

Research Briefing
**Welsh-medium and
bilingual provision in Further
and Higher Education**

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Research Briefing

Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in Further and Higher Education

This paper provides an overview of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the Further and Higher Education sectors in Wales. It explains the policy context and identifies key institutions and initiatives. The paper also gives statistics on the number of Welsh-medium and bilingual learning activities in these sectors and the number of learners studying through Welsh or bilingually. The Welsh Government has a target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and sees education and linguistic progression as one of the main ways to achieve this, as stated in its new Welsh Language Strategy. The report of the Welsh Government task and finish group on the future of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is due to be published soon.



Contents

1. Summary	1
2. The legal position	1
3. General policy context	2
4. Welsh-Medium Education Strategy and other initiatives	4
5. The position in Further Education	11
6. The position in Higher Education.....	16
7. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	17

1. Summary

7.8% of learning activities in the **Further Education sector** in 2015/16 included some element of Welsh, with **0.29%** of activities offered through **Welsh only**. In the **Higher Education** sector, **6,335 students** studied some part of their course through the medium of Welsh, representing **5% of students in Wales**. The Welsh Government has a target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and sees education and linguistic progression as a key means of achieving this. When discussing the target in the Siambr on the **9th November 2016**, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language stated:

We also want to see more learners in FE and HE being able to continue their education in the Welsh language, or in both languages, and we will be developing opportunities to do that.

The Welsh Government published its new Welsh Language Strategy **Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers** on 11 July 2017. The Research Service published the Research Briefing **Welsh-medium education and Welsh as a subject (PDF 687KB)** (August 2016), which explained the place of Welsh in statutory education. This paper describes Welsh-medium and bilingual education post-16, in Further Education and post-18, in Higher Education. Developing Welsh-medium provision post-14 was a strategic aim of the **Welsh-medium Education Strategy** and the **evaluation of the Strategy** showed the need to develop provision further. Other initiatives such as the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme, Bilingual Champions and institutions such as CollegesWales, Sgiliaith and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, also have a key role. The report of the Welsh Government task and finish group on the future of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is imminent .

2. The legal position

Section 9 of the **Education Act 1996** states that local authorities must have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. The **Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013** places a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education in their area through their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). Through the WESPs, local authorities must set out how they will meet this demand and improve the planning of provision of Welsh medium education in the area. Welsh-medium education has therefore established a statutory basis pre-16 and it is the Welsh Government's policy that all pupils should study Welsh from ages 3-16, either first or second language. Welsh medium education post-16 does not have the same level of statutory foundation.

Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009

The **Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009** established Learning Pathways 14-19, with the aim of increasing young people's choices and ensuring that local curricula offer a wide range of courses and opportunities for learners. This included **developing and increasing access to Welsh-medium courses**. The Measure requires that:

Each local education authority must exercise their functions in relation to local curricula so as to promote access to and availability of courses of study which are taught through the medium of the Welsh language.

The **Local Curriculum for Students aged 16 to 18 Guidance** stated the need to consider demand from learners for Welsh-medium provision:

A young person's wish to continue to follow his or her education through the medium of the Welsh language should be fully taken into account when planning the delivery of the local curriculum.

The Guidance also stated the need to ensure a 'minimum entitlement' of Welsh provision for students at a Welsh-medium institution:

Where a student attends a Welsh speaking school, or Welsh-medium institution then in forming the local curriculum for that institution, local curriculum planners should ensure that the student is able to access a local curriculum that meets the minimum entitlement through the medium of Welsh.

Further and Higher Education Bill (Governance and Information) (Wales) Act 2014

The aim of this Act was to reduce and modify legislative control over Further Education Institutions (FEIs), giving them more autonomy¹. This led to the reversal of the Office for National Statistics' reclassification in 2010 of Further Education Institutions as part of central government for the purpose of national accounts. In **January 2015**, the ONS reverted FEIs' status to that of Non-profit Institutions Serving Households.

