Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner

Advice note to Welsh Ministers on the education workforce

July 2026

1 Executive summary: Advice note to Welsh Ministers on the education workforce

1.1 Purpose: This advice note provides advice to Welsh Ministers on the steps that need to be taken to secure an increasingly bilingual education workforce, and to deliver the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

1.2 The strategic challenge: The current education workforce in Wales does not have the capacity to provide Welsh-medium education at the scale required to deliver the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025. We do not consider that a sufficiently ambitious strategy currently exists to close this gap.

1.3 Risk: Without further intervention, a shortage of a bilingual education workforce will hinder the growth of Welsh-medium education and undermine delivery of the Act and the wider Cymraeg 2050 ambition.

1.4 The proposed solution: establishing a framework of Welsh language training expectations for teachers as a statutory and mandatory element of teachers' career pathway. The framework will:

- Set clear linguistic expectations and outcomes for future teachers by mapping the process of moving the education workforce along a language continuum in line with the timetable of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.
- Require every teacher to follow a Welsh language training pathway throughout their career. The training would be designed and delivered on the basis of clear linguistic outcomes, differentiated according to linguistic ability at the starting point and likely language medium of teaching.
- Significantly expand and standardise Welsh language training across all ITE courses in Wales. A national curriculum would replace the current ambiguous requirements and would be established through the accreditation criteria for ITE programmes in Wales.
- Integrate Welsh language training as a mandatory part of the induction period for newly qualified teachers. The framework would set clear expectations and form a core part of the support and mentoring package provided to new teachers.
- Embed Welsh language skills development as part of teachers' continuing professional development, providing a coherent national offer that supports the progression and development of every teacher.
- Include training on the pedagogy of teaching Welsh in schools of different language media, ensuring that teachers in English-medium, bilingual and Welsh-medium schools have an appropriate understanding of how to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.
- Ensure that the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) develops leaders with the strategic understanding and skills required to move schools along the language continuum.

- Be developed and delivered through a collaborative process between the Welsh Government, the Education Workforce Council, Dysgu, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Medr, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, ITE providers, local authorities and schools.

1.5 The steps that need to be taken by Welsh Ministers

- Agree in principle to establish a framework of statutory Welsh language training expectations for teachers.
- As part of developing the National Framework for Welsh-medium Education and Learning Welsh, which will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, the following should be considered:
    i. How the code for describing Welsh language ability could be used to define the expected linguistic outcomes for teachers, in relation to delivering the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025. This should include how these expectations will vary according to the language medium of education and be raised gradually over time.
    ii. Develop proposals for establishing a national Welsh language training curriculum that would correspond to the expected linguistic outcomes for teachers. The curriculum should determine a standard and coherent Welsh language training pathway for every teacher, covering the ITE period, teachers' induction period, and continuing professional development. The curriculum should ensure that suitable support is available for every teacher to develop the Welsh language skills they will need.
    iii. Develop proposals for embedding the Welsh language training curriculum as a mandatory and statutory part of training, induction and development as a teacher in Wales.
- Consider what further policy and legislative changes would be required to embed the Welsh language training curriculum across ITE, the induction period for newly qualified teachers, and the continuing professional development system.

2 The full advice: establishing a statutory Welsh-language training framework for teachers as a mandatory element of the teacher career pathway

2.1 Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on me to provide advice and assistance to the Welsh Ministers on any matter relevant to the Commissioner's functions or relating to promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language. Under this provision, I submit this advisory note to explain the steps that I consider necessary to secure an increasingly bilingual education workforce that will enable Welsh Government to meet the vision of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

3 Our vision

3.1 In accordance with the vision of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, we want every child in Wales to have the opportunity to develop as a confident Welsh speaker. Achieving this will require transforming the education sector in Wales by establishing more Welsh-medium schools and moving all schools in Wales along a linguistic continuum. To realise this ambitious vision, a significant increase will be needed in the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh.

3.2 We envisage a future in which every teacher in Wales has Welsh-language skills and an appropriate understanding of the pedagogy of teaching Welsh in schools of different language medium, enabling them to support every learner to become a confident Welsh speaker. This will mean integrating the development of Welsh-language skills into every stage of a teacher's career: from initial teacher education, through induction, and into continuing professional development.

3.3 The vision is that every teacher in future will follow a national and statutory Welsh-language training pathway. The ultimate outcome would be an increasing supply of bilingual educators who will create new generations of confident Welsh speakers.

