

Agenda – Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: 6 December 2017

Meeting time: 10.00

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 Non-public funding of the arts: Evidence Session 8

(10:00 – 11:00)

(Pages 1 – 17)

Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport.

Jason Thomas – Director Culture, Sport and Tourism, Welsh Government

Peter Owen – Head of Arts Policy Branch, Welsh Government

3 Historic Environment: Evidence Session 8

(11:00 – 12:00)

(Pages 18 – 29)

Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport.

Jason Thomas – Director Culture, Sport and Tourism, Welsh Government

Gwilym Hughes – Assistant Director Historic Environment, Welsh Government

4 Paper(s) to note

4.1 Welsh Government budget 2018–19

(Pages 30 – 42)

Paper 1: Kirsty Williams AM, Minister for Education.

Paper 2: Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport

Paper 3: Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning

Paper 3a: Letter to Chair from Mudiad Meithrin



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

**4.2 Welsh Language Commissioner: Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years
Provision Briefing Note**

(Pages 43 – 66)

**5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the
public from the meeting for the following business:**

6 Private debrief

(12:00 – 12:30)

Agenda Item 2

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**Evidence Paper for Culture, Welsh Language & Communications
Committee on Wednesday 6th December 2017**

‘Non-Public Funding of the Arts and Historic Environment’

1. The context

The Welsh Government recognises that the culture and heritage sectors must work to become more financially resilient and sustainable. The continuing pressures on local and Welsh Government budgets, the recent fall in Lottery funds for ‘good causes’, and the uncertainty surrounding access to EU programmes all highlight the pressing need to secure more income from other sources.

This message is emphasised in *‘Light Springs through the Dark’*, the Welsh Government’s vision statement for culture. This notes that *‘there is real uncertainty and anxiety, notably over EU funding and reductions in local authority support. Due to these pressures, the sector is losing experienced and specialist staff, which is putting its professionalism at risk. As public funding falls, there is a clear need for the culture sector to up its game on fundraising, marketing, and income generation’*.

The statement calls on our sponsored bodies to *‘encourage the culture sector to be more proactive in pursuing new forms of income, in developing their business and marketing skills, and in exploiting digital technology, and to review and refine their fundraising and business advice services, to help the sector to diversify its income base’*

The statement also encourages organisations in the culture and heritage sectors to play a more active role in helping to tackle other public policy issues, such as health, education, regeneration and tackling poverty. This is mainly because the sector has much to contribute to these agendas, but such activities can also provide opportunities to generate additional income.

2. Remit Letters and Operational Plans

Following on from this, Ministers are giving significant priority to new income generation in the annual remit letters to our sponsored bodies, namely the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales (AC/NMW), the National Library of Wales (NLW), and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). Each body then sets out how it will address this priority, within its Operational Plan. A similar imperative is built into Cadw’s annual Business Plan. Details of the relevant sections within each Remit letter are set out in Annex 1.

3. Specific sectoral initiatives

This section of the paper highlights some of the specific projects and activities being undertaken by the Welsh Government, and its sponsored bodies, to

secure more non-public funding for the arts, culture and historic environment sectors.

Arts

- (i) *A national Endowment for Music.* The aim is to build a sustainable fund which eventually, will generate enough interest to support an annual grant programme. The initial target is to raise at least £20 million, with the aim to award the first grants in 2020-21. These would support young people's involvement in music and would complement, rather than replace, existing funding sources. The Welsh Government has provided an initial seed fund of £1 million, and has asked the Arts Council to establish the Fund as an independent charity. This will employ professional fundraisers, who will target a wide range of sources. The Fund is to be formally launched in Spring 2018.
- (ii) *A new, unified National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW).* There are seven national youth ensembles, which enable some of the most talented young musicians, actors and dancers from across Wales to receive top class tuition and performance experience. Historically, these have been administered by two separate bodies (the WJEC and Tŷ Cerdd), and funded via local authorities and the Arts Council of Wales (ACW). With our support, ACW is overseeing a transition to a new unified NYAW, with a new Board of Trustees. This is developing a new business model, still involving substantial public funding from ACW, but with greater reliance on commercial income, fundraising, and sponsorship.
- (iii) *Trusts and Foundations.* increasing funding from charitable Trusts and Foundations is also an important element of our strategy. We are encouraging ACW to help the arts sector to make more, and better quality applications to trusts and foundations, many of which have a UK-wide remit. In March 2016 the Welsh Government, in collaboration with ACW and Arts & Business Cymru (A&BC), organised a successful symposium with key trusts and foundations, and arts organisations from across the country. A&BC, supported by the Arts Council, has recently repeated this exercise.
- (iv) *Fundraising:* ACW has commissioned consultants Blue Canary, to assess the fundraising landscape in Wales and identify what can be done to optimise opportunities. A draft report was discussed by ACW Council in November and a final will be published in early December. It is likely to include recommendations on how to support senior fundraisers as well as the role that the Arts Council can play in developing relationships. Additionally, ACW support Arts and Business Cymru to deliver their fundraising internships programme.
- (v) *ACW 'Resilience' programme:* As part of ACW's 'Resilience' programme, a number of its core funded organisations are now receiving bespoke support to develop their fundraising strategies. This

includes training on how to develop and write successful bids for funding from large charitable trusts and foundations.

Cadw

- (i) *Commercial revenue:* in recent years Cadw has been working to improve its commercial performance, and income from the properties in its care. It has made record-breaking strides in increasing income by improving its sites and facilities. Cadw sites receive income from admissions, retail, membership, corporate hire and other commercial initiatives. 2016/17 saw Cadw's most successful year on record, with 1.4m visitors to staffed sites and £6.6m income received. This is reinvested into the care and protection of the historic environment. In each of the last three years Cadw's commercial income has exceeded ambitious targets. As part of this, it has run several award-winning marketing campaigns, and delivered ground-breaking events to attract new and repeat visitors.

For example, the 2016 *Historic Adventures* campaign began with the introduction of a large dragon sculpture at Caerphilly Castle on St David's Day. The campaign generated unprecedented interest and contributing to Cadw's most successful year on record. From the campaign's launch to its end in September there were 728,000 paying visitors to all Cadw sites (+3.63% year-on-year) generating £844,000 income (+71.47% year-on-year). The legacy of the dragons continues, with a female and two baby dragons introduced as part of the spring/summer 2017 *Live the Legends* campaign. Results to date suggest commercial performance and footfall continues to grow, with record numbers attending sites featured on the 'dragons tour'.

- (ii) *Memberships:* Cadw memberships are now at their highest level ever, at over 19,000. On 26 June Cadw launched an online membership sign-up system, which to date has resulted in 858 new membership sign ups. Most sign-ups have been initiated by the individuals concerned, however custodians have also been trialling online sign-ups on site. Cadw is also currently trialling membership stands during the busiest periods using professional promotional staff.
- (iii) *Unloved heritage project:* Cadw recently led a successful partnership bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which resulted in a grant award of approximately £750,000 for the Unloved Heritage Project. This aims to engage, enthuse and inspire young people to get involved with their local heritage. Concentrating on often-neglected 19th and 20th century heritage, this vehicle is being used to encourage skills development, to inspire creativity and to generate enthusiasm in young people for their past and a sense of pride in their place.

The wider Historic Environment Sector

The decline in public funding means that all the national heritage bodies are in a similar situation. Across the Historic environment sectors partners are exploring new funding opportunities, often through greater partnership working. Examples include:

- (i) *Historic Wales strategic partnership*: this was established in May 2017 to foster greater collaboration between Cadw, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru. The partnership provides an opportunity to bring a sharper focus and clearer identity to the commercial work of these national institutions, at a time of acute pressure on public finances. The partnership is currently considering several initiatives including skills development, commercial, and collaborative delivery of back office functions.
- (ii) *The Historic Environment Group*: this draws together the heads of key historic environment bodies to share information and good practice, and to inform policy. The group is able to learn from partners' experiences in pursuing diverse funding sources. Organisations which have had significant success in securing non-public funding for the historic environment include the National Trust, the Welsh Archaeological Trusts, the Historic Houses Association, and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

4. New markets

Another way for the arts, culture and historic environment sectors to diversify their income and increase their financial resilience is to develop new markets, be this in Wales, the UK or overseas. The Welsh Government is supporting this in several different ways. For example:

- (i) *Creative Europe*: the Welsh Government Creative Europe desk helps our creative and audiovisual sectors to access funding from the both the culture and the media strands of the EU's 'Creative Europe' programme.
- (ii) *Cultural exchange programmes and trade missions*: In September 2015, the Welsh and Chinese governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural exchange. This is facilitating a range of collaborations, involving Welsh artists, arts organisations, museums, libraries, creative businesses and higher education institutions. To date there have been two cultural missions to China, aimed at developing these links. We are also encouraging cultural organisations and creative businesses to participate in the wider programme of Welsh and UK government trade missions, in recognition of the growing potential for the sector to perform, exhibit, and do business overseas.

- (iii) *Major cultural events:* The Welsh Government's Major Events Unit supports a wide range of cultural events, including events such as the Hay and Green Man festivals, where a key aim is to extend their reach beyond Wales; such events provide a platform for the culture sector to showcase its work to international buyers and producers.
- (iv) *Cadw lettings and retail offer:* Cadw is continuing to develop a range of new income generating initiatives. For example as part of the £5.9m investment to improve the visitor experience at Harlech Castle, five luxury, self-catering apartments have been developed, as well as a café and new visitor centre with improved retail space. Further holiday letting opportunities are currently being developed near White Castle and Tretower Court and Castle, working with Welsh interior designers.

5. Digital technology

We also recognise that digital technology offers many opportunities for the cultural and historic environment sectors to diversify their income. This is recognised in 'Light Springs through the Dark': *'Digital represents a huge opportunity for the creative and cultural sector. It needs to do more to promote and share its offer and to exploit its Intellectual Property'*.

The challenge is to harness the power of digital technology to extend access and participation (e.g. live streaming), whilst also exploiting its income generating potential, where appropriate. This includes innovatory products and ideas, but also routine activities like ticket sales, and purchasing products online. Examples of the activities being carried out include:

- (i) *ACW's 'Digital Innovation Fund':* this is a partnership between the Arts Council and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA). It aims to fund and promote new ideas, including ideas with revenue generating potential, using digital technology as the tool.
- (ii) *ACW partnerships with BBC Wales and S4C:* these are focussing on digital skills, notably on how ACW can support short form capture (both individuals and organisations) and Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technologies, through a project initially centring on the National Eisteddfod.
- (iii) *Culture UK:* ACW is working in partnership with the other UK arts councils and the BBC through Culture UK. Examples include the recent P.A.R.A.D.E ballet on BBC 4 and Opera Passion day. This builds on recent funded work by 'The Space', a body which brings arts organisations, artists and technology together to reach new audiences, using digital skills and media. The Space is supporting organisations such as Sinfonia Cymru to use digital to Facebook live, to reach new audiences with their contemporary and innovative repertoire.

