



Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner



# Manifesto 2026

The Welsh Language Commissioner's proposals for the 2026 Senedd Cymru election

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## Foreword

The 2016–21 Government set ambitious targets to reach one million Welsh speakers by 2050, and to double the daily use of the language. The trajectory towards the million is based on the assumption that there will be 680,000 Welsh speakers by the end of the next Senedd term. According to the results of the latest census, there were 538,296 Welsh speakers in Wales in 2021, a decrease of over 23,000 since 2011. Therefore, bold interventions in favour of the Welsh language will be required by the next Welsh Government if it is to achieve the target of one million speakers by 2050.

While the Welsh language will need to be integrated across the next Welsh Government's policy and legislation agendas in order to make progress towards achieving the Cymraeg 2050 vision, I also believe significant interventions will be needed in some key areas. Continuing to invest and operate in line with recent decades cannot be expected to lead to different outcomes. In all respects, the situation of the Welsh language has remained relatively unchanged for twenty years, and to improve the situation, a shift in both approach and in methodology of intervention is inevitably required.

I am aware that the 2026 election manifesto proposals will take place against a backdrop of a period of challenging financial constraints for the public sector. This is one reason for focusing energies on interventions that can potentially have a significant and direct influence on the number of Welsh speakers and the use of the language. Several of the proposals reflect the priorities identified in our strategic plan for 2025–30. I believe that these interventions could potentially have a transformative impact on the situation of the Welsh language within a five-year period.

The proposals in this paper require action and guidance from the Welsh Government and will also require the contribution of other key partners, including the Welsh Language Commissioner. I have broad discretion to act in any way appropriate to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. My ambition as Commissioner extends beyond a narrow interpretation of that which is expected of me by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and I am eager to lead an organisation that does more and contributes more significantly to broader language planning. The proposals below reflect this ambition and I look forward to seeing them realised.

*Hfa Gwlad Jones.*



## Our proposals

- 1. Language duties** - increase the number of Welsh language services available to the public by extending Welsh language standards to priority areas
- 2. Community language planning** – extend the Commissioner's influence by strengthening the promotion standards as a framework for the co-ordination of intensive community language planning
- 3. Workplaces** - establish a specialist unit in the Welsh Language Commissioner's office to increase the use of Welsh in workplaces
- 4. Health and clinical care service** - transform clinical care in Welsh through intensive investment and action in priority areas
- 5. The education workforce** - establish a five-year Welsh language training framework as a mandatory element of training as a teacher in Wales

## 1. Increase the number of Welsh language services available to the public by extending Welsh language standards to priority areas

### Why?

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and subsequent standards were a significant step forward from Welsh Language Act 1993 and its language schemes. The standards have provided a level of certainty for organisations and consumers alike, creating new opportunities to use the Welsh language in a wide range of settings in Wales.

Although a substantial number of the organisations named in the Schedules of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are now subject to Welsh language standards, some organisations and sectors named in the Measure remain outside the standards regime. The Government may also expand the provisions of the Measure, ensuring that more organisations are required to comply with the standards.

### What?

We wish to see the 2026 election manifestos commit to the following:

- **The introduction of Welsh language standards regulations for Ministers of the Crown:** Ministers of the Crown are named in [Schedule 6 of the Measure](#), and would require the consent of a Secretary of State in order to be named in regulations. Priority should be given to ministerial departments that already have Welsh language schemes, for example, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The department with responsibility for the implementation of Government digital services (GDS) should also be prioritised.
- **The introduction of Welsh language standards regulations for non-ministerial departments of the UK Government:** This would include several departments and agencies providing key services to the people of Wales, for example, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), HM Prison and Probation Services.
- **The announcement of a clear programme for extending Welsh language standards to other sectors and organisations:** We call for the publication of a specific timetable for the introduction of regulations for organisations and sectors already named in the Measure, as well as the possibility of expanding its provisions to include those key sectors which are currently not named. Any such programme would need to consider the resource required by the Commissioner in order that it could continue to act as an effective regulator.

Consideration should also be given to reviewing Welsh language standards to ensure that the requirements remain relevant and reflect the way in which services are provided to consumers.

### Additional Information

[Welsh Language Commissioner Annual Report 2023-24](#)

[Welsh Language Commissioner's Reports on Compliance with Language Duties](#)

## 2. Extend the Commissioner's influence by strengthening the promotion standards as a framework for the co-ordination of intensive community language planning

### Why?

Ensuring the viability of the Welsh language as a community language and as a language used on a daily basis is one of the most significant challenges facing the Welsh language today. The results of the census clearly demonstrate a decline and also threats to the stability of the Welsh language in those communities with a higher density of speakers. It is obvious that a clearer focus is required on supporting the use and transmission of the language in these areas, and indeed in all parts of Wales.

