



The Equality and Social Justice Committee

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

19/06/2025

Dear Chair,

Consultation: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-enactment scrutiny

The Welsh Language Commissioner was established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Bill enables the Welsh Language Commissioner to do anything appropriate in the Commissioner's opinion to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and to work towards ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. As a result of section 26 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Welsh Language Commissioner is a member of the Advisory Board of the Future Generations Commissioner.

In line with our duty as Welsh Language Commissioner, our response will focus specifically on the extent to which the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) has led to progress in relation to the well-being goal of 'Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving'.

In attempting to answer this question it is inevitable that the impact of the act needs to be considered within the context of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Bill already imposes specific requirements on public bodies in Wales, and the Welsh Language Commissioner has regulatory responsibilities and powers to ensure that public bodies comply with their duties under the Welsh language standards regime.

There are now over 130 public organisations subject to Welsh language standards, which include all public bodies that fall under the welfare duty of the Future Generations Act. Welsh language standards impose broad duties on public bodies. These duties can be divided into five main areas:

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- **Service delivery** – this includes issues such as correspondence, answering the phone, meetings, publishing documents, maintaining websites and social media channels, signage etc.
- **Implementation** – this includes issues relating to the internal use of Welsh within organisations, recruitment, and language training for staff.
- **Record keeping** – this includes issues relating to complaints, and also an assessment of staff's language skills.
- **Policy making** – a number of public bodies have a duty to consider the impact of their policy decisions on the Welsh language and to consider how the policy could be adapted in order to have more positive impacts on the Welsh language.
- **Promotion** - local authorities and national parks have a duty to draw up 5-year promotion strategies which explain how they will actively promote the Welsh language and facilitate the wider use of the Welsh language in their areas.

As you know, one of the well-being aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act is 'Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving'. By including the Welsh language as one of the well-being goals there is a duty on public bodies named in the Act to set well-being objectives that will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals of the Act. There is also a duty on public bodies to take all reasonable steps (in the exercise of their functions) to achieve those objectives. To all intents and purposes therefore, the Act imposes a duty on public bodies in Wales to act in ways that will ensure that the Welsh language thrives in the future. We welcome this.

The extent to which the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act are being achieved

As the two legislative regimes share many of the same general objectives from the point of view of the Welsh language, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions about the specific impact that the Well-being of Future Generations Act has had in terms of the Welsh language. It is difficult to isolate the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations Act from the impact of the Welsh language standards regime and also the work of a wide range of other partners who contribute to the Welsh Government's Welsh 2050 agenda. Despite this, there is no doubt that the Act and the work of the Future Generations Commissioner complement and support the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner. In this context we work closely and effectively, and take advantage of opportunities to collaborate in order to maximise achievement.

The overall findings of the Audit Wales report on the implementation of the Act¹ indicate that there is clear evidence that the Act influences the ways in which public bodies plan and

¹ [No time to lose: Lessons from our work under the Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)



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operate. However, it also notes that the act to date has not prompted the intended system-wide change. The Future Generations Commissioner's Future Generations 2025 report² also concludes that significant work needs to be done to ensure that the principles of the Act are realised, and that the gap between policy and implementation is reduced.

In terms of the Welsh language in particular, the report of the Future Generations Commissioner states that there is a lack of strategic focus on culture and the Welsh language within the well-being objectives of public bodies and Public Service Boards. The report recommends that there needs to be a greater constant focus on culture and the Welsh language and that the Welsh language and culture really need to be a central part of the planning and implementation process at all levels in order to realise meaningful progress.

There is no doubt the Act contributes towards ensuring public bodies consider the Welsh language in planning processes and when making different decisions. Nonetheless, it is also often the case that Act and its language are accepted and discussed as a policy framework, but do not necessarily penetrate and have a real impact on the way policies are designed, funded and implemented. Consequently, the Welsh language is at times a marginal consideration in the process of planning and implementing different policies. There are too many examples of policy decisions and various strategies that have not adequately considered the Welsh language, and occasionally, this is likely to have a negative impact on people's opportunities to use the language. The reasons for this are likely to be a combination of a lack of understanding and coordination, a lack of resources and budgetary challenges, and the need for public bodies to prioritise short-term challenges rather than longer-term solutions.

In general, the findings of the Audit Wales report and the report of the Commissioner for Future Generations reflect our experience and evidence of the ways in which public bodies plan and operate from a Welsh language perspective. For example, one of the main conclusions of our report which provides an overview of compliance with Welsh language duties for 2023-24 was that there is clear ³ evidence that organisations are now better equipped to provide high quality Welsh language services. There is no doubt that the compliance of public institutions with Welsh language standards is improving and that people consequently have more opportunities to use the Welsh language.

Action to improve the effectiveness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and its implementation

There are probably a range of issues that might be considered in order to improve the effectiveness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We know that the Future Generations Commissioner's evidence to the committee⁴'s inquiry outlines a vast number of options to improve the effectiveness of the act. Our response below will focus on one factor,

² [Adroddiad-Cenedlaethaur-Dyfodol-2025.pdf](#)

³ [Assurance Report 2023-24](#)

⁴ [SWFGA 10 - Future Generational Commissioner Cymru.pdf](#)



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which is the potential that exists to strengthen the way we work in partnership in order to achieve the well-being goal of Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving.

In April we published our Strategic Plan for 2025-30⁵. A prominent theme running through our new strategic plan is our desire to prioritise important strategic areas, and to act in a more proactive manner in order to have the greatest impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language. With regard to our work with public organisations, we state that the following areas will be a priority for us over the next five years:

- To increase the use of Welsh in workplaces
- To improve local authority and national parks' procedures for the preparation and evaluation 5-year promotion strategies
- To improve Welsh language services within the health and care sector, with a particular focus on working with NHS Health Boards and NHS Trusts to increase opportunities for people to receive clinical services in Welsh
- To increase opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language
- To promote the use of services

We consider that the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the work of the Future Generations Commissioner have the potential to support the achievement of our strategic objectives. We are therefore very keen to continue working with the Future Generations Commissioner in order to drive meaningful progress in these areas.

Naturally, therefore, any steps taken to improve the effectiveness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, or to improve the ability of the Future Generations Commissioner to influence public bodies would be warmly welcomed. In terms of the Welsh language in particular, we believe that the focus should be on how the act and the Commissioner can complement and add to our ongoing work, thereby leading to faster and more far-reaching progress in the way public bodies plan and operate from a Welsh language perspective.

Yours sincerely,

Efa Gruffudd Jones
Welsh Language Commissioner

⁵ [Welsh Language Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2025-30](#)