6. Conclusion

The Welsh Government sees the arts, culture and the historic environment as vitally important, and as sectors which should continue to be supported with public funds. It recognises however, that there is significant potential within each of these sectors to reduce their overall reliance on public funds, by increasing the level of income they generate from other sources, by developing new products, and by exploiting new markets.

This requires the Welsh Government and its agencies to continue helping these sectors to develop their commercial and fundraising skills, and their marketing and customer relations activities. We would welcome the Committee's views on other steps we could be taking to further this agenda.

Remit Letters (2017/18)

Arts Council of Wales

'continue to work on your business development services, to support your clients to maximise their non-public funding. This includes work to secure more funds from charitable trusts and foundations, and from individual and corporate giving... I would ask you to work with your portfolio organisations to develop a tailored plan for developing their business and marketing skills, to include clear annual targets for increasing self-generated income.'

Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

'it is essential that our cultural bodies continue to pursue and attract investment from a wider range of funding sources to supplement core Grant-in-Aid funding provided by the Welsh Government'

National Library of Wales

'I would expect Welsh Government grant-in-aid to be supplemented by significantly increasing levels of funding attracted from other sources'

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

'heritage bodies need to attract investment from a wider range of funding sources to supplement the funding provided by the Welsh Government...(so) I would like you to include an income generation plan in your Operational Plan'.

Agenda Item 3

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Agenda Item 4.1

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

1 December 2017

Dear Kirsty

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018-19

Background

Thank you for attending the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's meeting on 16 November to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2018-19.

Prior to the meeting, the Committee asked for a range of information on those parts of the budget for which you are responsible and in which the Committee has an interest. You provided us with a paper, dated 8 November, which was published by the Committee along with the agenda and other papers for our meeting on 16 November.

On this occasion the Committee has decided not to report formally on the budget to the Assembly but would nevertheless be grateful for your response to the points set out below. We will publish your response and it would be helpful if it could be provided before the debate on the final budget, which I understand will be held in January.

Specific Issues

Creative Learning through the Arts

The Committee welcomes the recognition of the importance of the wider benefits of arts and music in children's education and that funding continues to be made available through the Creative learning Through the Arts programme. You mentioned in particular the 'Go and See' element of the programme and offered to supply a breakdown of the numbers of schools and children that have participated by local authority area.

Music in Schools Initiative

The Committee also welcomes the additional funding of £1m in each year for the next two years for music initiatives in schools. We noted that you are currently still considering how this funding might be used and that you hope to draw on evidence from the Committee's inquiry report in this area. While this is welcome,



it would be reassuring to know whether the Government has itself in mind any specific use of this funding? The Committee would also be grateful to know whether you intend to consult further with stakeholders on potential uses of the funding and would commend that approach if so.

Database of Musical Instruments

The Committee notes that the Music Task and Finish Group recommended that a database of musical instruments should be established. We have since received evidence from the WLGA that the aims of a database could be met through more modest investment. The WLGA told us that there would be 'considerable set-up costs and significant ongoing resource to maintain' and that 'there are established communication channels between authorities which enable music services to ask for assistance in accessing musical instruments from another local authority area'.

They suggested that the additional funding might be more profitably channelled toward other uses than new instruments that might provide a longer legacy benefit. This might include maintaining instruments already in stock. You explained that these concerns had not been raised with you in discussions with the WLGA. However, the Committee would value any further thoughts you may have in this area.

Fundraising – NYAW and the Endowment Fund

Members raised the potential for confusion between fundraising opportunities for National Youth Arts Wales and the National Endowment for Music. You announced the Endowment earlier this year with funding of £1 million and which you told us will be launched formally with the Arts Council in January. However, given these concerns, the Committee would be grateful if you could reflect further on this issue and how any possibility for confusion might be addressed.

Yours sincerely



Siân Gwenllïan AM
Acting Chair



Rt Hon Dafydd Elis Thomas AM
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

1 December 2017

Dear Dafydd

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018-19

Background

Thank you for attending the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's meeting on 16 November to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2018-19.

Prior to the meeting, the Committee asked for a range of information on those parts of the budget for which you are now responsible and in which the Committee has an interest. The then Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure provided us with a paper, dated 8 November, which was published by the Committee along with the agenda and other papers for our meeting on 16 November.

On this occasion the Committee has decided not to report formally on the budget to the Assembly but would nevertheless be grateful for your response to the points set out below. We will publish your response and it would be helpful if it could be provided before the debate on the final budget, which I understand will be held in January.

Specific Issues

Investment in the arts sector across Wales

You mentioned in relation to the Arts Council budget that you consider it important that investment in the Arts is spread more evenly across Wales. Specifically you mentioned the need to invest in Swansea and north Wales in the same way, at least proportionately, as the investment in national institutions in Cardiff.

Members of the Committee welcome this intent. However, do you have any particular plans in mind? Is this something that will be reflected in the Arts Council's remit letter? If so what specific additional steps will you be asking them



to take and what guidance will you provide to them on how they should prioritise resources to achieve the intent?

Widening access and increasing Income

You indicated that widening access to arts and culture remains a key priority. Your officials also indicated that widening and increasing income streams is viewed as complimentary to, or even a means of, widening access. The Committee welcomes any improvement in diversifying the income of our national arts and cultural institutions, particularly from private sector sponsorship and donations. The Committee also accepts that greater diversification of funding may involve increasing income through ticket prices. This could involve increasing ticket prices, or implementing a more commercially-driven programme of events. Neither approach seems consistent with attempts to widen access to the arts.

The Committee would be concerned if the priority of widening access was to be compromised by the need to grow income through paid for events. We would be grateful for your views on how the balance can be struck in a way that increases income without adversely affecting the less affluent.

Youth Arts

On the subject of private sector investment, you referred to investment that has been made by the private sector in Wales, a lot of which you said has been directed towards youth theatre and youth music. The Committee would be grateful for further information on this investment and where it has occurred.

National Museum and Library Capital Spending

The Committee notes that inadequate advance planning has led to the National Museum and National Library reporting significant underspends on their capital allocations. The Committee was given to understand that this funding was subsequently transferred to transport projects. The Committee regrets that the underspends concerned could not be transferred to other priority areas for capital spending within the 'culture' portfolio because there were no 'shovel ready' projects available.

The Committee noted that the funding to complete the capital works in the National Library and Museum will be made available to them in future years. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that planning processes did not allow for funding to be spent in the way envisaged. The Committee was grateful for your assurance that this situation will not arise again but would be grateful for further information on what specific improvements have been made:

- to the financial planning and monitoring processes to avoid this problem in future; and



- to ensure that there are capital projects available, within the culture and arts portfolio, that can be completed quickly should underspends arise in the future.

National Art Gallery and Football Museums

£5 million has been allocated in the draft budget for the development of feasibility studies into a National Art Gallery and a National Football Museum. During the meeting it became clear that this funding is a capital allocation for the actual development of these projects following feasibility studies that have presumably already been undertaken? The description of the funding in the Cabinet Secretary's paper of 8 November as being 'to undertake feasibility studies' therefore the Committee would be grateful for a note on the latest position on these projects and what costs the additional funding is intended to meet.

St Fagans National Museum of History

You agreed to provide the Committee with a note updating the Committee on the £7 million investment at St Fagans National Museum of History.

Future of Cadw

The Committee was pleased that you indicated, in advance of your formal statement to the Assembly on 21 November, that the Cabinet had decided that Cadw should remain within the Welsh Government. While a number of issues around the future of Cadw were rehearsed during plenary questions on your statement, the Committee would nevertheless be grateful if you could provide it with further detail of the new flexibilities and operational freedoms that Cadw will enjoy and how these differ from other parts of the Welsh Government civil service.

Heritage skills base

On a different issue relating to Cadw, its work necessarily involves reliance on highly skilled workers, such as joiners and stonemasons, whose skills may be less available in the general economy than they were in earlier times. The Committee would be grateful for a brief note on the arrangements for ensuring the continuance of this skill base into the future. You also agreed to share the skills partnership agreement made with 'English Heritage, Historic Scotland and the construction body for the UK.

Media Forum

The Committee noted your scepticism of the value of the Media Forum and would welcome an early decision on whether a forum will now be established. The Committee's own work in this area has highlighted the breadth and urgency of the issues that need to be addressed. If a media forum is not established, the



Committee would be grateful for your views on what other ways the Government can engage proactively in this area.

Other issues

In addition to the above you also agreed to provide the Committee with a note on:

- how the £100,000 designated for the implementation of the recommendations of the local museums services review will be distributed; and
- how many businesses have received funding from Business Wales in the last 5 years that meet the definition of “businesses in hyperlocal news”? How much has this funding been, what was it for, and how was this split between capital and revenue funding?

Yours sincerely



Siân Gwenllïan AM
Acting Chair



Eluned Morgan AM
Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

1 December 2017

Dear Eluned

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018-19

Background

Thank you for attending the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's meeting on 16 November to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2018-19.

Prior to the meeting, the Committee asked for a range of information on those parts of the budget for which you are now responsible and in which the Committee has an interest. The previous Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning provided us with a paper, dated 8 November, which was published by the Committee along with the agenda and other papers for our meeting on 16 November.

On this occasion the Committee has decided not to report formally on the budget to the Assembly but would nevertheless be grateful for your response to the points set out below. We will publish your response and it would be helpful if it could be provided before the debate on the final budget, which I understand will be held in January.

Specific Issues

Overall spending on the Welsh language

The Committee noted the overall increase of £2.1 million in identified overall expenditure on the Welsh language within the Education MEG. Given overall pressures on the Welsh Government's budget this demonstrates a welcome commitment to the language. Nevertheless, while the Committee has previously welcomed the overall ambition contained in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy we have also indicated that we are not convinced that the scale of resources needed to deliver the overall ambition has yet been fully assessed. We would like to see



greater clarity over the resources that will be needed over the medium and longer term.

Cymraeg 2050 - 5 year profile of expenditure

You and your officials indicated that, although the overall aim is for a million Welsh speakers by 2050, you are looking to break this down into 5 year milestones for planning and monitoring purposes. Given this, the Committee would be grateful for a breakdown of profiled expenditure in this area over the next 5 years alongside the specific objectives that this expenditure is intended to support.