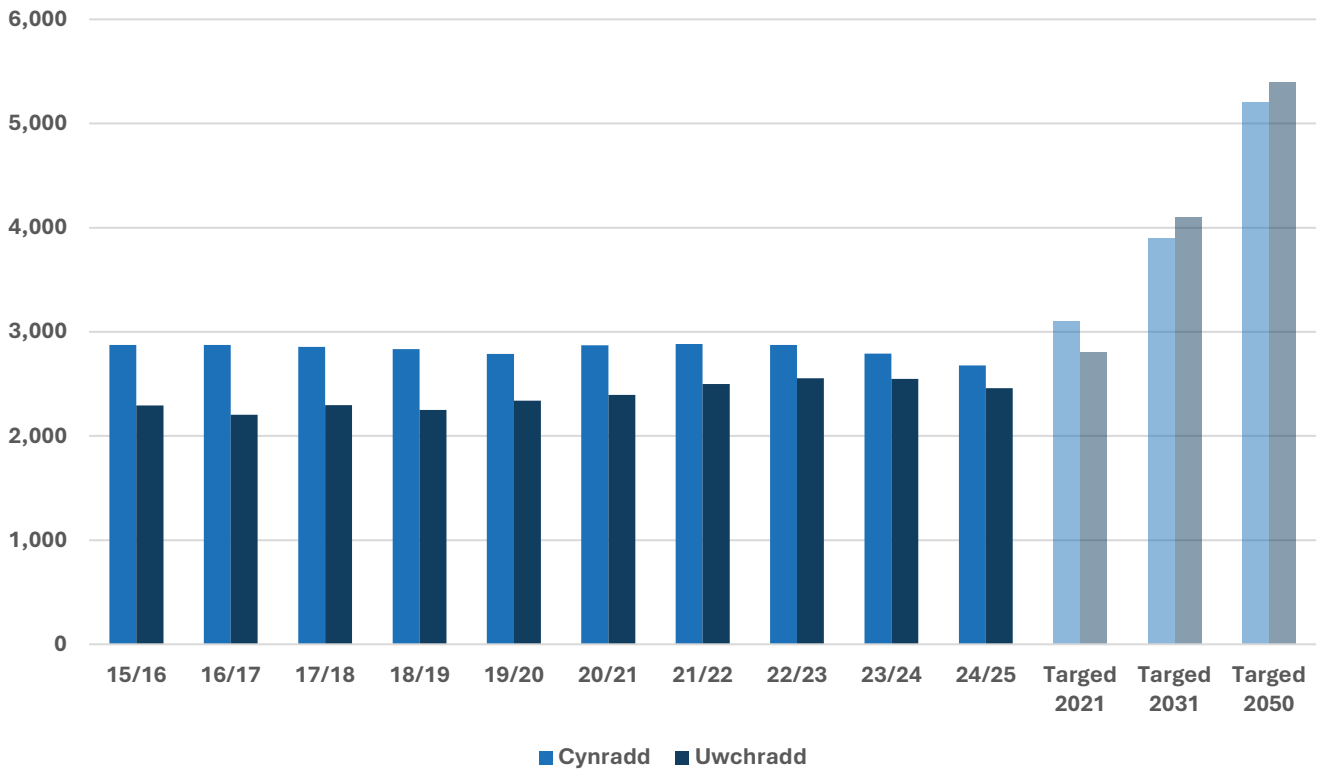
3.4 The new Welsh Government has the opportunity—and the responsibility—to lead these developments and establish a language-training model that could be replicated across the education system, including in the early years and in further and higher education, and for all professional education workers.

4 The current position

4.1 **Shortage of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh:** Despite the policy ambition of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, Wales's current education workforce does not have the capacity to provide Welsh-medium education on the scale required.

4.2 At present, around 30% of teachers in Wales state that they are able to teach through the medium of Welsh[1]. As the table below shows, the numbers teaching through the medium of Welsh in the primary sector have decreased somewhat over the past decade. During the same period, the numbers teaching through the medium of Welsh in the secondary sector have increased somewhat. Nevertheless, the numbers are significantly below the targets that have been set.

Numbers teaching through the medium of Welsh in primary and secondary schools. Pupil Level Annual School Census data



4.3 Despite significant efforts to recruit Welsh speakers to train as teachers through various grants, there is a substantial gap between the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh and the targets that have been set. Significant intervention will be needed to close this gap and to ensure that there are enough teachers throughout Wales who will be able to teach through the medium of Welsh, to ensure opportunities for every child in Wales to develop as a confident Welsh speaker.

