



17 Ionawr 2024

Annwyl Delyth

Thank you very much for your letter of 11 December on behalf of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee relating to the Welsh language in banking.

I have received several pieces of correspondence from members of the public recently responding to HSBC's decision to close their Welsh language telephone service. My response to them has been consistent; namely, that the news is extremely disappointing and that I am committed to increasing the use of our language. This is a priority for the Welsh Government and central to our strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*.

The Welsh Government has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Welsh Language Commissioner. In the Memorandum, the area of banking is the responsibility of the Commissioner. However, it is my intention to correspond with the heads of banking services in Wales to reinforce the importance of the Welsh language within the sector and to persuade the sector to increase their use of Welsh.

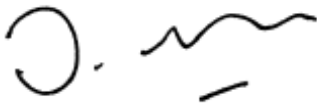
I know that the Commissioner has already met with HSBC to discuss the company's decision. While there has been no suggestion that the decision will be overturned, HSBC has agreed to consider how to improve customer awareness of the Welsh language services they still offer. The Commissioner has confirmed that she will work with banks to do the following:

- Include information on their website stating what Welsh language service is available from which bank and building society and update this annually;
- Maintain proactive relationships with the banks and building associations;
- Arrange a visit with heads and senior officials of banks and building societies during 2024.

We will continue to target sectors that are beyond the scope of the Welsh Language (Wales) Bill 2011 through the Helo Blod service. The service is going from strength to strength and providing direct and proactive support to businesses to use more Welsh. This work goes hand in hand with the Commissioner's provision to the private sector, so we will continue to work together in shaping our services for these sectors.

I hope that the above information will be useful to the committee to gain an understanding of the work already underway in this area. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a wavy line and a short horizontal stroke.

**Jeremy Miles MS**  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language