The Committee recognises that much of the expenditure concerned may not currently be separately identified, particularly, from general education expenditure. However, you recognised in your remarks to the Committee that it will be important to look at this issue in a cross-governmental way. It is also important at the outset to have a clear idea of the resources that will be required and the planning assumptions that underlie those resources.

Support for Mudiad Meithrin

In our report, 'Achieving the Ambition', we drew attention to Mudiad Meithrin's assessment that 650 new groups would be required over the lifetime of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. You explained that the increase in the number of Mudiad Meithrin playgroups by 40 between now and 2021, increasing to 150 playgroups over the next decade is sufficient in order to achieve the target. The additional £1million in the draft budget for Mudiad Meithrin will enable this to happen.

Despite this, there is a clear disparity between the earlier assessment provided to the Committee and the increase now planned. We were grateful for the explanation in evidence that this is, to a considerable degree, because of differences in the definition of a Cylch Meithrin with, for instance, sessions at different times of the day being registered as separate groups. A lower number of additional groups may, therefore, achieve the same end as outlined to us by Mudiad Meithrin in their earlier evidence.

Mudiad Meithrin have since indicated to the Committee's officials that they agree with this assessment. We have also received a letter from Mudiad Meithrin, which welcomes the additional funding and explains further some of the work that they will now be doing in this area. I attach a copy of the letter for the public record.



Sabbatical Scheme

The Committee has previously expressed its concern at the perceived effectiveness and limited evaluation of the Sabbatical Scheme. As we noted in 'Achieving the Ambition' there does not seem to be a great deal of evidence that attendance on courses has fed through to the classroom, either in terms of better outcomes for pupils or in terms of increases in the number of Welsh speakers in the education workforce. There was an indication in your evidence that changes are being made to the scheme, which might help address some of our concerns.

You agreed to reflect on our concerns and I'd be grateful for your views along with further information on how the changes to the scheme might help address them.

Promoting the Language - Working with SMEs

You confirmed that the £400,000 in funding to help SMEs increase their use of the language in 2017-18 is planned to continue in 2018-19. The information provided during the meeting indicated that this funding supports 10 officers, employed by the Welsh Government under contract to work in communities with the Mentrau Iaith.

The Committee would be grateful for any further information you can provide on how the scheme will work and the reasons why this particular approach has been chosen. It would also be useful to know what specific outcomes the scheme is intended to achieve, and how its success will be evaluated in the future.

Welsh Language BEL

The Committee would be grateful for a detailed breakdown of the £3.9 million within the Welsh Language BEL (6020). Your officials also noted that this BEL included some errors in 2017-18, which the current budget is now correcting. It would be helpful to receive some clarity for the record on exactly what the errors were, and how they have now been corrected.

Proposals for a Welsh Language Bill

The background paper provided by your predecessor indicated that the cost of introducing a new Welsh Language Act would be met from within current budgets. The point was made at the meeting that it is difficult to believe that the new Bill will have no financial implications on the Welsh Language BEL. While the Committee appreciates that it may be too soon for you to have drawn up detailed estimates of any additional costs, it does not seem unreasonable to ask whether



you are planning on the basis that there will be additional costs and, if so, where savings might be found to meet these costs.

Raising School Standards BEL

£4.2 million has been allocated within the raising School Standards BEL to support the teaching and learning of Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh. This funding is due to increase by £680,000 next year and by £250,000 the following year. It would be helpful to the Committee to know what input you will have into how that spending is utilised and your role as the Minister for the Welsh language in future budget decisions, given that this BEL is within the portfolio of the Minister for Education.

International Support

The Committee noted that some funding had been set aside for the supporting the language in Patagonia.

The Welsh School in London is approaching its 60th anniversary and the Committee would be grateful to know whether you intend to offer it any funding in the coming financial year.

Yours sincerely



Siân Gwenllïan AM
Acting Chair



20/11/17

Bethan Jenkins AM
Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Annwyl Bethan,

I write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee. For ease, I have translated this letter to allow you to share its contents with fellow Members or staff if you so wish.

You will remember that Mudiad Meithrin's Chairperson, Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, and I recently gave evidence to the committee regarding the 'Cymraeg 2050' language strategy and the Welsh Government's aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

As a result of your report, meetings and continuous discussions with relevant Welsh Government representatives and the compact with Plaid Cymru, we understand that additional funding has been allocated to Mudiad Meithrin each year over a period of two financial years. We are extremely grateful for this and believe the investment will make a genuine difference as we aim to reach the target of establishing 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin (and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi) by 2021.

Earlier this year, we published a document entitled 'Meithrin Miliwn' in response to the new language strategy. We identified 10 steps that would be central to realising the Welsh-medium early years' contribution (through Mudiad Meithrin) as far as the aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is concerned.

The 10 steps are:

1. Undertake an urgent independent review of Mudiad Meithrin's resources in order to evaluate the support necessary to open 150 new Cylchoedd Meithrin and Cylchoedd Ti a Fi (as well as expanding the 'Cymraeg i Blant' scheme and supporting Mudiad Meithrin's support structures for existing Cylchoedd Meithrin committees and staff) – a review is currently under way;
2. Ensure Mudiad Meithrin's input regarding the future of the WESP nationally and at Local Authority level while adapting some of the outcomes (to include

the Early Years) – points raised by Aled Roberts in his independent review of the WESP;

3. Ensure that where there are plans to open new Welsh-medium schools, that discussions are held with Cylchoedd Meithrin (where they currently exist) to discuss possible relocation and (where they do not exist) to provide an obstacle-free pathway to childcare and education for children aged 2 years and above on the school site;
4. Continue to invest in a Welsh-medium scheme to train and qualify the Early Years workforce (such as 'Cam wrth Gam') in order to attract new entrants and to identify gaps in the workforce;
5. Invest in encouraging and promoting Welsh-medium childcare and education in co-operation with grassroots partners;
6. Ensure access for Cylchoedd Meithrin to capital grant funds through the '21st Century Schools' scheme in order to encourage Cylchoedd Meithrin to open quality new locations (if not on school sites) as community hubs;
7. Encourage a pilot scheme for schools who educate primarily in English to partner with Cylchoedd Meithrin in order to immerse older children in Welsh as part of the language continuum;
8. Invest in a national immersion scheme by following the principals of the 'Croesi'r Bont' scheme;
9. Ensure comprehensive data processes with access to birth data;
10. Pilot various schemes in co-operation with the National Centre for Teaching Welsh in order to offer support to help parents introduce or use Welsh in the home.

This additional investment will therefore be used to realise the two main aims of opening 40 new Cylchoedd Meithrin/Ti a Fi (in geographical areas where there is no provision) and contributing to increase the succession ratio to 90% by 2030. We will also concentrate on maintaining, supporting and assisting the existing network of Cylchoedd Meithrin by strengthening Mudiad Meithrin's infrastructure (in terms of the services and advice we provide to our members).

At the same time we consider the work of our national training scheme ('Cam wrth Gam') to be a key part of the workforce plan. Also, working with parents and families through the 'Cymraeg for Kids' programme is crucial in the work of encouraging, promoting and supporting language acquisition at home.

We are aware that you as a committee will scrutinise aspects of the proposed budget and I felt that it was important for you hear about the exciting details of what is imminent as a result of this development.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Gwenllian Lansdown Davies

Prif Weithredwr
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arbenigwyr y blynyddoedd cynnar **Welsh early years specialists**

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Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive: Dr Gwenllian Lansdown Davies

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Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Steve George
Clerk
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

27 November 2017

Dear Clerk,

Welsh medium childcare and early year's education provision briefing note.

The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy emphasises the importance of the early years towards achieving the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. With this in mind I presented this briefing note on Welsh medium childcare and early years education to the Cabinet Secretary for Education as advice under Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The briefing note discusses the significance of the childcare and early years education sector in creating new Welsh speakers. The paper discusses current childcare and early years education provision in Wales, and outlines the Welsh Medium provision in particular. The policy context is discussed, particularly the Welsh Government's commitment to offer 30 hours of free childcare to all 3-4 year olds whose parents are in full time work, and also the vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The paper concludes that there exists clear potential to integrate the above policies. When the 30 Hours Offer comes to fruition, it will lead to a significant increase in the demand for childcare across Wales, and thus presents a timely opportunity to take significant strides towards achieving the vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. To realize this potential, however, several recommendations should be considered:

- The Welsh Government needs to ensure that the Welsh language and its vision for 2050 are key considerations in the process of planning, funding and implementing its plans for childcare and early years education.



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Although general plans and commitments are outlined in Cymraeg 2050's work programme for 2017-2021, there are no explicit plans on the way forward and there is a risk that a golden opportunity to take highly significant steps forward with regard to the future of the Welsh language will be lost.

- The Welsh Government should use Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) as a framework for coordinating the actions of the Government, local authorities and childcare providers. Specifying growth targets in the childcare sector as a specific outcome in WESPs would ensure that local childcare strategies are aligned with the government's national aspirations and targets for Welsh language provision. Growth in this sector would contribute significantly to increasing numbers across the Welsh medium education sector in the long term.
- In order to produce effective national and local strategies, and to evaluate the impact and success of these strategies in the future, valid and reliable data is essential. The Welsh Government needs to take the lead in reforming the way childcare data is collected and shared in order to ensure that national and local plans and strategies are based on reliable information.

I trust that this paper will be of interest to you, and I hope you'll share the paper with members of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee.

Yours Sincerely,



Meri Huws
Welsh Language Commissioner





Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Briefing Note:

Welsh Medium Childcare and Early Years Education Provision

Author: Hywel Iorwerth

Date: 22/11/2017

Welsh Language Commissioner

The principal aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner, an independent organization established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organizations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.

Two principles will underpin the work:

- In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language
- Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so

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Key facts

Increasing the number of young children who receive Welsh medium care and early years education will be critical to achieving the Government's vision of a **million** Welsh speakers by **2050**.

51% of all Welsh speakers learnt the language at school: **11%** at nursery school, **25%** in primary school, and **15%** at secondary school.



80% of Welsh speakers aged 3-15 learnt the language at school: **22%** at nursery school, **46%** in primary school, **12%** in secondary school.



