



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.



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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