3. General policy context

One million Welsh speakers by 2050

On **1 August 2016**, the Welsh Government announced its target of **one million Welsh speakers by 2050**. The Welsh Government has stated the education system, including the post-compulsory sector, has a central role to play in achieving this target. On the announcement of the target, Alun Davies, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning highlighted **the role of the education sector** in achieving the target:

We want everyone to have the opportunity to learn through the medium of Welsh both from early years right through to higher education, and that it will be seen as an integral part of our overall provision, and not something that is separate from it.

In the Siambur on the **9th November, 2016**, he added:

We recognise that there is a challenge... from the early years to the post-16 sector. We have to take intentional steps to increase the provision if we're going to see this vision realised ... we recognise that there is a need to strengthen the strategic planning system for every stage of education and training, which is vital if we're going to succeed.

¹Ten colleges are Exempt Charities Further Education Corporations, three colleges are now controlled by Higher Education institutions and the newly merged WEA YMCA Community College Cymru (since renamed as Adult Learning Wales) operates across the whole of Wales. This briefing refers to them all throughout as 'Further Education Institutions (FEIs)'.

Welsh Language Strategy

The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, **A living language: a language for living** was due to come to an end on 31 March 2017. The Welsh Government consulted on a new draft strategy between August and October 2016. One of the six areas of the proposed new strategy was education. The Assembly's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications undertook an **Inquiry into the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy (PDF 672KB)**, publishing its report in May 2017, containing 23 recommendations. The majority of recommendations referred to the education sector and the report concluded that the target of one million speakers:

will need to be delivered in large part through the education system.

The Welsh Government published its new Welsh Language Strategy **Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers** on 11 July 2017. The **education sector** has a **key role** in the strategy. **22%** of seven year olds currently receive Welsh-medium education and the aim is to increase this to **30%** by **2031** and **40%** by **2050**. The target is for **70% of all pupils** to be **fluent** in Welsh **by the time they leave school** in 2050. The strategy emphasises that the education sector has an important part to play in the strategy, including the **post-compulsory sector**:

Creating the right conditions for new learners of all ages to develop and use their skills is a key objective – from the early years, through every stage of compulsory education and post-16 provision, to opportunities for adults to learn Welsh.

In order to meet its targets, the strategy states the need to:

Reform the post-16 Welsh-medium and bilingual education and skills offer to ensure that young people have the opportunity to continue developing bilingual skills to support a prosperous economy.

The actions in the implementation programme relating to this aim include to:

01. Respond to the **recommendations** from the **task and finish group** which is reviewing the activities of the **Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol**, paying particular attention to progression to higher education and the development of bilingual education and skills which meet the needs of the economy.
02. Continue to develop further education Welsh-medium and bilingual course provision in terms of course availability and learner uptake.

Hazelkorn Review

Professor Ellen Hazelkorn's report, **Towards 2030: A Framework for Building a World-Class Post-Compulsory Education System for Wales**, was published in March 2016. The second recommendation was to:

Establish a single new authority to be called the Tertiary Education Authority (henceforth TEA) – as the single regulatory, oversight and co-ordinating authority for the post-compulsory sector.

There were no explicit recommendations relating to Welsh-medium provision. On **31 January 2017**, the Cabinet Secretary for Education made a statement on the Hazelkorn Review, noting that she planned to consult on the recommendations 'in the spring.' She added that she was 'hopeful' that the entire process, including consultation and scrutiny of the required legislation, could be completed within a period of three years. On 20 June 2017, the Cabinet Secretary made a further **statement** on

post compulsory education and training and launched a [White Paper consultation, 'Public Good and a Prosperous Wales' \(PDF 0.97MB\)](#), to be completed by the end of October 2017. This takes forward the recommendation to establish a new, single authority as the sole regulator, funding and oversight authority for the post-compulsory sector, to be called the **Tertiary Education and Research Commission** (TERC), which would replace the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The initial consultation will be followed by a technical consultation.

Diamond Review

Professor Sir Ian Diamond's [Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales](#) (the Diamond review), was published in September 2016. The Review recognised the need to **increase Welsh-medium provision at HE level**. Professor Diamond's report stated:

We have received considerable evidence on both the desirability and the need for higher education to be delivered through the medium of Welsh. We support fully the need for a sustainable funding model to be developed not only for the status quo but importantly to enhance provision.

