

Welsh Education Workforce - a new opportunity to lead change.

Position paper for the meeting with Jeremy Miles MS,
Minister for Education and Welsh Language.
Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

With the implementation of Cwricwlwm i Gymru in our classrooms and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans over the next 10 years by our local authorities in September 2022, minister, it is a very exciting time for education and specifically Welsh-medium education in Wales.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans are now almost ready for implementation in all parts of Wales and we look forward to contributing to their delivery.

In contributing to the formulation of these plans and in responding to the 22 consultations across Wales, details in some outcomes were of concern.

Outcome 7 specifically looks at the need to see an increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh and the need to ensure an adequate workforce to address the growth over the next decade. The responsibility placed on Local Authorities, through these plans, means that the workforce from the Early Years to Post-16 Education needs to be looked at and planned carefully. We see in this outcome also a responsibility to look at the support available for these sectors in the areas of ALN, Early Years, teacher assistants, as well as the workforce element to support teaching and learning - including the continuing professional training and daily supporting workforce in our playgroups, after-school provision, schools, and local authorities.

The contents of outcome 7 of the individual plans did not get close to showing how the numbers in the workforce required for growth in the other outcomes could be reached.

The reality is that the **mechanism** to secure the workforce for the sector - before even starting to work on the growth of provision over the next decade - is not sufficiently evident, specific, or effective, and with this the work to be done over the next decade will be so much more challenging. This mechanism must be clearly visible and work like clockwork, before the plans come into effect in September 2022 or it will impose an impossible situation for Local Authorities and for childcare and play providers, schools and their governing bodies who have committed to increasing and providing the highest quality locations and provision for learners in Wales. The Welsh Government has the opportunity to lead on this significant change.

“Grym ein Gweithlu”¹

Mudiad Meithrin has produced and presented a document entitled Grym ein Gweithlu (Workforce Power) that sets the picture clearly in terms of workforce challenges in the Early Years and offers tangible solutions for the sector. Unfortunately, no feedback has been received from the Welsh Government on the scheme to date.

¹ <https://meithrin.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Grym-ein-Gweithlu-Saesneg-llai.pdf>

The plan states:

Mudiad Meithrin believes that each child has the right to be provided with quality early years care and education, and also the practical right to convenient provision delivered through the medium of Welsh.

We cannot realise this right without our staff - our greatest resource.

None of our aims are possible with an insufficient supply of staff, and it is a continuous challenge to ensure that enough people choose to qualify to work in the Welsh-medium Childcare and Play sector.

We ask for feedback and discussion with Mudiad Meithrin and their partners to look seriously at this document and to consider the scheme as one that could be used to secure the Early Years and Play workforce.

Welsh in education workforce plan.²

We are grateful to the Minister for the recent formulation and publication of this 10 year plan. But, it's a 10-year plan. We remain concerned that there is a lack of a detailed direct implementation mechanism designed to meet all Local Authority targets set by the Welsh Government. Relying on Local Authority annual reports alone to monitor progress will be ineffective and place significant pressure on individual provision and schools who may be unable to recruit for the delivery of the Curriculum and provision. With such a broad plan, we fear that there is a lack of accountability.

All key stakeholders who contribute to the creation of a Welsh-medium education workforce need to commit genuinely to securing a thriving Welsh-medium education workforce and come round the table to discuss and plan purposefully and continuously as a planning body.

This particular body needs to take the lead in developing the sector by looking at the Welsh Government's 10 year strategy and taking a phased response to the challenges facing the sector **today** as well as what we want to achieve in 10 years.

We ask that you give serious consideration and have further discussions to establishing a new planning body, that could be named the Welsh in Education Workforce Partnership.

Gan ddiolch am eich amser i ddarllen ein papur.

Elin Maher

Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg (Parents For Welsh Medium Education)

Member of WCVA's Welsh Language and Education Network

² <https://gov.wales/welsh-education-workforce-plan>