate within government, the Welsh Language Directorate. It will be based on expertise in linguistic policy and planning, including the behavioural sciences. This will build on the government’s preliminary work in this direction, and will take advantage of relevant research work in this field. The Unit will reflect recent developments in language policy and planning and will make the most of these opportunities to contribute to language policy implementation across government policy fields.

There are many examples of behavioural changes that could be beneficial to the language: from technology to the provision and use of Welsh-medium services. Often, the Unit’s work will complement harder policy in regulation, legislation or funding, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of these efforts.

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8. page 16, “Yr Achos dros Ddatganoli Darlledu” (2019) <https://cymdeithas.cymru/sites/default/files/Datganoli%20Darlledu%20-%20Ymgynghoriad%20Pwyllgor%20DGCh.pdf>



The new team in this Unit will be tasked with supporting wider policy initiatives, aiding the prioritisation and development of cross-government policy in order to increase the number of speakers and use of the language. As we are calling for a substantial increase in the annual expenditure on projects to promote the Welsh language by 2025/26, we recommend that one of the first tasks of the new unit will be to conduct a thorough review of the language impact of current expenditure, which would include a review of the linguistic implications of policies outside the area of language policy. We believe this new team and its expertise would be beneficial to a number of language policy fields as well as improving operations across government.

## **More Welsh-speaking geographical communities**

Without strong and viable geographical communities, a minoritised language cannot survive. Despite a global pattern of population migration from rural to more urban areas, it is as important as ever that we strengthen those communities where Welsh remains the daily language of a large proportion of the population. There has been no real effort to mitigate or halt these trends, which are so damaging to Welsh-speaking communities. The tendency to concentrate investment in the south-east aggravates these destructive economic patterns. At the same time, and in parallel with strengthening traditional Welsh-speaking areas, action is needed in all parts of the country to create and increase geographical communities and other contexts where Welsh is the main or only medium of communication.

Communities where the density of Welsh speakers is highest face a crisis of out- and in-migration. This is without doubt an enormous threat to the survival of Welsh as a living language. In a number of areas, from the National Development Framework to the tuition fees system, to the Seren Network which specifically sets about incentivising students to leave Wales to study, the government is facilitating outward and inward migration that is extremely damaging to Welsh-speaking communities.

The next government should introduce a 'Property and Planning Act' which would:

- ensure that empty houses and existing houses are used before any new development takes place
- cap the percentage of second homes or holiday cottages permitted in a community
- amend the definition of affordable housing and control rent prices to make them affordable to people on local wages
- provide clearer and stronger requirements on conducting language impact assessments when any impact on the Welsh language is suspected
- devolve planning powers, including setting housing targets, to the most local level as is appropriate, and make linguistic planning compulsory in order to ensure that developments have a positive rather than negative effect
- make the Welsh Language Commissioner a statutory consultee on Local Development Plans along with individual planning applications
- control house prices and provide specific assistance for speakers of minority languages to remain in their communities
- close any loopholes or weak spots in the law that allow people to avoid taxation.

In addition, we call for:

- the return of the social housing stock to public ownership, the return of underutilised stock to public ownership, and ensuring that a substantial element of new housing is in public ownership
- a super-tax on landlords' profits to be invested in returning empty houses and second homes to be used by communities and the people living and working in them
- incentives to renovate and/or build housing using sustainable construction materials and methods
- penalties for refusing to let properties to members of disadvantaged communities such as travellers or refugees
- the development of a strategic plan for housing and tourism in rural areas to counterbalance the fact that many houses have been taken out of the local available housing stock.

Outward migration—such as young people leaving their communities to seek employment—is one of the main factors leading to the language crisis. It is estimated that we lose around 5,200 Welsh speakers per year through migration out of Wales. 117,000 young people between 15 and 29 years old have left Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire over the last decade, representing over 55% of all outward migration for all ages. In Ceredigion, 3,670 young people left the county in one year alone, 2015 to 2016, equivalent to almost 20% of all 15-29 year-olds in Ceredigion leaving the county. This is one of the main reasons we have to focus on policies that would create jobs in Welsh-speaking communities, and campaign for economic policies that strengthen the position of the language.

In order to invest in national infrastructure, such as internet and transport between north and south, along with financial incentives to develop Welsh-speaking towns, we recommend:

- regulating and introducing a punitive tax on houses used mainly or solely for AirBnB, including creating a definition of houses or flats used entirely as second homes or AirBnB
- tourism tax powers for local authorities
- powers to tax landlords' profits.