4. Welsh-Medium Education Strategy and other initiatives

The Welsh Government's [Welsh-medium Education Strategy](#) (WMES), published in 2010, set out six national strategic aims for Welsh-medium education. The **second strategic aim** focused on Welsh-medium provision in the **post-16 sector**:

To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, to take account of linguistic progression and continued development of skills.

The strategic objectives of this aim included:

*S02.1 To ensure more high-quality opportunities to study or train through the medium of Welsh under the **14–19 Learning Pathways**, in line with the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 and related guidance.*

*S02.3 To increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in **further education**.*

S02.4 To plan provision which enables linguistic progression from the statutory education phase into the post-16 and post-19 phases with course options that maintain and strengthen linguistic skills in Welsh.

*S02.6 To encourage partnership working between the higher education sector (including the planned **Coleg Ffederal**) [subsequently named the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol] and the post-16 sector on effective progression pathways for learners from post-16 provision into Welsh-medium higher education.*

*S02.7 To improve the planning of pathways for Welsh-medium progression **into and within higher education**, both in academic subject areas and in priority vocational areas.*

The third strategic aim emphasised the importance of **linguistic progression** between education sectors:

To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next.

The strategic objectives included:

SO 3.2 To develop further opportunities for post-16 learners to maintain and improve their language skills in Welsh to provide linguistic progression.

In order to monitor progress, the Strategy set five and ten year targets based on five outcomes. Outcome 4 was:

More learners aged 16–19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning.

The table below shows the targets for 2010 and 2020.

Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning

Learners learning activities by medium of delivery*	2007/08		2015		2020	
	WM**	B**	WM	B	WM	B
Schools	9.6%	5.3%	12.0%	6.0%	14.0%	6.0%
Further education institutions	0.2%	4.5%	1.0%	6.0%	2.0%	8.0%
Work-based learning	0.2%	1.2%	0.5%	2.0%	1.0%	3.0%

Source: Welsh Government. 2010. Welsh-medium Education Strategy, p 25

The **targets for 2020** are **2% of learners in Further Education institutions studying through Welsh** and **8% of learners studying bilingually**. The targets for schools are 14% of post-16 learners studying through Welsh, and 6% bilingually.

The WMES contained an Implementation Programme for each of the strategic aims. The actions for Strategic Aim 2 (‘To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, to take account of linguistic progression and continued development of skills’) included:

- Develop effective planning for Welsh-medium 14–19 provision through regional Welsh-medium forums;
- Increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in further education (FE) and Work-Based Learning;
- Improve planning of linguistic progression into the post-16 and post-19 phases;
- Develop a framework for cooperation between Welsh-medium higher education (HE) and post-16 provision;
- Prioritise courses and options which maximise opportunities for Welsh-medium progression into HE.

Annual reports

The Welsh Government published annual reports, evaluating the progress of the WMES. The **2013-14 annual report** showed that by the academic year **2012/13, FEIs** had already reached the 2015

target of 7% of students studying through Welsh or bilingually, with **8.4% of learning activities through Welsh or bilingually**. However, the reports did not give separate statistics for Welsh-medium provision and bilingual provision. The report noted that six colleges had maintained their Welsh provision and seven colleges had increased it. The **2014-15 annual report** showed that the number of learning activities through Welsh or bilingually in FE colleges had increased slightly to **8.5%** in the academic year **2013/14**.

In 2015-16, the report on the WMES formed part of the Welsh Government's **annual report on A living language: a language for living: Welsh Language Strategy 2012-17**. The report summarised student learning activities by medium of delivery from 2009-10 to 2014-15. The report showed that **7.2%** of learning activities in FEIs were delivered through Welsh or bilingually in the academic year **2014/15**.