4.4 **There is insufficient Welsh-language training during Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or as part of teachers' continuing professional development:** At present, Initial Teacher Education courses in Wales are expected to include 35 hours of Welsh-language training. Evidence from the National Centre for Learning Welsh indicates that one full level of language learning takes 120 hours, and therefore that

[1] According to the data of the School Workforce Annual Census, Welsh Government

35 hours is not sufficient to follow a language continuum and develop the necessary linguistic skills.

4.5 After completing an ITE course, there is currently no statutory requirement for teachers to continue developing their Welsh-language skills. This is despite the fact that Welsh-language training for teachers is available and has been designed specifically for the education workforce, whether through short courses or sabbaticals. Although developing Welsh-language ability is part of the professional standards for teachers, there is currently no mandatory framework to ensure that every educator develops their Welsh-language skills after qualifying. This means that any further training is, in effect, voluntary or dependent on specific school or local authority programmes.

4.6 **Welsh-language training is voluntary and is not required as part of a coherent and ambitious strategy:** The National Centre for Learning Welsh has already developed a National Learn Welsh Programme for the Education Workforce. The programme offers varied and flexible training for teachers and classroom assistants and includes sabbatical courses and placing tutors in schools that have committed to changing language category.

4.7 Although the developments above are extremely positive, undertaking this training is currently voluntary. Although the curriculum has been designed and the training is available, there is no mechanism to ensure that enough teachers undertake the training, nor that this training is provided strategically as part of plans to move schools along a linguistic continuum.

4.8 The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 establishes the National Institute for Learning Welsh. This new body will build on the work of the Centre and will be responsible for ensuring national planning to support people of all ages to learn Welsh. A central part of the Institute's responsibilities will be to continue further developing a Welsh-language training curriculum for the education workforce. Another significant development in recent years was the establishment of Dysgu as the national body for professional learning and leadership for schools. Dysgu has responsibility for developing and delivering professional learning to support the teaching of Welsh in English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.

4.9 There is no doubt that the developments are important steps forward. However, they do not answer the essential question of how to ensure that teachers undertake Welsh-language training and professional learning on a scale that corresponds to the requirements that will be placed on them as part of implementing the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025. The Institute will have the ability to design the curriculum and encourage participation, but it cannot require every ITE provider or school to embed Welsh-language training as a central element of training as a teacher and as part of continuing professional development.

4.10 **Lack of clarity and transparency leading to concern among the current and future workforce:** The education workforce is aware that changes are under way and that teachers will increasingly be required to be able to teach through the

medium of Welsh in future. At present, there is no clarity about the pathway for moving the education workforce along a linguistic continuum, nor is sufficient assurance being provided to teachers that appropriate support and training will be available to everyone, regardless of their current linguistic skills or their starting point when training as a teacher.

4.11 Evidence that different and bolder interventions are needed: Without further intervention, there is a risk that we will see an endless cycle in which a shortage of Welsh-medium carer workers, teachers and lecturers remains a continuing barrier to increasing the number of individuals leaving school able to speak and use Welsh. More ambitious and substantial intervention is needed if we are to secure the increasingly bilingual education workforce required to achieve the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

5 Our proposal: embedding a framework of national Welsh-language training expectations as a mandatory part of the teacher career pathway

5.1 To address the challenges above, as well as focusing on recruiting more Welsh speakers as teachers, we ask the Welsh Government to establish a framework of statutory Welsh-language training expectations for teachers. The framework would ensure that every teacher in future gradually improves their Welsh-language skills and receives training in the pedagogy of teaching Welsh in schools of different language media. The framework will contribute directly to realising the ambition of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

5.2 The foundations for developing such a Welsh-language training framework already exist as a result of the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. It is necessary to build on this and empower the work of the Institute, Dysgu and other key partners by developing a coherent and strategic framework for delivering the change that is needed.

5.3 The Welsh Ministers already have a duty under section 25 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 to set out in the National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh the steps they will take to ensure that training, professional development and support are available to education practitioners in Wales for the purpose of improving Welsh-language ability. Below, we outline the type of steps that could be included in the framework to ensure that education practitioners in Wales have the appropriate skills to achieve the objectives of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

5.4 In addition to making full use of the provisions of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, it is also necessary to consider the need to embed Welsh-language training within policy and legislation relating to ITE, teacher induction and continuing professional development.

5.5 We recommend that the training pathway be woven through three key stages in teachers' careers: ITE, the induction period and continuing professional development.