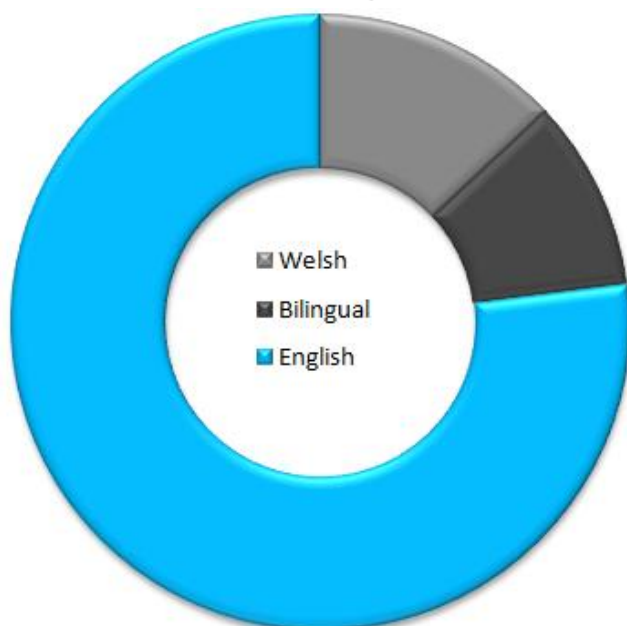
25% of those who learnt Welsh in primary school are fluent.



50% of those who learnt Welsh at nursery school are fluent.



English is the main language of **77%** of childcare providers; whilst **13%** are Welsh medium, and **10%** are bilingual*



Language is acquired quickly and naturally between the ages of **0-5**, and research shows that as many as **80-85%** of children in Welsh medium pre-statutory care transfer to Welsh medium primary education.

Executive summary and recommendations

This paper discusses the current situation with regards to Welsh medium childcare and early years education. Here are the main findings:

- Ensuring that children and young people start learning Welsh as early as possible is vital in order to produce fluent Welsh speakers who are likely to use the language and transfer it to the next generation. The childcare and early years education sector has a highly significant role to play in this context.
- Growth in the number of young children who receive Welsh medium care and early years education could be critical in achieving the Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- The Welsh Government has committed to offering 30 hours of free childcare to every 3 and 4 year old child whose parents are in full-time work. If this comes to fruition, it will lead to a significant increase in the demand for childcare across Wales and, as a result, a golden opportunity to ensure an increase in the numbers who receive Welsh medium childcare.
- Although the Welsh Government is aware of the importance of childcare to the future of the language, there are no specific and firm plans on how they intend to integrate the 30 Hours Scheme and the 2050 vision. It is unclear how the Welsh Government intends to move from general commitments to increase Welsh medium childcare provision to specific actions which will have an impact on the ground.
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) have significant potential to turn broad and general commitments into specific and material actions and targets.
- WESPs could provide an effective framework for coordinating the actions of the Welsh Government, local authorities and childcare providers, in order to ensure that there is significant increase in the numbers receiving Welsh medium childcare and subsequently transferring to Welsh medium education.
- Developing and evaluating national and local strategies to increase the numbers receiving Welsh medium childcare depends on the availability of reliable data and information.
- Current data on Welsh medium childcare in Wales is fragmented, inconsistent and difficult to interpret. There is currently a lack of robust information, and this deficiency may undermine attempts to reform the Welsh medium childcare sector in Wales and, as a result, the potential to take significant strides towards achieving the vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

- The Welsh Government needs to ensure that the Welsh language and its vision for 2050 are key considerations in the process of planning, funding and implementing its plans for childcare and early years education. Although general plans and commitments are outlined in Cymraeg 2050's work programme for 2017-2021, there are no explicit plans on the way forward and there is a risk that a golden opportunity to take highly significant steps forward with regard to the future of the Welsh language will be lost.
- The Welsh Government should use Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) as a framework for coordinating the actions of the Government, local authorities and childcare providers. Specifying growth targets in the childcare sector as a specific outcome in WESPs would ensure that local childcare strategies are aligned with the government's national aspirations and targets for Welsh language provision. Growth in this sector would contribute significantly to increasing numbers across the Welsh medium education sector in the long term.
- In order to produce effective national and local strategies, and to evaluate the impact and success of these strategies in the future, valid and reliable data is essential. The Welsh Government needs to take the lead in reforming the way childcare data is collected and shared in order to ensure that national and local plans and strategies are based on reliable information.

1. Context: Childcare and Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers

Evidence shows that the majority of children and young people tend to learn Welsh at school today.¹ Research jointly commissioned by the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government shows that around 80% of Welsh speakers aged 3-15 have learnt the language at school. This compares with 51% of Welsh speakers of all ages who learnt the language at school. Unfortunately, fluency rates amongst those who have learnt the language at school are not as high as they are amongst those who learnt Welsh at home. For example, whilst 80% of those who learnt the language at home are fluent, only 25% of those who learnt the language in primary school are fluent. The fluency rates of those who learnt the language in secondary school is lower (11%) whilst the fluency rate of those who learnt the language at nursery school is much higher (50%). The research proves that there is a correlation between when and where individuals acquire or learn Welsh and how fluent or willing they are to use the language.

The above facts are highly significant in the context of the Welsh Government's ambitious strategy to ensure a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Not only does it emphasise the importance of the education system in terms of creating new Welsh speakers, but also the fact that learning Welsh from the very start of the education process is essential in order to produce fluent Welsh speakers who will use the language and transfer it to the next generation. Language is acquired quickly and naturally between the ages of 0-5, and research shows that as many as 80-85% of children in Welsh medium pre-statutory care transfer to Welsh medium primary education.²

In summary, a growth in the numbers receiving Welsh medium pre-statutory provision is likely to lead to an increase in the numbers in Welsh medium statutory education and also the numbers speaking Welsh fluently in society. It is therefore of no surprise that numerous key bodies and stakeholders are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the pre-statutory period as the start of the journey towards achieving the Welsh Government's target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.³

¹ For a more detailed overview of the data, see: The Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government, *Welsh language use in Wales, 2013-15 (2015)*; The Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Position of the Welsh Language 2012-2015: The Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year Report (2015)*.

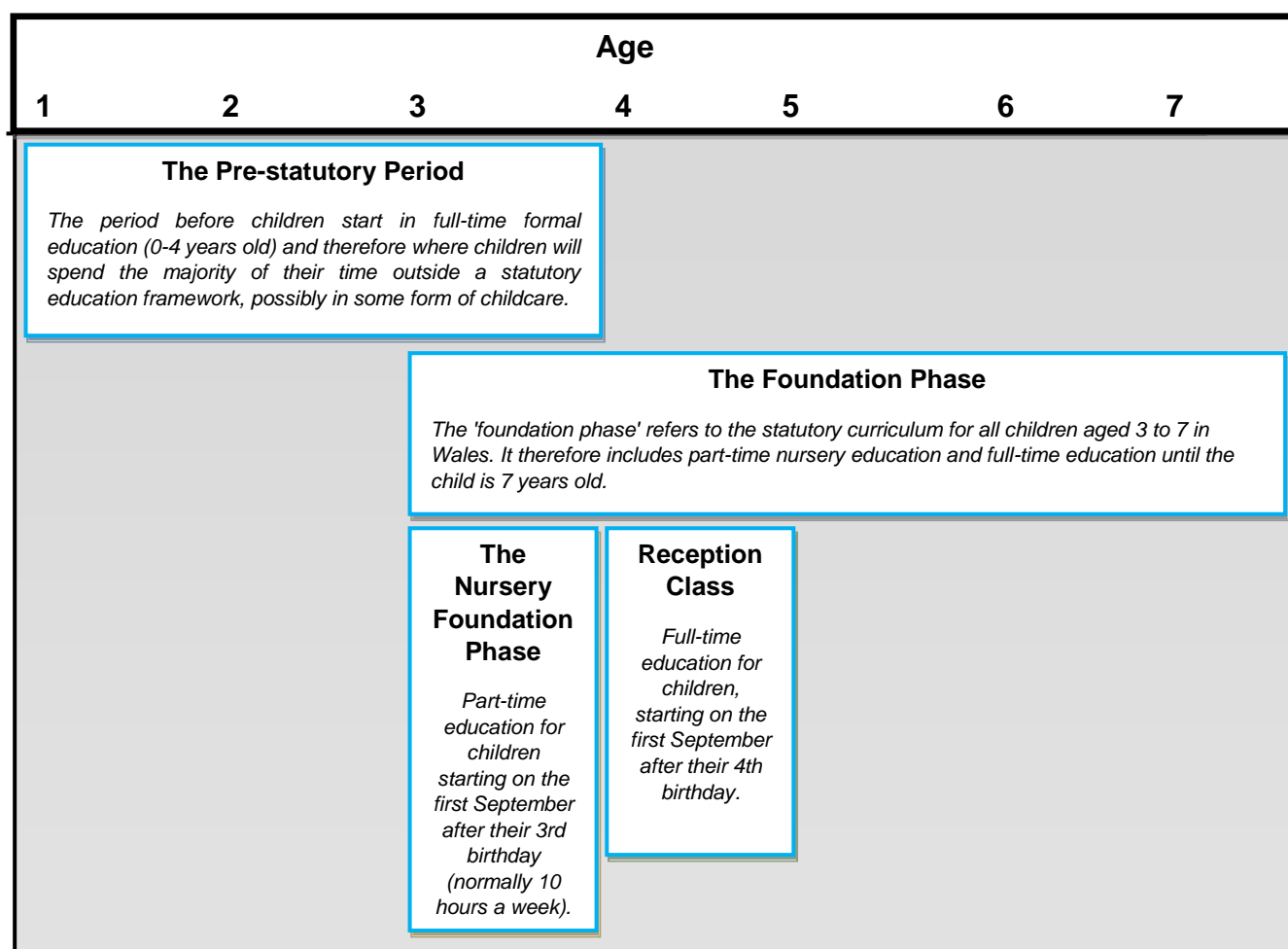
² 2015-16 data provided directly by Mudiad Meithrin.

³ The Welsh Language Commissioner, *The Position of the Welsh Language 2012-2015: The Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year Report (2015)*; Direct discussions with Mudiad Meithrin; Welsh Government, *Urgent Review of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, 2017-20 by Aled Roberts (August 2017)*; National Assembly for Wales, Children, Young People and Education Committee, *Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) (December 2015)*.

2. The current situation

2.1. Childcare and early years education in Wales

Figure 1: Timetable and explanation of the key phases:



Apart from part-time early years education provision, the pre-statutory period is not controlled directly by the Welsh Government and is provided by a wide range of individuals, companies and voluntary and private organisations. This provision includes a variety of childminders (full-time, part-time), full day care (for example nurseries), morning or afternoon day care sessions (Mudiad Meithrin's substantial provision is the most notable example of Welsh medium provision), crèches, nannies, and open access play provision.