Learning activities by medium

Student learning activities by medium of delivery (LA26)	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	WM+B	WM+B	WM+B	WM+B	WM+B	WM+B
Schools	17.1%	21.0%	17.4%	20.1%	20.5%	20.4%
Further education institutions	6.2%	5.7%	6.7%	8.4%	8.5%	7.2%
Work-based learning	1.5%	3.0%	3.9%	3.6%	3.0%	6.7%

Source: Welsh Government. 2016. **A living language: a language for living: Welsh Language Strategy 2012-17: Annual report 2015-16**, p34

The Lifelong Learning Wales Record definition for Welsh-medium and bilingual learning post-16 was revised in 2014/15. Prior to 2014/15, the language of learning was recorded according to the language of the classroom. From 2014-15, the learning is recorded according to the medium of learning and assessment of individuals. This explains the decline from 8.5% in 2013/14 to 7.2% in 2014/15. Prior to 2010/11, data for Work-based learning provision delivered by FEIs was categorised under 'Further Education institutions'. From 2010/11 onwards, this data has been categorised under 'Work-based learning'.

Evaluation of the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy

The Welsh Government commissioned Arad to undertake the **Evaluation of the Welsh-medium education strategy** in October 2012. This was published in 2016 and contained **21 recommendations**. The report concluded that there has been not enough development in Welsh-medium provision in the Further Education sector:

Very little progress has been seen in relation to Welsh-medium provision in the FE sector during the life of the Strategy.

In contrast to the annual reports on the WMES, this evaluation provided some separate statistics for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the FE sector. In **2013/14, 1.7% of FE courses** were provided **through the medium of Welsh**.

Three recommendations referred to Welsh-medium provision post-16. Recommendation 11 was that FE colleges should have strategic plans for developing Welsh-medium provision:

Further education institutions should ensure that they have action plans which clearly set out priority areas for the development of Welsh-medium provision. The

institutions' strategic plans should state how they will expand Welsh-medium provision in colleges to support growth in the sector.

Recommendation 12 noted the need to ensure consistency between FE colleges' strategic plans and local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). (The WMES required local authorities to submit WESPs to measure demand for Welsh-medium education and outline their targets to the Welsh Government):

The Welsh Government should ensure there is coherence and consistency between Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Welsh-medium provision action plans in further education institutions.

Recommendation 13 referred to assessing demand for Welsh-medium provision post-16:

The Welsh Government should consider how to measure the demand for post-16 Welsh-medium provision more systematically, looking at ways of ensuring that learners record their preferred language of study as part of a new common application process.

Welsh-medium Education strategy: next steps

Following the evaluation, the Welsh Government published the policy statement, **Welsh-medium Education Strategy: next steps** in March 2016, to set out the direction for Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the following year. The policy statement outlined the achievements since the publication of the WMES. This included two achievements in Welsh-medium provision in the post-16 sector. The Welsh Government had:

Required local authorities and further education colleges to submit annual plans to the Welsh Government indicating what post-16 provision will be made available through the medium of Welsh or bilingually

[and]

Supported opportunities for learners in Years 10-13 in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and further education colleges to develop their understanding of continuing to use their Welsh-language skills as they progress into post-16 and post-19 education, training and for the workplace.

The policy statement also set out targets for the following year. Two of these targets referred to Welsh-medium provision in the post-16 sector:

Work with further education colleges to ensure that the work undertaken by the Bilingual Champions is embedded into their planning processes;

[and]

Continue to promote linguistic continuity from one phase of education and training to the next in partnership with schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Welsh Language Sabbatical scheme

The Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme (WLSS) was originally developed as a pilot scheme in 2005. The aim was to achieve the objective set out in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, **laith Pawb – A National Action plan for a Bilingual Wales**, of increasing the number of practitioners able to teach and train through the medium of Welsh pre-and post-16. The Strategy referred to:

Support for teachers to extend their Welsh skills through sabbaticals or other training.

The laith Pawb strategy was superseded by **A living language: A language for living**, in 2012. The WLSS provides periods of intensive study, in order to **develop Welsh language skills** and **develop confidence in bilingual and Welsh-medium teaching methodologies**. Courses are offered at various levels and delivered by providers across Wales, under a contract with the Welsh Government. The scheme covers the cost of participants' travel and subsistence costs and pays for supply staff, allowing schools and colleges to release staff to attend the training courses.

