



Eich cyf/Your ref: MA/JMEWL/2934/21  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/JMEWL/2934/21

November 2021

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter, dated 8 October, following the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee meeting on 29 September, where we discussed my portfolio. In your letter, you ask for further information on some areas, and it is my pleasure to present that information below.

### **Vaccine passports**

You have asked for the latest information on progress made to ensure the COVID-19 pass is available in Welsh, and that the electronic process of applying for a pass is available bilingually.

Welsh Government has been working with NHS X in order to provide a digital service for our citizens so that they are able to show their COVID-19 vaccine status and COVID-19 test results where necessary. The COVID pass was launched bilingually on 15 October 2021, meaning people can show their vaccine status and COVID-19 test results on-screen bilingually, or produce a bilingual pass to be downloaded or printed as a bilingual pdf. In early 2022, we will also begin substantial work to explore the NHS' log-in system, with a view to developing this function bilingually alongside work to develop a new NHS app in Wales, that will be bilingual from the start.

### **On-line learning**

You have asked for information on National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Centre) figures and figures for those using the *Say Something in Welsh* and *Duolingo* app.

According to the latest data published by the Centre in relation to the 2019/2020 academic year, they had 17,505 individual learners. 85% of the Centre's provision is currently on-line, either through virtual classes or self-study courses, or a combination of both. The next set of data will be available on 31 March 2022.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We do not have information on *Say Something in Welsh* user numbers, but 2,000 learners following the Centre's courses this year will receive free *Say Something in Welsh* provision to support their learning. *Duolingo* report that their app have 276,080 active users practising their Welsh within the United Kingdom (476,000 globally). In 2020, Welsh was the language that grew the most in popularity on *Duolingo* in the United Kingdom – with a 44% increase in users compared to 2019. The Centre has launched a new partnership with *Duolingo* so that the app can be used to support classroom learning, and to attract more to take Welsh lessons.

In your letter, you refer to provision for learners and Welsh-speakers where there are issues in terms of digital access. You also ask for further information on our response to the [report on the effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups](#), where we discussed the action we will take to address barriers to accessing digital networks and increasing digital skills, in response to the second recommendation on 'Digital Inclusion'.

Thanks to government support, a number of programmes are already being implemented to widen digital access in Wales, including broadband programmes, and others to increase digital skills. We will continue with our efforts to widen access to technology during the second *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme from 2021 to 2026*. We have also published the [Welsh language technology action plan: progress report 2020](#) which details the components that will further increase the use of the Welsh language in technology. We are also currently using and developing procurement systems that drive the market for bilingual software that provides a positive experience for Welsh language users.

### **Welsh language use within the community**

You have asked for further information on our commitment in the *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26* to 'establish and support a commission to strengthen the position of Welsh as a community language'.

It is my intention to appoint a Chair for the commission by January 2022. I emphasise that the commission is not a bricks and mortar organisation, rather a group of specialists who are able to advise me in progressing our agenda in relation to Welsh language use within the community. Establishing a commission is one of the recommendations in Dr Simon Brooks' report, [Second homes: developing new policies in Wales](#). The commission will look specifically at the future of Welsh as a community language. In his report, Dr Brooks highlighted the fact that traditional Welsh-speaking areas share socio-economic, social and cultural characteristics, thus sharing the same challenges in relation to their long-term sustainability. My aim is for the commission to look in detail at a number of areas that can impact or threaten communities where a substantial percentage speak Welsh. I will publish more detailed information about the work of the commission in due course.

### **Proposed Welsh Medium Education Bill**

You expressed an interest in hearing more about the proposed Welsh Medium Education Bill.

Every child wanting to attend a Welsh-medium school should be able to do so – wherever they live in Wales. Every local authority in Wales provides Welsh-medium education in order to meet this policy aim. However, we are aware of examples where access to Welsh education is not always equal, and that there are common barriers such as distance from a child's home and accessibility of transport to another school where there is no room at the

closest Welsh school. Decisions on transport policy, in line with the 2008 Learner Travel Measure, are made by local authorities.

We have already taken important action in this area. We have strengthened the secondary legislation supporting the planning of Welsh-medium education by local authorities through their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). The WESP sets a clear ambition and expectation for local authorities in planning Welsh-medium provision.

I am keen to explore what else we are able to do in this area. We have committed to introducing a Welsh Medium Education Bill during this Senedd term to ensure all learners in any part of Wales can be educated through the medium of Welsh if that is their wish, and to ensure we are on the right track to reach our targets in *Cymraeg 2050*. This builds on, and is in the spirit of, the new Curriculum for Wales.