Pre-statutory childcare has changed significantly over recent years, partly as a result of the Welsh Government's offer of free early years education and childcare, for example the Flying Start project and, more recently, the 30 Hours Offer (discussed further in 3.1 below). Providers have had to adapt to these changes by offering more

flexible provision. As part of the process of piloting the 30 Hours Offer, the Welsh Government's Social Research department has published a report outlining the current situation in terms of childcare capacity in Wales.⁴ Here are some of the key facts in the report:

- It is currently estimated that there are around 175,000 children aged 0-4 living in Wales.
- There are 4,025 childcare providers in Wales, offering around 80,000 childcare places.
- There are around 2,000 childminders, offering around 15,000 places.
- There are around 700 full day care providers, offering around 30,000 places.
- There are around 1,200 part-time providers, offering around 35,000 places.
- There was no information about the range of Welsh medium provision in the report.

Although childcare is not controlled directly by the Welsh Government, the Childcare Act 2006 lists the duties imposed on local authorities as strategic leaders in local childcare provision.⁵ Local authorities have a legislative duty to assess and plan childcare provision in order to ensure its availability and quality. Local authorities are required to monitor and assess provision through Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (discussed further in 2.2 and 3.3 below).

2.2. The Welsh language in childcare and early years education provision

As part of their wider duties to monitor and assess childcare provision, local authorities are specifically required to consider and plan for Welsh medium childcare. The Welsh Government's childcare and early years plan highlights the advantages of bilingualism for children, and outlines a number of actions to support it.⁶ Firstly, local authorities are required, through Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSAs), to monitor and fill gaps, ensure sustainability and improve the quality and amount of Welsh language and bilingual provision in the area.⁷ They also work with Mudiad Meithrin and other providers via a range of grants to achieve the above objectives.

According to a recent report by the Welsh Government⁸ there are around 175,000 children aged 0-4 living in Wales. Unfortunately, there is no complete and reliable data on the numbers in childcare, and in Welsh medium childcare specifically (more details in 3.3 below). The main source of information on this sector is data collected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). All childcare providers registered with CSSIW are required to complete a Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) which includes questions on the language of provision.

⁴ Welsh Government Social Research, *Childcare capacity in Wales* (October 2017). This report was a result of collaboration between the Welsh Government, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD).

⁵ Childcare Act (2006) - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/88/pdfs/wsi_20160088_mi.pdf

⁶ Welsh Government, *Building a Brighter Future: The Early Years and Childcare Plan* (2013).

⁷ Welsh Government, *Childcare Guidance* (2016).

⁸ Welsh Government Social Research, *Childcare Capacity in Wales* (October 2017)

One problem with this source is that not all providers complete the self assessment. For example, in 2016, only 76% of those working in the sector completed the self assessment, thereby giving an incomplete picture. The second fundamental problem is that it is the childcare providers themselves who are responsible for assessing the language of provision. It is inevitable that there will be some inconsistency and misinterpretation here in terms of defining language, which then impacts on the reliability and validity of the data.

This data, which is provided by CSSIW, is essential in preparing an evidence base for ensuring the sufficiency of local authority provision (the CSAs). Although the majority of local authorities use CSSIW data to undertake their assessments, the majority also use local data to support this information. As a result, the data reported in local authority reports is different to that held by CSSIW. The ways in which local authorities collect and use data also varies significantly. As a result, the national and local picture of Welsh medium childcare in Wales is fragmented, inconsistent and difficult to interpret. However, the data available can provide an useful snapshot of general patterns in Welsh medium childcare provision in Wales today:

Figure 2: The main language of provision in numbers and percentages in all local authorities, according to CSSIW data based on data from SASS (25 September 2017)⁹.

Local Authority	Welsh		English		Both Languages	
All Wales	500	13%	2993	77%	389	10%
Swansea	7	3%	205	93%	9	4%
Blaenau Gwent	2	3%	62	94%	2	3%
Vale of Glamorgan	9	4%	207	93%	6	3%
Cardiff	28	6%	390	88%	24	5%
Caerphilly	20	8%	214	87%	13	5%
Neath Port Talbot	5	3%	138	93%	6	4%
Newport	2	1%	158	96%	4	2%
Ceredigion	46	41%	30	27%	35	32%
Conwy	27	19%	94	68%	18	13%
Gwynedd	129	64%	19	9%	55	27%
Merthyr Tydfil	3	7%	38	84%	4	9%
Bridgend	8	5%	135	92%	4	3%
Powys	22	11%	160	82%	12	6%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	18	7%	221	88%	13	5%
Pembrokeshire	19	13%	121	82%	7	5%
Denbighshire	24	17%	92	67%	22	16%
Carmarthenshire	76	35%	66	30%	78	35%
Flintshire	9	4%	221	91%	14	6%
Monmouthshire	1	1%	121	98%	1	1%
Torfaen	3	3%	89	94%	3	3%
Wrexham	11	5%	178	88%	13	6%
Anglesey	31	28%	34	31%	46	41%

⁹ It appears that these figures are slightly different to those noted in the Government's most recent report, as there is no information about the language of all provision.

Figure 3: The main language of provision in percentages in all local authorities, according to CSSIW data based on data from SASS (25 September 2017).

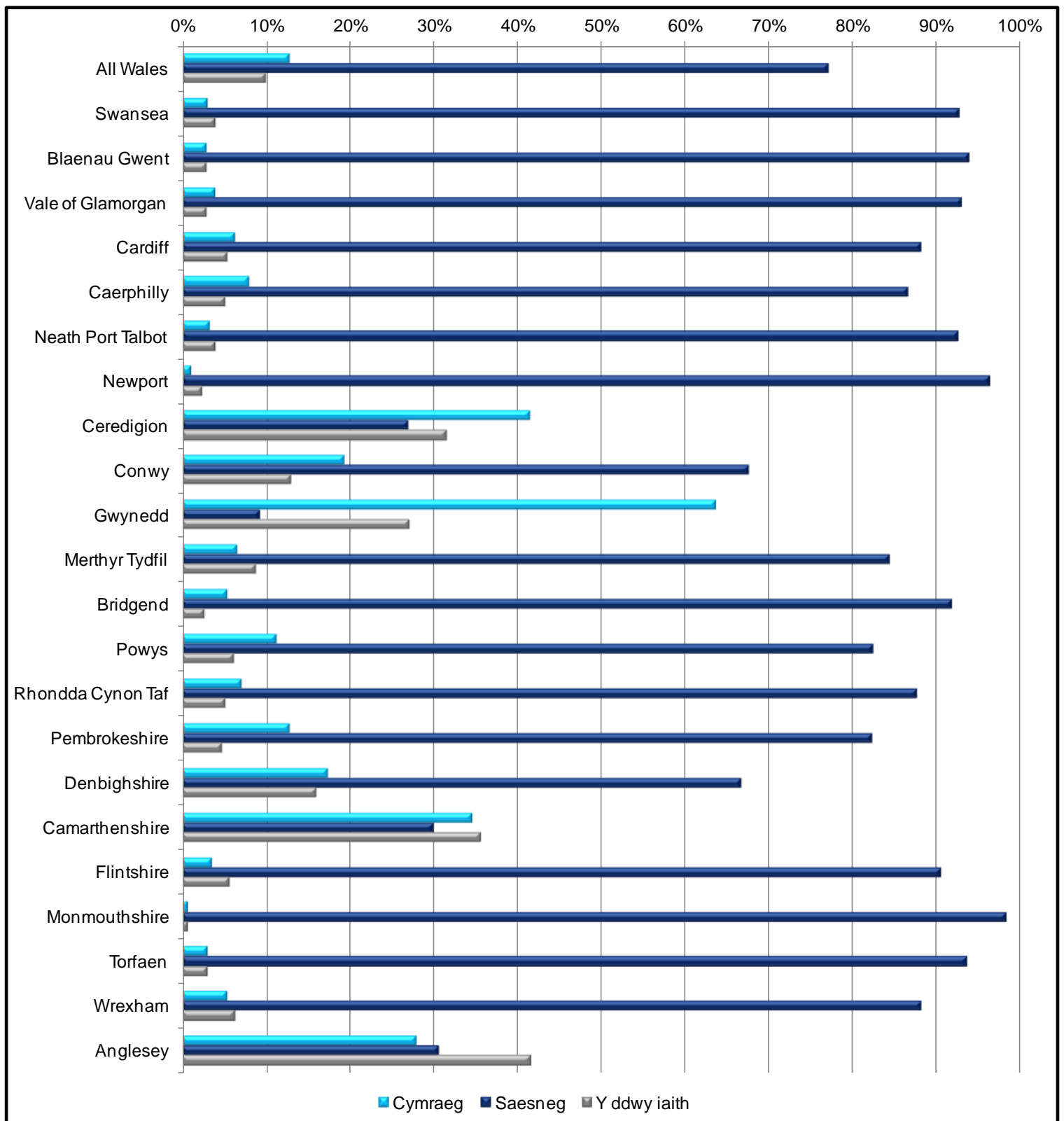
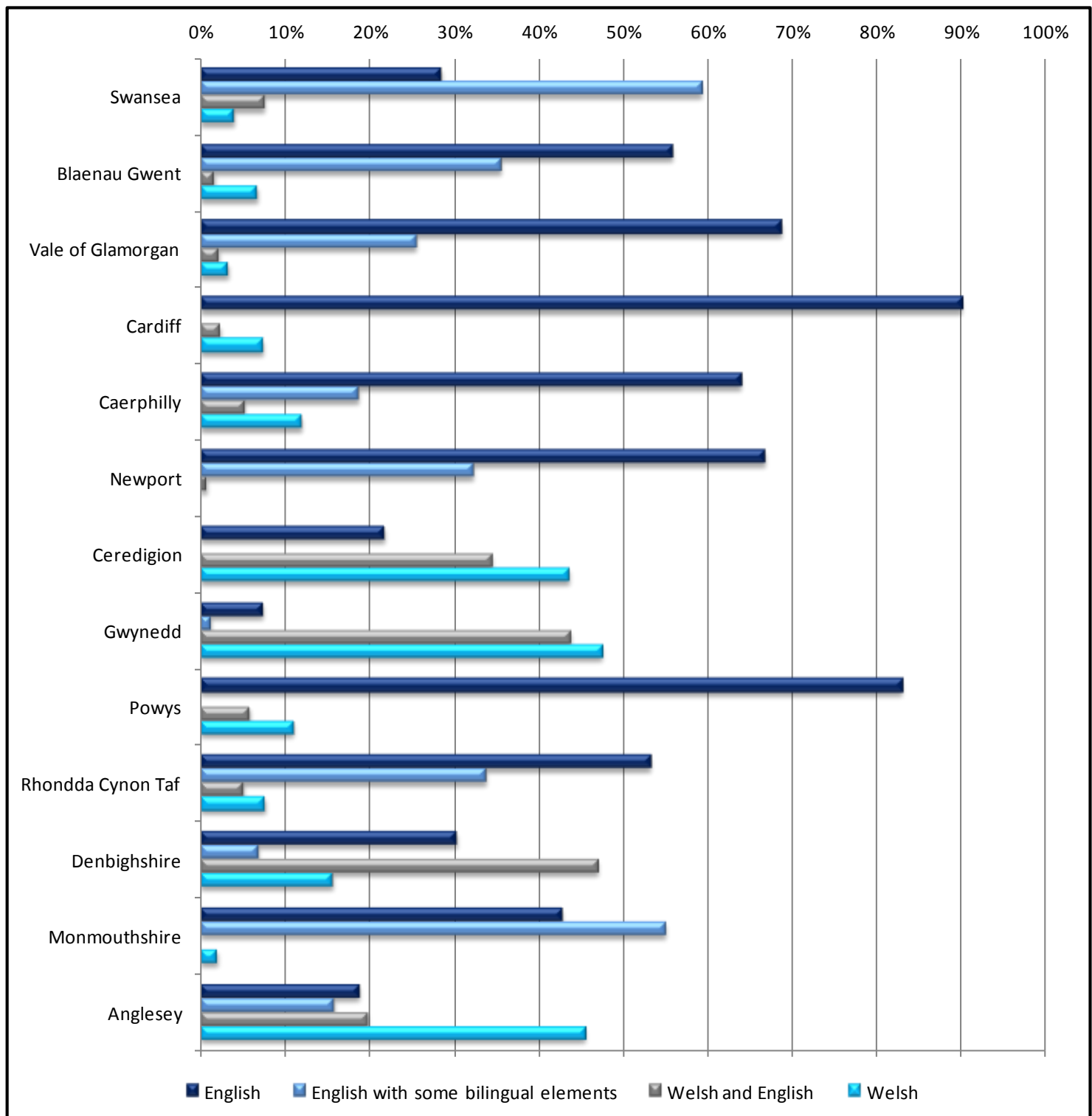