The promotion standards that have been imposed on local authorities and national park authorities are particularly relevant in this context. The standards require them to draw up and evaluate 5-year promotion strategies explaining how they intend to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in their area.

Improving the arrangements of local authorities and national park authorities for the preparation and evaluation of the strategies is one of the priorities of the Commissioner's strategic plan for 2025–30. However, it must be recognised that the Commissioner's ability to influence the content and successful implementation of the strategies is currently limited. The standards do not set clear expectations as to the content of the strategies, nor do they specify a process for monitoring and scrutiny. The potential of these strategies as a vehicle for community linguistic planning is not yet fully realised.

A recent report by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities recommends that the promotion standards should be reviewed and supplemented in order to maximise the potential of the 5-year promotion strategies as a vehicle for improving community language planning in areas of higher density linguistic significance.

### What?

- A commitment to the introduction of a white paper as soon as possible during the next Senedd proposing a means of implementing the primary recommendation of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities to establish areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- Strengthening the promotion standards so that they become a more effective vehicle for community language planning. This would include:
  - In all local authorities in Wales, and particularly in areas of higher density linguistic significance, a requirement that the promotion strategies are developed in collaboration with a range of key partners in order to create a community language planning strategy. These strategies would sit alongside the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and would focus specifically on offering opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language and to experience cultural, community and sporting activities through the medium of Welsh.

- In areas of higher intensity linguistic significance, that the promotion strategies are used as a framework for planning, reporting on and monitoring various policy interventions. While national guidance would be provided regarding how such areas might vary public policy, the promotion strategies would be a vehicle for implementation, reporting and monitoring at a local level.
  - Placing a responsibility on the Commissioner to monitor and provide recommendations for organisations on the achievement of their strategies. This would be based on annual and end-of-term reports.
  - Placing a responsibility on the Commissioner to review the success of the strategies, both annually and at the end of their term, and to produce a report with recommendations to the Welsh Government. These reports would provide an evidence base for further policy development in key areas, ensuring adequate resources are properly targeted.
- Provide the Commissioner with additional resource so that the Commissioner, as part of its regulatory role, can undertake further duties to monitor, scrutinise, and make recommendations to local authorities and national parks, other partners and the Welsh Government.
  - Establish a dedicated resource within the Welsh Government to further develop detailed policy proposals in key areas such as **education, planning and housing**, and **economic development**. This national guidance would develop policies that could be adopted and implemented by areas of higher density linguistic significance, and possibly by other areas in Wales.
  - Provide an additional resource for key partners such as the language initiatives, Mudiad Meithrin, the Urdd, the National Eisteddfod and sports clubs – to enable them to implement key elements of these local promotional strategies.

## Additional Information

[Good practice guide for county and county borough councils and National Park authorities](#)

[Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language – Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities report on communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers](#)

[BRO Project Compendium of Census Language Statistics 2021 – Dr Richard Glyn Roberts and Professor Conchur O Giollagain](#)

[Data Dashboard: Who speaks Welsh in Wales?](#)

### 3. Establish a specialist unit in the Welsh Language Commissioner's office to increase the use of the Welsh language in workplaces

#### Why?

Creating, maintaining and supporting Welsh-language workplaces forms a key part of the strategy for ensuring the vitality of the Welsh language. Beyond education this is the strategic area that has the most significant potential to directly influence people's opportunities to learn and use Welsh, contributing directly to achieving the two main objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

We need to build on the achievements of the education system by ensuring opportunities for people to use Welsh on a daily basis at work. Increasing both the formal and informal use of Welsh in the workplace has the potential to influence people's perception of the importance of the language, on opportunities to gain linguistic confidence, and on the wider use of the Welsh language in the community.

Ensuring that the education system in Wales contributes to the creation of an increasingly bilingual workforce forms a key part of the strategy. However, there is also a need for far stronger focus on the role of employers in planning and utilising the Welsh language skills of their workforce and offering more opportunities for individuals to use Welsh at work.

The Commissioner is already leading work in this field to increase the use of the Welsh language in the workplace in collaboration with public organisations, businesses and charities. The Welsh language standards regime offers a powerful framework for encouraging organisations to progress along a linguistic continuum. For example, the standards relating to the assessment of Welsh language skills in the workforce; those relating to recruitment; and those requiring organisations to develop a policy on increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace, are key tools for strategic action in this area. Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the workplace is one of the priorities of the Commissioner's strategic plan for 2025–30 and with additional investment there is clear potential for the Commissioner to achieve far more in this area of strategic importance.