In addition, the next government should:

- establish a legal duty requiring it to promote economic growth and spread prosperity across the whole country
- establish a medical school in Bangor to train a Welsh-speaking health and care workforce
- decentralise the public sector by moving hundreds of jobs out of Cardiff
- establish a national green energy company on Ynys Môn
- establish the new National Communications Council and Menter Iaith Ddigidol in the western counties to be run through the medium of Welsh
- reopen the Aberystwyth-Carmarthen and Bangor-Porthmadog railway lines
- scrap tuition fees for students studying in Wales.

## **New governance**

As the history outlined in our introduction makes clear, we must get to the root of why every government from the start of devolution has failed to deliver on their language strategies.

The pattern of civil service failure to achieve targets set with a democratic mandate is not limited only to the field of Welsh-language policy. In part it is due to structural deficiencies, including recruitment and training for the civil service as a whole, together with a lack of political will.

In this field, nothing short of a revolution is needed to ensure that we have an executive structured in a way that is ready to deliver on the vision of 'more than a million'.

Therefore, the next government should:

upgrade the Welsh Language Division into a 'Welsh Language Directorate' with a substantial increase in the number of officers working on this agenda

fund the Coleg Cymraeg to establish a national residential training college, the Coleg Hyfforddi, in order to ensure that new employees of the government and other public services are fluent Welsh speakers and have a full understanding of the Welsh context

set an internal target, as part of the target to create a thousand new Welsh-language spaces, that five government directorates will operate fully through the medium of Welsh by the end of the next Senedd term, including the education directorate and the culture, sports and leisure directorate.

During the consultation period, we heard numerous concerns about a lack of Welsh used internally in the civil service. In order to transform the situation, steps must be taken to provide language training for sections of the present workforce in a much more systematic way, so that more and more parts of the civil service become fluent in the language within a short period. Furthermore, the next government should establish a policy requiring all new civil servants to be fluent in Welsh, or to undertake an intensive Welsh language learning programme upon joining the workforce, with a responsibility on government to ensure that every new worker is fluent in Welsh before they pass their probationary period—a policy which can easily be implemented through the establishment of the national Coleg Hyfforddi under the auspices of the Coleg Cymraeg.

## **Welsh Language Commissioner**

The Commissioner's role needs to be refocused on hard regulation. We therefore believe that:

- the focus of the Commissioner's role should return to being an independent regulator, rather than trying to be everything to everyone like the old Welsh Language Board
- extending the Welsh Language Standards to the rest of the private sector should be a priority for the Commissioner and their staff
- the Commissioner should be funded independently of the government, through a direct block grant as is the case for the Audit Office and the Public Services Ombudsman
- the appointment of the next Commissioner should be a decision for the Senedd, rather than the government
- a new education unit should be established within the Commissioner's office to regulate local authorities' Welsh medium education strategies, as well as supporting parents and inspiring behaviour change
- a planning unit should be established within the Commissioner's office to regulate the language impact assessments of individual planning applications as well as to undertake the new function of being a statutory consultee on Local Development Plans
- as part of the 'more than a million' target, the Commissioner should be asked to maintain a national overview on progress towards its achievement, with a duty to produce an annual performance assessment
- the Commissioner should be given powers to ensure that bodies who benefit from tax reductions and other financial incentives offered in order to increase the use of Welsh meet their commitments
- the Commissioner should be given powers to enforce conditions relating to the Welsh language in the procurement contracts of government and other public bodies.

### 3. Welsh language citizenship for all

The concept of Welsh language citizenship for all recognises the need to deepen the current agenda around the Welsh language and concentrate on how people use Welsh in their everyday lives and how we can extend the language to all, not just the fortunate few.

As we discuss in our introduction, in our engagement work a number of people have referred to the obstacles faced by some groups in gaining access to the language—including geographical, economic, informational and social class barriers. That is what leads us to call for ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’ in order to ensure that everyone, without exception, can learn, experience and use the Welsh language in a meaningful way in their daily lives.

It appears that our present system creates and maintains a Welsh-speaking white middle class while preventing—directly and indirectly—specific groups of people from learning Welsh or from using it in their communities and everyday lives. Then, having maintained a system that excludes these groups from the Welsh language, politicians and others try to claim that it is not inclusive to have spaces and events which operate through the Welsh language.