In 2011-12, the Welsh Government conducted a **Review of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme for educational practitioners: participant experiences 2011-2012**, published in 2014. The Review concluded that the WLSS can have a 'clear influence on the use of Welsh in colleges':

The main message from all those who contributed to the review (participants, local authorities and senior managers) was that the WLSS is a valuable scheme and that there is a continuing need for such courses.

The Review added that the profile of the Welsh language had increased in schools and colleges as a result of the scheme. The work also found examples of relationships between the Sabbatical Scheme and the Bilingual Champion (the member of staff responsible for overseeing Welsh-medium and bilingual provision at an FEI):

There was evidence of links between the Sabbatical Scheme and the work of Bilingual Champions in the further education sector. Bilingual Champions have encouraged individual tutors to attend the Sabbatical Courses, in some cases reflecting colleges' plans to develop provision in priority subject areas.

Recommendation 20 of the Welsh Language, Culture and Communications Committee inquiry into the new Welsh Language Strategy was to evaluate the WLSS:

We recommend a thorough evaluation of the Sabbatical Scheme looking particularly at its value for money in improving classroom outcomes and in encouraging more teachers to teach Welsh or in Welsh.

Bilingual Champions

The Bilingual Champion project was established in 2005, originally as a pilot programme, and was extended to all FEIs by 2013. The Champions were initially funded by the Welsh Government, with colleges continuing to fund the posts after the grants came to an end. The Champions' principle role is to **support strategic planning within FEIs to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision**. The principle objectives of the project were:

To enable colleges to develop a robust strategy and increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision for learners;

To increase the number of learners undertaking to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh or bilingually;

[and]

To increase the number of college staff able and qualified to assist with portfolio building, assessment and verifying through the medium of Welsh.

As part of the evaluation of the WMES, the Welsh Government conducted **A Study of the work of the Bilingual Champions in further education**, published in 2014, in order to examine the contribution of the Bilingual Champion in developing a support structure to encourage Welsh-medium education. The report contained 11 recommendations. The first recommendation was linked to recommendation 11 of the Evaluation of the WMES, referring to strategic plans for developing Welsh-medium provision, and the Champion's roles in forming these plans:

The Welsh Government should ensure that all colleges complete action plans to develop Welsh-medium provision and that they are publicly available. In order to support these action plans, colleges should ensure that Champions have direct contact with the relevant senior managers in the institutions and that they are supported by an internal steering group.

The third recommendation, for CollegesWales, was related to the aim of increasing the number of learners studying through Welsh:

Guidance should be developed for colleges highlighting effective ways of encouraging students to follow part of their courses through the medium of Welsh.

The eleventh and final recommendation was that:

Colleges should confirm their plans to maintain the Champions' role, including stating how the Champions' functions will be incorporated into the institutions' work on a continuous basis.

The study concluded that the project had a significant effect on Welsh-medium provision, from the perspective of strategic planning. There had been 'a clear increase in the attention' that colleges gave to planning Welsh-medium provision and institutions had 'formalised the process' of planning provision, as a result of the champions. The institutional-level data reviewed in the study indicated that the number of students choosing to follow Welsh-medium or bilingual courses had increased in recent years. In addition, some colleges noted that they now considered language skills when appointing staff, in order to maintain and extend Welsh-medium provision. This was being done for the first time after the appointment of Bilingual Champions. The study concluded:

It is very unlikely that the developments seen across the sector would have happened if not for the project.

The importance of the Bilingual Champions was also acknowledged in the policy statement **A living language: a language for living – moving forward 2014-17:**

We also need to build on the work of the bilingual champions in further education and work-based learning to ensure the further development and sustaining of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision post-16.

Policy statement on Higher Education

In 2013, the Welsh Government published a **Policy statement on higher education**, which included a section on Welsh-medium education. The statement acknowledged the role of Higher Education Institutions in supporting the Welsh language:

The Welsh Government's vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales. Higher education providers have a key part to play in making that vision a reality.