#### What?

Additional investment would enable the Commissioner to further develop this work by establishing a specialist unit to focus specifically on this key strategic area. The unit would:

- **Formulate and lead the implementation of a coherent and multi-layered strategy** to target and support various public organisations, businesses and charities in terms of planning for **progression along a continuum of increasing use of Welsh in their workplace.**
- **Research and experiment with different approaches to behaviour change**, investigate barriers to the use of Welsh in the workplace, identify actions for increasing the use of Welsh in workplaces of various types and in various locations, and develop an understanding of how workplace practices affect wider linguistic practices.



- **Research and develop methods of measuring the use of Welsh in the workplace**, creating a clearer picture of the current situation and facilitating the process of evaluating the impact of various interventions.
- **Apply a methodology to measure skills and proficiency in Welsh for the purpose of moving workplaces along a continuum**. The framework that is intended to be drawn up for describing Welsh language competence as part of the Welsh Language and Education Bill could be used as a scaffold to plan and measure the impact of various interventions aimed at increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace.
- **Facilitate the process of targeting and co-ordinating Welsh language training provision**. A specialist unit would be able to identify priority sectors based on strategic significance and the strategic plans developed in specific sectors and workplaces. The unit would also focus on linguistic progression and would support employers in planning appropriately to ensure that learners put their Welsh language skills into practice. The National Centre for Learning Welsh is a prominent partner in this context as the centre already offers language training to workplaces as part of their Cymraeg Gwaith programme.
- **Create a stronger and more strategic link between the employee and the education and training sector**. There are clear opportunities for the prioritisation of the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual courses, programmes and apprenticeships in priority areas in a way that would meet the needs of organisations, businesses and charities aiming to progress along a linguistic continuum. Collaboration with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Medr will be fundamental in ensuring that the education sector creates a workforce with Welsh language skills, and one that is strategically distributed across and within various organisations.

Beyond these key pillars, a range of other factors require consideration as part of this coherent strategy. They include the Government's key role in supporting the use of the Welsh language through technology; issues related to leadership and culture; and the relevance of related policy priorities, for example areas of higher density linguistic significance.

## Additional information

[The Welsh Language Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2025-30.](#)

[Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language – Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities report on communities with a higher density of Welsh speakers](#)

[Welsh Language and Education Bill](#)



## 4. Transform clinical care in Welsh through intensive investment and action in priority areas

### Why?

The ability to use the Welsh language when receiving health and social care services is crucial, particularly as people are often in a position of weakness in such settings. At present, Welsh speakers do not receive the care they should receive through the medium of Welsh.

Welsh language standards require health boards to provide numerous services in Welsh to the public but they are not obliged to ensure that Welsh speakers are able to receive clinical services through the medium of Welsh. However, health boards are required to publish a 5-year plan setting out proposed steps to improve their ability to conduct clinical consultations in Welsh (standard 110). Health boards have identified those areas of health care that they propose to prioritise in these plans. Since 2019, basic duties in relation to the Welsh language have been imposed on primary care providers through regulations. Certain standards imposed on health boards align with these duties and health boards are also required to issue policy on the provision of primary care services (standards 78 and 78A). Local authorities responsible for care services are also required to provide some elements of their services in Welsh but are not required to provide full care packages in the language.

*More than just words* is the Welsh Government's strategy for increasing the use of the Welsh language in the health and care sector, and specifically in clinical care through the medium of Welsh. It was written in line with the principle of the active offer which places the responsibility on health and social care providers to offer services in Welsh, rather than the patient or service user having to request them.

Although the Welsh language standards and *More than just words* provide the foundations for increasing the care available through the medium of Welsh, the position of the Welsh language in the sector has remained unchanged and Welsh speakers cannot be guaranteed to receive clinical care through the medium of Welsh. Strong leadership on the part of the health service centrally and far more investment and intensive specific action is required to transform this situation and ensure that clinical care is available in Welsh to all wherever they may be.

### What?

By the end of the next government term, the clinical care available to Welsh speakers must be transformed. Significant resources and efforts need to be concentrated in the **priority areas of *More than just words*** (i.e. children and young people; older people; people with learning disabilities; users of mental health services; people living with dementia; people who use stroke services; people using speech and language therapy services); the **priority areas identified by the health boards in their 5-year plans** (drawn up in accordance with standard 110 and which are broadly in accordance with the areas identified in *More than just words*); and in **primary care**.