As we consulted on this new vision, it became obvious that there is a widespread frustration at the indirect ways that people are excluded from the Welsh language, and the lack of a proactive plan to extend the language to specific demographic groups, e.g. non-car owners, people on low incomes or those who are unable to work. Evidently, substantial work is needed to reach out to communities that are underrepresented in the Welsh language at present due to historical and structural reasons, including communities of colour in particular. All obstacles to accessing the language need to be eliminated.

Investment in the Welsh language is an investment in the nation’s skills. By ensuring that our disadvantaged communities are the ones to benefit from this investment, the vision of ‘more than a million’ is an opportunity to rectify social inequalities.

Our public bodies do not do enough to extend the Welsh language to new groups. There are no conditions or incentives to engage excluded groups in Welsh-language projects. Some movements do this voluntarily, but there is a lack of recognition and leadership from the government.

Despite the government’s legal equality duties, its language strategy does not mention how to extend the Welsh language to groups that have traditionally been excluded from it. In our engagement work, it has become apparent that bodies are not required or obliged to do this either.

The lack of access to the Welsh language experienced by certain demographic groups is clear—from migrants and those living on low incomes to school ancillary workers and people of colour. However, the government is not prioritising action to deal with the obstacles and indirect discrimination facing some of the most powerless groups in our society.

In order to change this situation and establish Welsh language citizenship for all, the next government should:

- provide Welsh lessons at all levels for all, free of charge, either through the National Centre for Learning Welsh or another provider
- extend the scope of the Welsh Language Standards to ensure that they create the right for all workers to learn Welsh in the workplace
- attach conditions to public grants on extending the Welsh language to groups currently excluded from it
- establish a Welsh Language Access Fund—for individuals and projects—to promote access to the language, break down the obstacles to those who are excluded, and maintain and create inclusive Welsh language spaces, such as:
  - the right for all to undertake intensive programmes to learn or improve their Welsh free of charge in order, for example, to ensure that a wider range of people are able to become fluent in the language before applying for jobs where Welsh is essential
  - widescale provision of free transport, food and childcare in order to facilitate access to Welsh lessons near people in their communities as well as online-only provision for those who desire it
  - promoting and investing in community translation programmes
  - free transport to Welsh-language events, such as local Urdd eisteddfodau
  - free admission to eisteddfodau and other Welsh-language events
  - a ‘Ffrindiau Cymraeg’ scheme to welcome refugees through the medium of Welsh, based on the Voluntaris programme in Catalonia.

# Funding the proposals

We understand that the above proposals require substantial additional spending by the government. We therefore outline four ways of generating income:

- **A levy on digital and telecommunications companies**

We estimate that over £50 million<sup>9</sup> could be raised from this new levy, which would be more than enough to enable the funding of the digital projects suggested in this document. We further outline how this income could be raised in our paper 'Broadcasting in Wales - the case for broadcasting and communication powers for Wales' (Darlledu yng Nghymru - yr achos dros bwerau darlledu a chyfathrebu i Gymru).

- **A tax on AirBnB and tourism**

Increasing use of AirBnB contributes towards rising property prices and rents while also increasing the demand for second houses. Consequently, this undermines the sustainability of the Welsh language in many communities. Reports by AirBnB show that 467,000 stayed in households in Wales in 2017/18 and that household income across Britain was £854 million in the same year.

The current government has already considered introducing a tourism tax<sup>10</sup> to see how a small contribution by visitors could help maintain important services for communities. The report highlights the importance of including AirBnB as part of any future proposal for a new tax. In 2017, there were 10.1 million overnight visits to Wales, suggesting that a low per-night tax could raise tens of millions per year.

- **A super-tax on landlords' profits**

The right to shelter is a basic human right recognised by the United Nations as a necessity for everyone. By making unearned profits on housing, landlords profit from this basic need for shelter in order to get rich at the expense of the poorest, the most vulnerable and society more broadly.

There are over 100,000 private landlords registered in Wales<sup>11</sup>. By introducing a tax of 25% on their income, we estimate that about £375 million a year could be raised.

In order to prevent landlords from raising rent prices in response to the new tax, we propose that the government introduce a system of rent price control.

- **A super-tax on second homes**

Second homes, which artificially inflate house prices in the surrounding areas and make it difficult for young people to settle in their local area, are not beneficial to our communities. Second homes also have negative effects on the Welsh language in these areas.