ITE period: Expanding Welsh-language training on ITE courses

What	• Provide a specific and standard Welsh-language and Welsh pedagogy training curriculum for every trainee teacher • Significantly increase the current requirement of 35 hours of language training, with greater focus on methods for teaching Welsh that meet the need to be able to teach Welsh and teach through the medium of Welsh in schools of different language medium. • Language training to be designed on the basis of clear linguistic outcomes. • A training package that differentiates trainees according to linguistic ability at the starting point and likely teaching medium.
How	• Welsh Government and the Education Workforce Council to require, through legislation on the accreditation criteria for ITE courses, that every ITE provider delivers language training in accordance with a national and standard curriculum.[2] • The Institute to develop suitable curriculum and content for different trainees, and to provide guidance and resources to providers. This curriculum should be developed on the basis of the "Code for describing Welsh-language ability" to be developed as part of implementing the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 and should bridge effectively with further training to be offered throughout teachers' careers. • The Institute, Dysgu, Medr, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and ITE providers to collaborate to implement and embed the Welsh-language training curriculum on ITE courses.

Induction period for newly qualified teachers: Integrating Welsh-language training as part of the induction period for newly qualified teachers

What	• Set clear expectations for teachers to develop their ability to teach through the medium of Welsh during the induction period. • Provide support to ensure that newly qualified teachers receive appropriate linguistic training and training in Welsh language pedagogy in accordance with a national and standard curriculum.

[2] The Education Workforce Council (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Training) (Wales) Regulations 2017, Criteria for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes in Wales, The School Teachers' Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2012

	• This further training would build on training during the ITE course, be tailored to different cohorts of trainees, and facilitate a process of moving teachers along a linguistic continuum as well as developing their practical understanding of methods for teaching Welsh in schools of different language medium. • This training would be a core part of the support and mentoring package provided to new teachers.
How	• The Welsh Government, in collaboration with the Education Workforce Council, to amend the subordinate legislation and guidance that set the requirements for the induction period for newly qualified teachers.[3] • The Institute to develop an appropriate language-training curriculum for trainees that builds on the ITE period. • The Institute to collaborate with Dysgu, the Education Workforce Council, local authorities and schools to embed Welsh-language training into the induction period of every newly qualified teacher—as part of the structured Early Career Pathway to support teachers during their first 3–4 years of teaching.

Continuing professional development: Embedding the development of Welsh-language skills as part of teachers' continuing professional development

What	• Training to develop Welsh-language skills to be a core part of professional development programmes for teachers in Wales. • Varied and coherent opportunities for teachers to maintain and develop their Welsh-language skills and develop their ability to teach Welsh during their careers. • Clear and robust expectations requiring teachers and leaders to continue developing their Welsh-language skills throughout their careers. • Ensure that the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) develops leaders with the strategic understanding and skills needed to move schools along a linguistic continuum.
How	• Welsh Government to collaborate with the Education Workforce Council to strengthen the professional standards for teaching and leadership.

[3] The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015, Induction guidelines for newly qualified teachers in Wales, Professional Standards for teachers in Wales.

	Clear and robust expectations should be set for teachers to receive Welsh-language training as part of continuing professional development. • The Institute to develop an appropriate language-training curriculum for teachers' continuing professional development that builds on the ITE period and the teacher induction period. • The Institute to collaborate with Dysgu, local authorities and schools to develop a broad, coherent and attractive offer for teachers at different career stages and in different sectors. This training would align with the needs of schools (as outlined in school delivery plans) and the needs of local authorities (as outlined in Welsh in Education Strategic Plans). • Consider the possibility of aligning performance management and career development with evidence of developing and improving Welsh-language skills.[4] • The Education Workforce Council, the Institute, Dysgu and local authorities to collaborate to embed Welsh into leadership pathways in Wales.

5.6 Central to the vision above is that Welsh Government clearly specifies the type of linguistic outcomes that teachers are expected to reach during their careers, and ensures that teachers receive the appropriate linguistic training to achieve those outcomes. The duty on the Welsh Ministers to introduce a code to describe Welsh-language ability provides a golden opportunity to introduce an ambitious and far-reaching strategy for moving Wales's education workforce along a linguistic continuum.

5.7 Although the ultimate vision is that every teacher in Wales will be able to teach through the medium of Welsh, it is important to note that this vision can be implemented gradually. It would be possible to raise the level of expectations for different cohorts of trainees gradually over time. The process of increasing these expectations should be planned carefully, setting a clear trajectory for moving the education workforce—and therefore schools and pupils—along a linguistic continuum in accordance with the expected timetable of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

5.8 It is also essential that the process of moving the education workforce along a linguistic continuum is fully inclusive and provides opportunities, time and support for every teacher, regardless of their current Welsh-language skills, to contribute to realising the vision of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

[4] The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Order 2025 (revoked), School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2025/26 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions – September 2024