- **Increase NHS Wales' central investment in the Welsh language by funding a department of specialist lead officers** who will ensure that care in Welsh forms an integral part of all elements of care pathways in the areas prioritised above. They will work within and between departments and share good practice across health and care service working with professional bodies, regulators, inspectorates, health boards and bodies, social services and social care leaders, charities and others involved in patient care pathways. They will be involved in the development of strategies and action plans in these areas so that specific requirements and guidance regarding the Welsh language are issued for health boards, social care providers and others involved in the provision of clinical care to patients. They will identify the needs of the workforce and the resources and technology required to deliver care in Welsh.
- **Fund the development and planning** of a workforce able to provide care in Welsh in the priority areas identified above so that Welsh speakers receive care in Welsh wherever they may be. A sufficient number of staff with appropriate Welsh skills will need to be in the right place at the right time so that care packages for Welsh speakers can be available in Welsh. Under the leadership of the lead officers, the current skills of the workforce in priority areas will need to be identified and the development of such skills will require funding. Workforce planning will also be required to ensure that the necessary Welsh language skills are available now and for the future. Guidance will also be necessary regarding day-to-day workforce planning to ensure that Welsh speakers are available as required as part of the care packages of individuals.
- **Fund dedicated resources and technology** to enable the provision of clinical care in Welsh in the priority areas identified above. Language and communication are essential elements of the delivery of care in these areas so standard diagnostic tests and resources are essential to treat the conditions and support the recovery of patients. Information technology, including artificial intelligence, is increasingly becoming a part of patient care and the Welsh language must form an integral part of these technologies to facilitate the delivery of care in the prioritised areas.
- **Commit to reviewing, and where relevant, reforming primary care duties** set in 2019 and the associated standards. These duties do not reflect changes in patients' means of engagement with primary care services (e.g. increased telephone consultations and the use of IT) and reforms to primary care that bring primary care and other services such as pharmacy, therapy, housing, social care, mental health, community and the third sector closer together, often in integrated health centres.

## Additional Information

[\*More than just words, Five Year Plan 2022-27\*](#)

[Welsh Language Commissioner's advice document : Good Practice Advice Document Standard 110](#)

[More than just words Evaluation 2016-19](#)

[Welsh language in primary care](#)

[My Language, My Health: The Welsh Language Commissioner's Inquiry into the Welsh language in Primary Care, 2015](#)

## Establish a five-year Welsh language training framework as a mandatory element of training as a teacher in Wales

### Why?

Ensuring a significant increase in the numbers of Welsh speakers progressing through the education system is one of the cornerstones of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. This objective will not be achieved without a significant increase in the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The current strategy for creating a bilingual education workforce does not reflect the scale of ambition as stated in Cymraeg 2050.

The number of current Welsh speakers, and the number of Welsh speakers resulting from the current education system, is unlikely to produce a sufficient number of carers, teachers and lecturers to achieve the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education Bill. Without significant intervention, there is a danger that we will see a vicious cycle in which a shortage of Welsh-medium carers, teachers and lecturers prove a continuing obstacle to ensuring an increase in the number of school leavers able to speak and use the Welsh language.

To drive real change in the number school-leavers who are confident Welsh speakers, significant intervention is required in bilingual education workforce planning. This is one fundamental area where firm and bold investment by the Government could lead to immediate and far-reaching changes to the future number of Welsh speakers.

### What?

A commitment to establishing a five-year Welsh language training framework as a mandatory element of teacher training and qualification in Wales. The long-term aim of the framework would be to ensure that all qualifying teachers in Wales are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. This would include:

- **Setting clear responsibilities for specific organisations to develop and implement elements of the framework:** this would include consideration of the role of the Education Workforce Council, Medr, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh.
- **In collaboration with the partners mentioned above, establish a Welsh language training framework as a mandatory element of teacher training and qualification in Wales:** the training would begin as a core element of all Initial Teacher Education courses, and then continue as a required element of the induction and professional learning period of new

teachers for the first four years of their career. The framework would need to design a series of various Welsh language training pathways tailored for trainees with varying levels of proficiency in Welsh. The framework would be able to set out a long-term vision of how expectations and training would increase over time, in line with the proposed timetable of the Welsh Language and Education Bill.

- **Reviewing relevant legislation:** This would include legislation relating to the accreditation of initial teacher training courses, professional standards for teachers, qualified teacher status, and the induction period for newly qualified teachers.
- **Develop corresponding plans and frameworks for the wider education workforce:** While the above 5-year framework specifically targets teachers, equivalent Welsh language training frameworks should also be developed for learning support assistants, the early years sector workforce, and the post-16 education workforce.

## Additional Information

[Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales, Welsh Language Commissioner's briefing note](#)

[Welsh Language Commissioner's response to proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill](#)

[Welsh Language Commissioner's evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into the Welsh Language and Education Bill](#)

[Children, Young People and Education Committee Stage 1 Report on the Welsh Language and Education Bill](#)