Figure 4: The language of provision in 13 local authorities, according to data collected by the Commissioner from local authority CSAs 2017-2022.



This data shows a rather different picture of Welsh medium childcare provision compared to figure 3. The significance of these differences will be discussed in 3.3 below.

3. Strategic planning for Welsh medium childcare and early years education

The Welsh Government has stated the importance of expanding Welsh medium childcare and early years education in order to achieve the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Various factors will affect the success of that vision:

3.1. National strategy and integrating Government policies

The Welsh Government needs to ensure that the Welsh language and its vision for 2050 are key considerations when planning, funding and implementing its plans for childcare and early years education. Without explicit plans on the way forward, it is likely that a golden opportunity will be lost to take highly significant steps forward with regard to the future of the Welsh.

A national target has been set to expand Welsh medium childcare provision by creating 150 more nursery groups over the next 10 years.¹⁰ In Cymraeg 2050's work programme for 2017-2021, the Welsh Government states that it wants to 'support the expansion of Welsh-medium early years provision by 40 nursery groups by 2021'.¹¹ It also states the intention to deliver the offer of 30 hours of free childcare across Wales, providing more Government-funded Welsh-medium childcare places. Beyond this general commitment to provide support and funding, it is not yet clear what specific actions the Welsh Government intends to take, nor what framework will be used to drive this work forward.

The Welsh Government's childcare policies

The Flying Start project targets children under the age of 4 who live in some of the most deprived areas in Wales. One part of the project is the provision of free part-time childcare to 2 and 3 year old children. Although local authorities are expected to offer Welsh medium provision, statistics show that only 7% of those who were eligible requested Welsh medium childcare. This percentage is far lower than the percentage of children receiving Welsh medium education in Wales.¹² It is fair to say that there is room for improvement in terms of integrating the objectives of this project with the aim of increasing the numbers in Welsh medium childcare.¹³

¹⁰ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers* (2017), p. 12.

¹¹ Welsh Government, *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers - Work Programme 2017-21* (2017), p.10.

¹² Arad, *Welsh Medium Childcare Provision for Pre-School Children* (March 2017).

¹³ The organisation Parent for Welsh Medium Education has echoed these concerns and has gone so far as to say that Flying Start is militating against the expansion of Welsh medium education. See below its response to the consultation on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=179&RPID=1008375631&cp=yes>

The Welsh Government's 30 Hours Offer is more far-reaching than Flying Start in terms of childcare. The Government has committed to offering 30 hours a week of free childcare to working parents of 3 or 4 year old children. The childcare will be offered for 48 weeks of the year. The 30 Hours Offer is a combination of early education time (Nursery Foundation Phase) and childcare. During term time (39 weeks), children who are 3 years old before September get at least 10 hours of early years education a week. The 30 Hours Offer will include an extra 20 hours of childcare in addition to this early years education, as well as 30 hours of childcare outside of term time (up to a total of 48 weeks).¹⁴ The Government is piloting this plan in 7 local authorities, including specific areas in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Swansea.

Full details of the 30 Hours Offer continue to be developed, and they are likely to be modified as a result of the pilot scheme. If the full offer does come to fruition, however, it would lead to a significant increase in demand for formal childcare across Wales and, as a result, provide a timely opportunity to create new Welsh speakers in line with the vision for 2050. Despite being a positive opportunity to improve the position of the language, this offer is also likely to intensify challenges relating to the provision of Welsh medium childcare.

A recent report by the Welsh Government's Social Research department¹⁵ was commissioned with the aim of mapping childcare provision in Wales against the possible demand for that provision as a result of the 30 Hours Offer. The comprehensive report provides a wide range of data along with very important strategic planning information for the 30 Hours Offer. Given that the Welsh Government has emphasised the importance of childcare and early years education to the vision for 2050, it is surprising that the report makes no mention of Welsh medium provision. Nonetheless, here are some key facts from the report which outline the availability of childcare in Wales in the context of potential demand as a result of the '30 Hours Offer'.

- There are 175,000 children aged 0-4 living in Wales, and there are around 80,000 childcare places.
- There are 115,000 children aged 0-4 with working parents, who are therefore likely to be using some form of childcare.
- There are 70,000 children aged 3-4 in Wales, and around 46,000 of these are currently eligible for the 30 Hours Offer.
- There are only 45,000 full childcare places (that would currently be able to offer 30 hours or more childcare a week) in Wales.
- If all full-time childcare places for children in Wales were earmarked for 3 and 4 year old children eligible for the 30 Hours Offer, more provision would still be needed. This does not take account of the likelihood that some of the places would be taken by some of the 69,000 children under the age of 3 with working parents. Some places could also be taken by older children (possibly after school or during school holidays).

¹⁴ These hours can vary slightly from one local authority to another. Some local authorities offer 15 hours of nursery education a week and, in this case, an additional 15 hours of childcare will be provided.

¹⁵ Government Social Research, *Childcare capacity in Wales* (October 2017)

- It is likely that a significant number of the 46,000 children who will be eligible for the 30 Hours Offer are not currently receiving childcare. It is very likely that the majority of these will want to take advantage of the free childcare when the scheme is fully operational.
- It is likely that there will be an increase in demand for childcare in deprived areas in particular, where the offer could enable parents to look for work without having to worry about childcare costs.

Trying to estimate how much additional childcare will be needed as a result of the 30 Hours Offer is both complex and inconclusive. The Welsh Government's report includes detailed calculations in order to try to map capacity and availability and, although we must treat this data carefully, it is safe to say that there is a significant gap between current capacity and likely demand over the coming years. All of the evidence strongly suggests that there is a lack of places, and that far more childcare places will be needed when this scheme is rolled out across Wales.

Integrating the 30 Hours Offer with the vision for 2050

The figures above show the general challenge that will likely arise as a result of the 30 Hours Offer, but no consideration has been given to the more specific challenges we are likely to face in the context of increasing Welsh medium provision. Despite the Government's commitment to creating 40 new nursery groups by 2021, this commitment, by itself, is not ambitious enough. Mudiad Meithrin's statistics¹⁶ state that there is an average of 21 children in each of its nursery groups in Wales. Based on this average, 40 new nursery groups would create approximately 900 new Welsh medium places. Despite the fact that it is likely that these new nursery groups would provide more spaces than the above average¹⁷, the Government's recent report suggests that there is a need for tens of thousands of new places in order to meet the demand which is likely to be seen as a result of the 30 Hours Offer. It is unclear whether creating a total of 40 new nursery groups by 2021 will improve the current situation in terms of the percentage receiving Welsh medium childcare. Whilst such central strategies are part of the answer, it is clear that more detailed and ambitious planning is needed to ensure that local authorities and childcare providers shoulder some of the responsibility for increasing Welsh medium provision. There are several important questions that need answering if the Government really does want to see childcare making a significant contribution to the vision for a million speakers by 2050:

- What framework could be adopted to ensure effective collaboration between the Welsh Government, local authorities and childcare providers in order to increase Welsh medium provision?
- How could the Welsh Government's funding plans be used to ensure an increase in Welsh medium childcare provision? Mudiad Meithrin has received additional funding for 2018/19 and there are important questions about how

¹⁶ Mudiad Meithrin, *Annual Report 2015-16*.

¹⁷ Most of the current nursery groups consist of morning/afternoon sessional care whilst the 30 Hour Offer will require full daycare provision which will likely increase the numbers attending such nursery groups.

exactly this funding should be used and the role of the Welsh Government and local authorities in terms of this planning. Some local authorities use the Government's childcare grants to fund Mudiad Meithrin in their local area, whilst other authorities operate in different ways. There is little detail so far about the framework and processes for managing investment and planning at national and local levels.

- In relation to the point above, Mudiad Meithrin is the most notable Welsh medium childcare provider in Wales and it would be useful to hear the Welsh Government's plans in terms of the Mudiad's contribution to planning and provision at national and local levels. The Mudiad has already started mapping the position of each nursery group, with specific consideration being given to their ability to respond to, and provide for, the 30 Hours Offer. How will this feed into the action of the Government and specific local authorities?
- What information and data is needed to create an effective strategy to increase Welsh medium childcare provision? The recent Welsh Government report has provided information on general capacity, but the linguistic agenda also needs consideration.
- Welsh medium provision cannot be protected nor widened without securing a sufficient supply of staff with the appropriate language skills, as well as the correct expertise, to work in the sector. Although projects to increase the numbers of qualified Welsh medium staff in the sector (for example, the Cam wrth Gam scheme) have been successful, many members of staff are leaving their posts in nursery groups and the childcare sector due to low salaries compared with the salaries of classroom assistants in the primary education sector.
- Consideration needs to be given to the ways in which Welsh medium childcare provision can be promoted and facilitated, rather than simply meeting the demand.