I am also keen to ensure that learners are given the opportunity to continue on their journey to acquire Welsh language skills during the post-16 phase. The *Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26* commits us to extend the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and develop proposals for the Welsh Medium Education Bill to place the Coleg on a statutory footing.

It will be for the First Minister to consider a timeframe for introducing the Bill as part of the Legislative Programme.

We will consider implementation of the legislation as we develop the legislative proposals.

## **Welsh Language Standards Regulations**

You have asked for more information on current work to establish a better understanding of how the Standards have increased the use of Welsh.

I am keen to consider all Government interventions through the lens of Welsh language use. In relation to the standards specifically, I have asked the Welsh Language Commissioner to undertake a piece of work relating to the 'language journey' of users and organisations.

This information will be helpful in establishing a better understanding of what prevents people from using Welsh language services. I am keen to understand the barriers and challenges from the user's standpoint, and also from the standpoint of organisations providing services in relation to all categories of Standards that apply to them, so that we are in a position to help overcome these barriers. I do not intend to place any conditions on the work as it is the Commissioner who is best placed to decide how to undertake the task.

This work is part of the common process of considering the impact of legislation. The conclusions will influence any standards prepared by us in future.

## **National Eisteddfod of Wales**

You have asked for details of the £200,000 earmarked for the National Eisteddfod from the COVID-19 Response Fund and its financial situation in the longer term.

Discussions continue with the National Eisteddfod to ensure they have the necessary resources to organise and hold the Ceredigion Eisteddfod in 2022 and the Llŷn and Eifionydd Eisteddfod in 2023. The aim is to use this funding mainly to support a specialist team to help with the work. As I have noted, part of this funding will support social and

community inclusion and will create new opportunities to attract audiences that have not usually attended this important festival.

We hold regular discussions with the National Eisteddfod to consider their work and vision for the future. We will continue to hold these discussions and will explore what further support is needed in order to ensure a thriving future for the Eisteddfod for future generations.

### **Late immersion provision**

Every local authority in Wales is expected to meet the demand for late immersion provision within their counties. Those needs vary from county to county, and the models and immersion arrangements are therefore different. The following authorities have established arrangements in place to offer late immersion education, either in a centre or in a unit on school premises, in a location that is independent of the school or by a peripatetic arrangement: Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Ceredigion, Flint, Wrexham, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, and Newport.

On 14 September this year, I announced that £2.2m was available to support local immersion and late immersion plans. We have received a positive response from local authorities, schools, Welsh language organisations and educational organisations. Every education director and senior education official was informed of the financial investment through the connections of the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, and through direct contact with the local authorities themselves. My officials in the Welsh Language Division facilitated two virtual sessions for education officers in local authorities, regional consortia and school practitioners where presentations were given by peers in other counties on existing immersion arrangements, and also to discuss more practical matters regarding the application, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Every county has been informed that they have the same opportunity to apply for up to £100,000 funding by completing an Expression of Interest form.

We have received applications from most counties and they have been assessed. I look forward to being able to announce the result of that process very soon.

I am confident that our local authorities and partners will take advantage of this opportunity to expand Welsh-medium late immersion provision in schools and centres. I see this as an important step in our response to the challenges arising from COVID-19. This investment will support learners on an educational pathway to be Welsh-speakers, as well as supporting language progression in the light of COVID-19, and I continue to look forward to seeing exciting, innovative and important plans developed over the coming year.

### **Other matters**

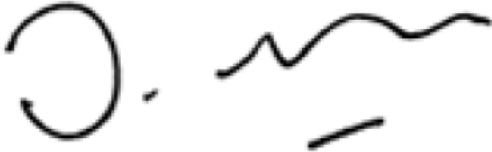
You have asked for my [response](#) to the recommendations of the review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. It was published on the Government's website on 22 October. I published a [Written Statement](#) for Senedd Members informing them of this.

You also asked for my response to the statement by the National Museum for Wales and the Arts Council of Wales on the Widening Access Report. The report is a matter for the organisations in question – I have emphasised numerous times in my work that I am eager for each one of us to own the language, as it belongs to us all. Increasing the numbers that

take an interest in the Welsh language, learn our language and use it, is of the highest importance for me.

In our document published in July, with our 5 year Work Programme ([\*The effects of COVID-19 on Welsh language community groups: government response\*](#)), I responded to a recommendation by the Welsh Language Partnership Council's Increasing the Use of Welsh Sub-group, (that steered the research and created recommendations on that basis) regarding the Arts Council of Wales and Sports Wales. I look forward to working with both organisations over the next five years in order to understand how we can work in partnership to increase the use of Welsh.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language