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9. <https://cymdeithas.cymru/papurdatganoli>

10. <https://gov.wales/welsh-tax-policy-report-2018>

11. [https://www.rentsmart.gov.wales/Uploads/Downloads/00/00/01/05/DownloadFileEN\\_FILE/Monthly-Statistics-June-2020.pdf](https://www.rentsmart.gov.wales/Uploads/Downloads/00/00/01/05/DownloadFileEN_FILE/Monthly-Statistics-June-2020.pdf)

There are 24,423 second homes in Wales<sup>12</sup>. By doubling the current Land Transaction Tax rates on these houses, which raised £63.9 million<sup>13</sup> in 2019/20, we estimate that tens of millions of pounds could be raised each year.

We estimate that approximately £500 million a year could be raised through a combination of these new taxes. This means that, as well as funding our expenditure proposals in this document, further investment could be made in public services for the welfare of our people and communities.

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12. <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Council-Tax/Dwellings/chargeableemptyandsecondhomesbylocalauthority>

13. <https://statscymru.llyw.cymru/Catalogue/Taxes-devolved-to-Wales/Land-Transaction-Tax/landtransactiontaxstatistics-by-transactiontype-transactiondescription-latestyear>



## Conclusion

These proposals have been made after consultation by Cymdeithas yr Iaith with a substantial number of experts and bodies on what needs to be done to ensure that the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities more generally are able to thrive.

There was a strong feeling amongst most people that the original ‘one million speakers’ target has created a shift in the public discussion about the Welsh language, and that what is needed in the next Senedd is to deepen and build on that. Some expressed concern that the target is an empty gesture unless definite steps are taken to achieve it, but the general view is that the million is an essential foundation to build upon to ensure the Welsh language’s future.

The majority of bodies consulted feel that the government has not adequately explained their plans to reach one million speakers and what their contribution as bodies should be. This demonstrates a weakness in the government’s structures and a failure to enter into dialogue on the ground with different organisations in order to enable a collective effort towards a shared goal. Our proposals to upgrade the Welsh Language Division to full Directorate status along with the refocusing of the Commissioner’s role onto specific regulatory work are an attempt to deal with some of the problems identified by others.

There is a clear focus on increasing speaker numbers, through a Welsh-medium Education for All Act, substantial investment in training for the education and childcare workforce, together with increasing the use of Welsh in a meaningful way through a new focus on establishing new Welsh-language spaces.

Many comments were also made during the consultation period on the need to change people’s perception of the language and to better extend it to excluded groups. That is partly what has motivated us to call for a ‘Welsh language citizenship for all’ agenda supported by a new fund to expand access to the language, which will also contribute to the wider social justice agenda.

On the other side of the debate about the inclusivity of Welsh is the need to completely change the discourse regarding Welsh-language spaces, communities and contexts. Rather than threaten these places, indirectly and directly, the government’s responsibility is to support them. The government should be ensuring that everyone has access to fluency in Welsh so that Welsh-only spaces are a source of pride and enjoyment to all, with these locations and contexts proliferating rather than shrinking. The target of creating more Welsh-language spaces should ensure an incentive: for workplaces operating in Welsh to become a norm; for Welsh-language films and gigs to become increasingly prominent in our daily lives; and for us to see more geographical communities where over 70% of the people speak Welsh. In addition, our proposals to eradicate the obstacles to access to the language, such as free Welsh lessons for all and the Welsh Language Access Fund, should create the circumstances that allow these spaces to flourish in all parts of the country.

As often demonstrated by crowds singing the national anthem with gusto at football or rugby matches, entertainment and leisure provides a context where the Welsh language already includes every single citizen. The proposals therefore work along with the flow of public opinion in this regard in proposing a Welsh-language film fund, bands circuit and sports clubs.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith has always believed that the Welsh language belongs to everyone, in all parts of the country. The proposals in this document represent the major, but attainable, steps needed to really achieve that vision. This is a challenge and this is an opportunity for our politicians, and for every one of us who calls this country home.

## More than a Million

Welsh language citizenship for all

### **Increase the use of the language**

Create a thousand new spaces where Welsh is the main language

Establish a Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg to increase Welsh language content online

Spend £186m a year to promote Welsh, equivalent to 1% of the government's total budget

### **Create 'more than a million' speakers**

Pass a Welsh-medium Education for All Act

Invest £100m to teach Welsh to education and childcare workers

Ensure that 80% of new teachers can speak Welsh

### **Welsh language citizenship for all**

Free Welsh lessons for everyone

New fund to support people to learn Welsh

Conditions on public grants to extend the language to excluded groups