To conclude, the Government has stated that increasing the numbers receiving Welsh medium childcare is essential in order to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. A recent Government report clearly shows that far more childcare provision will be needed over the coming years. There is no doubt, from reading Cymraeg 2050's work programme for 2017-2021, that the Government is aware of the importance of childcare and early years education in terms of its vision for 2050. It is, however, unclear how the Government intends to turn a general commitment to develop the sector into specific actions which will have an impact on the ground. Below are two more specific recommendations on ways of mitigating the challenges outlined above, and ensuring that the potential to integrate childcare policies with the vision for 2050 comes to fruition.

3.2. Childcare and Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs)

Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) could provide an extremely effective framework for coordinating the actions of the Welsh Government, local authorities and childcare providers. Specifying growth targets in the childcare sector as a specific outcome in WESPs would ensure that local childcare strategies are aligned with the government's national aspirations and targets for Welsh language provision. Growth in this sector would contribute significantly to increasing numbers across the Welsh medium education sector in the long term.

Since publishing the Welsh Medium Education Strategy in 2010, local authorities have been required to prepare Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and submit them to the Welsh Government. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provided a statutory basis for those plans. Local authorities are required to plan a Welsh medium education strategy, including 7 specific outcomes, in order to increase and improve provision. Following a great deal of criticism about the strategic plans, Aled Roberts was asked to conduct an urgent review of the current system for planning Welsh medium education in Wales in March 2017. Like many other previous reports,¹⁸ Aled Roberts' report is critical of many local authority plans and of the general governance and legislative system. According to the report, one clear shortcoming in the plans is the fact that there is no outcome relating to pre-statutory provision.

Currently, there is no specific outcome which requires local authorities to provide a plan, targets and specific criteria with regard to Welsh medium childcare. Although Cymraeg 2050's work programme for 2017-2021 states that WESPs should include plans to improve Welsh medium early years provision, it is not compulsory. As a result, very little attention is currently being paid to childcare in local authority plans. Requiring local authorities to include a clear and definite plan to increase the numbers receiving Welsh medium childcare and early years education would be beneficial for two main reasons.

1. WESPs have significant potential as a means of coordinating the actions of the Government, local authorities and providers. WESPs would provide an effective framework for the Government to ensure that sufficient local planning and action coexists with its national aspirations and targets. Although CSAs already require local authorities to undertake childcare planning and to consider the language of provision, there is no approval process relating to these reports. WESPs need to be approved by the Government in order to ensure their quality and authorities would therefore be accountable for the targets set. These local plans would also be an effective way of promoting and targeting the work of Mudiad Meithrin as the provider who is likely to develop the majority of new Welsh medium provision. It is likely that the

¹⁸ National Assembly for Wales: The Children, Young People and Education Committee, *Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* (December 2015); Estyn, *Local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* (September 2016).

Government will expect the additional funding earmarked for the Mudiad to be used to reach its target of creating 40 new nursery groups by 2021. In order for this work to have the biggest possible impact in terms of creating new Welsh speakers, it is essential that local authorities are part of this planning process. The situation in terms of Welsh medium provision varies significantly from one area to another, and there are different requirements within and between areas. There is no one-size fits all solution, and local authorities will have the relevant information to prepare a plan and strategy that befits the local area. If local authority WESPs were to outline a clear plan for growth in Welsh medium childcare and early years education in the area, if there was a strong strategic relationship between the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, and if the Mudiad received support and investment from the Government, then significant developments should be seen in the numbers of children receiving Welsh medium childcare. Reforming WESPs in accordance with Aled Roberts' recommendation would therefore be a positive way of addressing the challenges noted in 3.1 and would represent a substantial and tangible act on part of the Welsh Government.

2. Including a specific outcome for Welsh medium childcare provision in WESPs could lead to significant growth in numbers across the Welsh medium education sector. The current plans' first outcome relates to growth in the number of 7 year old children who are taught through the medium of Welsh. Given the evidence which shows the transition rates between childcare and Welsh medium primary education and the clear relationship between how early in life someone learns Welsh and their fluency at the end of the journey, it is surprising that there is no specific outcome on increasing the number of children receiving Welsh medium childcare and early years education. This is especially true given the fact that there is a fundamental problem with the current outcomes required by the WESPs framework. The majority of local authorities do not set targets for the number of 7 year old children who will be taught through the medium of Welsh. Instead, projections are noted based on the numbers in Yr2, Yr1 and reception class in the area. Local authorities, therefore, know the figures in terms of the number of 7 year old children who will be taught through the medium of Welsh for the next 3 years (the length of the current plans) because these children are already part of the Welsh medium education system. In order to set targets for growth rather than reporting facts, local authorities either need to be asked to prepare more long term plans or be required to set growth targets for pre-school years. Growth in the pre-school sector would have a significant influence on the numbers of 7 year old children in Welsh medium education in subsequent years. Ensuring large numbers across the Welsh medium statutory education system would subsequently be based on successful progression and transfer from one phase of education to another.

3.3. Collecting and recording data

In order to produce effective national and local strategies, and to evaluate the impact and success of these strategies in the future, valid and reliable data is essential. The Welsh Government needs to take the lead in reforming the way childcare data is collected and shared in order to ensure that national and local plans and strategies are based on reliable information.

The recent report by the 'Government Social Research' department¹⁹ is striking and demonstrates how data could potentially be used as a way of informing government strategies. Unfortunately, no consideration was given to Welsh medium provision in this report, and data on Welsh medium provision is very poor in comparison. As discussed earlier (see 2.2 above), there is no effective framework for collecting reliable and valid information on Welsh medium childcare in Wales. Aled Roberts' recommendation to include a specific outcome in the WESPs on increasing pre-statutory Welsh medium provision, depends on the ability to collect and present reliable and valid data on this sector. Without reliable and valid data, there is no robust evidence base to inform Welsh Government and local authority decisions and strategies in terms of funding and planning improvements to the provision. Neither is it possible to assess the effectiveness of any operational strategies. The fact that this sector is not directly controlled by the Welsh Government and includes a wide range of different services makes this a difficult task.

Here is a summary of the main problems that need to be addressed:

Reliability: There exists problems with the consistency of data collection and presentation methods within and between local authorities. The aim of CSAs is that all local authorities provide a clear picture of the childcare sector in order to undertake effective planning for the future. Local authorities are required to use CSSIW self assessment data to complete their childcare sufficiency assessments. One problem in this regard is the self assessment completion rates, which means that the picture is incomplete. Another more fundamental problem is that local authorities often supplement CSSIW data with their own data. This can include data in the form of surveys or quantitative data collected by the local authority itself. The ways in which local authorities collect, interpret and present this additional data varies from one report to another and from one authority to another. CSSIW data and data presented in CSAs never correspond (even when taking self assessment response rates into account); many local authorities completely ignore statistics about the language of provision; some local authorities provide statistics on the language of childcare provision as one combined figure, whilst others only provide statistics on language according to the type of provider (childminders, nurseries etc). This makes the process of following trends over time and comparing different authorities complex, unclear and, in some cases, impossible.

Despite the introduction of a new process in 2016 in an attempt to ensure a more consistent and standardised method of preparing CSAs, reviewing the CSAs that have recently been submitted for 2017-2022 shows that fundamental problems still

¹⁹ Government Social Research, *Childcare capacity in Wales* (October 2017)

exist. For example, only data from 13 of the 22 local authorities can be used in figure 4 (above), either because the data is unavailable or because it has been presented in a way which makes it impossible to use. If the data collection method is inconsistent and unreliable, then the information will be invalid and it will not be possible to prepare or evaluate any plans and strategies for increasing and improving provision in this sector in a meaningful manner.

Validity: a very important factor in ensuring the quality of any data collected on childcare provision language patterns is the problem of categorisation. The Childcare Statutory Guidance defines 4 language categories:²⁰

- a) Welsh medium setting
- b) Welsh and English medium setting
- c) English medium setting with some bilingual elements
- d) English medium setting

Here are the categories most frequently used in CSAs recently submitted by local authorities in 2017. However, as can be seen in figures 2 and 3, CSSIW's most recent data (25 September 2017), in the same way as its previous data, uses only three categories. This is very unclear given that the CSAa are meant to be based on CSSIW data in the first place.²¹

Beyond obvious problems with the consistency of the categories and the source of the data, there are questions about the validity of the self assessment process in terms of the language of provision. Research conducted by Arad on behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner states that misinterpretation occurs on both sides, with settings describing themselves as Welsh medium and English medium settings when only one member of staff is able to say a few words in Welsh, and other settings which, to all intents and purposes, are Welsh medium or bilingual settings but are afraid to describe themselves as such as they feel uncomfortable about being able to prove that all their paperwork and correspondence is in Welsh.²² In addition, it appears that the use of different language categories can have a significant impact on the process of self assessing the language of provision. For example, there are significant differences between figures 3 and 4 above and more detailed comparisons in specific areas are noted below:

²⁰ Welsh Government, *Childcare Statutory Guidance* (2016), p. 32.

²¹ All of the CSAs evaluated use 4 language categories and state that the data has come from CSSIW's SASS. In recent correspondence with the Commissioner, CSSIW stated that the SASS includes 3 language categories and that it is not aware of any data which includes 4 language categories.

²² Arad, *Welsh Medium Childcare Provision for Pre-School Children* (March 2017).

Figure 6: Comparison between CSSIW data (2017) and data collected from Denbighshire CSA 2017-2022.

