

**P-06-1207 Start referring to Welsh cities and towns by their Welsh names, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 08.11.21**

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Jack Sargent MS
Chair – Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

2 November 2021

Dear Jack,

I would firstly like to thank you for taking the petition into consideration. It means a great deal to me that the voices of myself and many others, who join me as Welsh speakers, are being acknowledged. It is crucial that necessary steps are taken to protect what is left of our language after the hardships it has faced. Understandably so, current efforts towards the preservation of the Welsh language are fairly recent and feedback should be welcomed. Having grown up in a predominantly Welsh community, listening to others around me and exploring various ways on how efforts towards the preservation of the language could be improved makes me keen to bring possible new ideas into your Cymraeg 2050.

I agree, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that Welsh cities and towns are also referred to by their Welsh names by Welsh Ministers and the Welsh Government. I cannot say I disagree with any aspect that has been presented in the letter. However, towards the end of the letter I notice that the issue with regarding towns by their Welsh name and discarding the English given name could be considered erasing the connection with Medieval Wales. It is understandable that some town names will have historical connections yet, its documentation will remain we cannot guarantee that our language will do the same in the later future since it has proved to be in immense danger in the past. Not only that, but the Welsh language cannot be compared to a historical era or a period in history. It is common for historical eras to disappear naturally; however, we should be reminded that our language did not disappear naturally. I also notice you agree with the use of the term 'Cymru' and 'Senedd' – should you investigate the term 'Prydain' for Britain, I strongly believe it should become another popularised Welsh term in Wales and further establishes the connection to our country.

Before I go into slightly more detail on the Welsh language, I would like to state reasoning behind the petition, I wrote this petition a while ago after reflecting upon my experience in education. Of course, Welsh is compulsory for Key Stage 4 learners in schools across Wales, due to the government's initial decision to do so in 1999. However, during my time in education I had found that hatred towards Welsh as a subject was not uncommon – it was rather disheartening. The main argument my peers had for this hatred was that it was never used by anyone outside of the education system it was only by paying closer attention to government figures in Wales, I had noticed that the language was rarely ever used. Whilst I wholeheartedly agree that making Welsh a compulsory subject was a step in the right direction, myself – and many others – do not believe that the current fault lies within the legislation but rather the attitude possessed by public figures in Wales as stated, by Welsh Ministers. It is for this reason I made the decision to start the petition.

I also notice you cover education in Wales, and it would be a missed opportunity, especially whilst on topic, not to discuss key points on how Welsh is taught. Many would join me in agreement that the way second language Welsh is taught at GCSE level is not taught very well rather than help young people become enthusiastic about their heritage and home, it makes young people gain an alarming disinterest in the language which can have an overall negative affect in the future – for example, they would not want their children to attend Welsh schools due to their negative experience, many people have already witnessed this consequence in action. I think there are many possible ways to combat this. Firstly, I do not believe that we have a strong sense of identity as a nation. Not many Welsh children are aware of their heritage and just how wonderful it truly is and it is due to this reason they do not have a connection to the language. You cannot have language without history and therefore, I think it is crucial to teach young people of key Welsh figures such as Gwenllian ferch Gruffydd, Betsi Cadwaladr, Owain Glyndwr, Roald Dahl. Not only that, but Welsh mythology will draw children and young people into learning the language – stories such as Rhiannon, Y Tylwyth Teg, and Branwen from the Mabinogion will not fail in establishing a connection between language and identity due to its intriguing nature. Of course, it would mean the most if you consider what I have discussed in this letter, many in this country wish to see a change in our education and have been eager to see this change for generations.

I understand that a some will disagree with what I put forward to you however, it's important that you do not alter the necessities of Wales to suit a small minority.

I would like to take the time to thank you, once again, for taking my petition into consideration, it means a great deal to me. I hope, as do many others, that Wales sees some significant and impactful changes in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Madison Lorraine