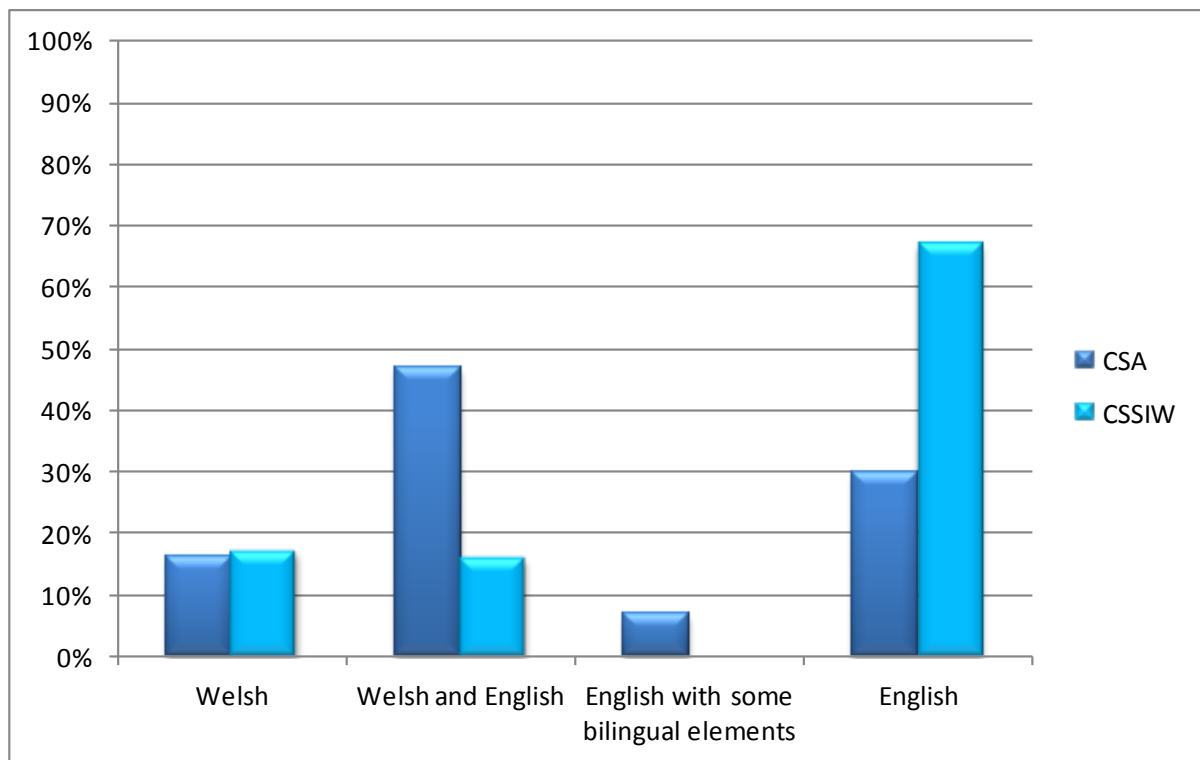


Figure 7: Comparison between CSSIW data (2017) and data collected from the City and County of Swansea CSA 2017-2022.

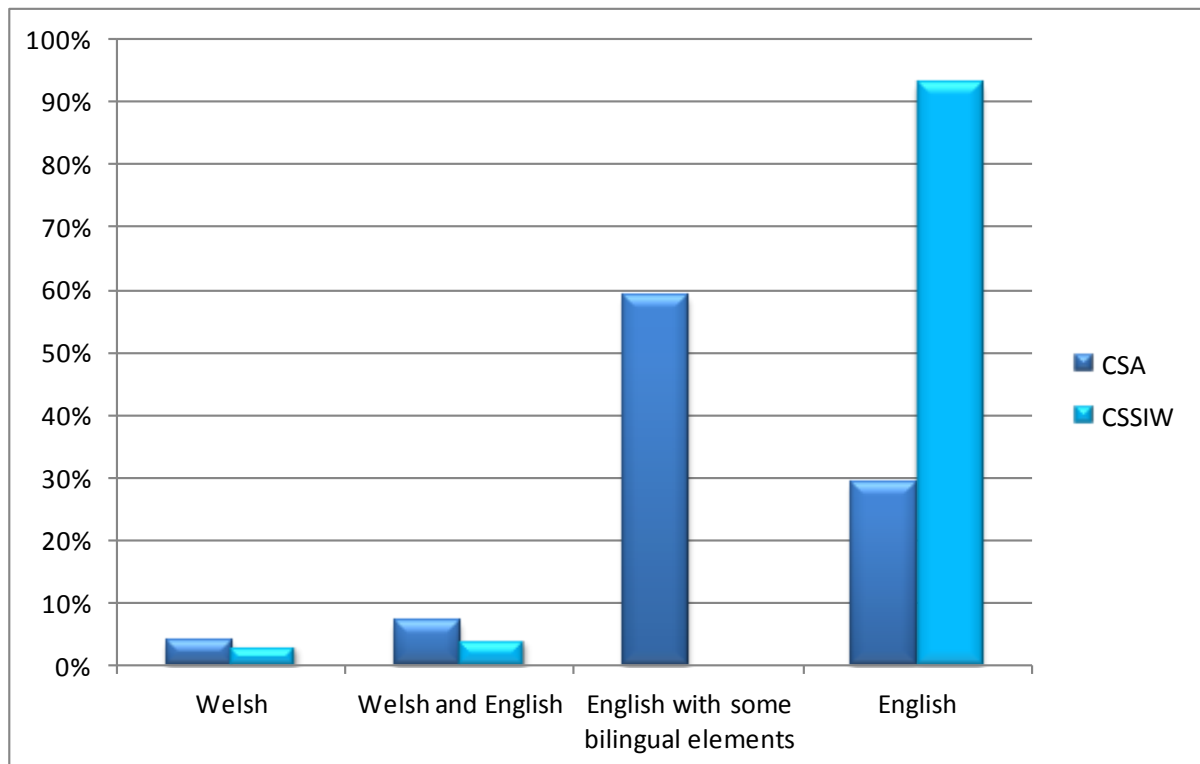
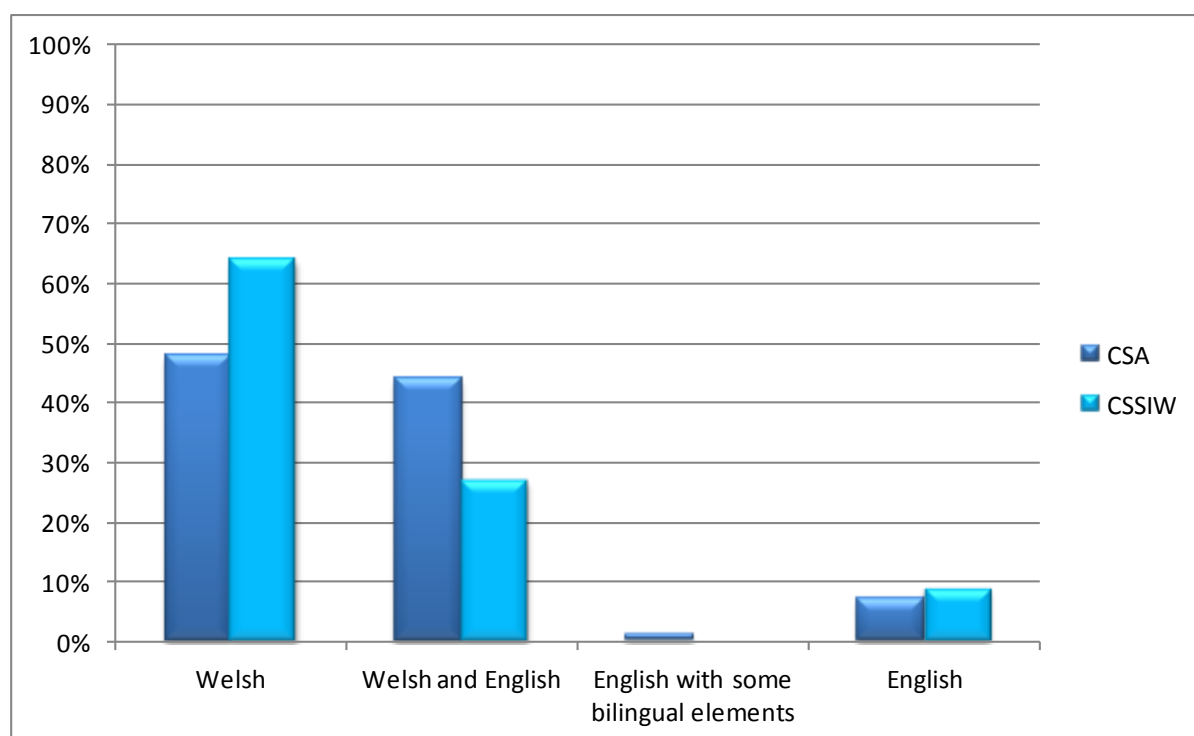


Figure 8: Comparison between CSSIW data (2017) and data collected from Gwynedd CSA 2017-2022.



The data above shows that there are important questions to be answered about how the data is collected and interpreted and the subsequent findings i.e. concluding that the City and County of Swansea has moved from a situation where 95% of childcare was being provided in English to a situation where 60% of the provision is bilingual would be very misleading. It is fair to conclude, from looking at the data, that around 90% of childcare in Swansea is, to all intents and purposes, provided through the medium of English. It is important to be clear about this when describing the position of the language in the area, in terms of providing information to parents on the available provision and, more importantly, in terms of ensuring a valid evidence base to evaluate any previous strategies and plan new ones. It is impossible to avoid these problems completely, but it is important to consider and try to minimise the impact of these on the quality and accuracy of the data.

It appears that the most effective way of moving forward is to reform the current framework. The most comprehensive data on the sector is likely to be provided by CSSIW, and work should be undertaken with the organisation to improve the quality of self assessments and completion rates. Specific local authority data could be used to support CSSIW's data, but consistency is needed in terms of how this is done and how the data is presented. The Government has already tried to move in this direction, but it is obvious that further standardisation and management is needed. It appears, from looking at the recent report by the Government's Social Research

department²³, that CSSIW and the Welsh Government have a wide range of detail and data on childcare in Wales. They also have the research expertise needed to collect, interpret and present this data in an effective way. In view of this, it is unclear why 22 local authorities need to be given raw data from CSSIW, before interpreting and presenting it themselves in the CSAs. It appears also that the Welsh Government and CSSIW could provide data on Welsh medium childcare at national and local levels. This data could be considered alongside the published report on childcare capacity and availability in Wales. It is clear that the Government already has the software and data, and it would just be a case of swapping or adding variables (for example, the availability and location of Welsh medium and bilingual provision, details on Welsh medium schools in the area, areas where the demand for childcare is likely to increase, and the numbers of children aged 0-4 in the area). Good quality data would provide a robust evidence base and enable local authorities to plan and evaluate the first outcome in their WESPs, namely increasing the number of children in Welsh medium childcare. It would also enable local authorities and the government to measure the success of these strategies in terms of increasing Welsh medium childcare provision.

²³ Government Social Research, *Childcare capacity in Wales* (October 2017)