The statement refers to the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in promoting the Welsh language in the Higher Education sector. The Coleg is discussed in chapter 7 of this paper.

Funding review

In 2013, the Welsh Government published the report for the **Post-16 Planning and Funding Review**, with the aim of simplifying the funding system in the post-16 sector. One of the planning principles underlying the report was:

To promote the delivery and development of Welsh-medium provision.

The previous funding methodology included funding uplifts to reflect the additional costs for Welsh-medium and bilingual delivery. The new framework would 'maintain uplift funding for Welsh-medium provision'.

This would be a ring-fenced quantum within the overall grant allocation. As part of the new methodology, local authorities and FEIs would be given block allocations for each of these uplifts.

Higher Education Council for Wales' Corporate Strategy

The **Higher Education funding Council for Wales' Corporate Strategy for 2013-14 - 2015** was approved by the Welsh Government in 2013 and later extended by a further year to 2017. The Strategy included a **target for increasing study through the medium of Welsh**:

The number of students studying higher education courses at higher education institutions and further education institutions in Wales undertaking at least 5 credits of their course through the medium of Welsh, per annum, will rise from 4,335 in 2011/12 to 5,600 in 2015/16, including a rise from 2,269 to 3,030 in the number of those studying at least 40 credits per annum.

Priorities for Further Education sector

The Welsh Government publishes an annual letter outlining the priorities for the Further Education sector. **Developing Welsh-medium provision** was the fifth priority area outlined in the **2015/16 letter (PDF 231KB)** from the then Minister for Education Huw Lewis. The letter noted that:

The number of learners studying through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in the sector is increasing slowly.

The letter stated the target of increasing Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in FE in order to reach the targets outlined in education and language strategies:

Each institution is expected to increase the availability and take-up of Welsh-medium and bilingual course provision in support of our Welsh-medium Education Strategy and continue to maintain and develop the students' Welsh language skills to support our 'A living language: a language for living' strategy.

The Welsh language was listed under the third priority area in the [2016/17 letter \(PDF 292 KB\)](#). The then Minister stated:

I must say I how please I am to note the increasing number of post-16 learners studying through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in schools, colleges and work-based learning... although the pace of change could be faster in some areas.

The letter echoed the desire of the previous letter to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in FEIs.

5. The position in Further Education

Education beyond compulsory school age in Wales is divided between school sixth forms and Further Education Institutions. The WMES stated that the majority of Welsh-medium provision which currently exists at post-16 is in sixth forms, as opposed to FEIs:

The data clearly show that it is school sixth forms that form the mainstay of Welsh-medium provision in the 16–19 age range.

In 2016, the Welsh Language Commissioner published [The Position of the Welsh Language 2012-2015: the Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year report](#). The report echoed the WMES:

It is fair to say that secondary sixth forms (Years 12 and 13) are the main provider of Welsh medium education for the 16–19 age range.

Further Education Institutions

There have been changes in the structure of the FE landscape in recent years, with many institutions merging. There are currently [fourteen FEIs](#) in Wales. In 2014-15, **two thirds of learners** chose to attend an FEI and they currently provide **80% of all post-16 qualifications** in Wales.²

Provision

In the policy statement, [A living language: A language for living – Moving forward](#), the Welsh Government stated:

The increase in the number of school-age speakers between 5 and 15 is one of the most encouraging developments of the last generation... However, the decline of Welsh usage that occurs among this group after leaving school is one of our major current and future challenges.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's five year report noted the **lack of Welsh-medium provision** post-16 and the **low number of students studying through Welsh** at this level:

² These statistics are taken from CollegesWales and Sgiliaith's [Memorandum of Understanding \(PDF 257KB\)](#), published March 2016

There is a clear lack of progression in Welsh medium learning, between key stages in schools and especially as pupils move on to further and higher education.

[and]

The percentage of students who receive their education through the medium of Welsh in further and higher education continues to be very low compared with the percentage in schools.

This was reinforced by the WMES:

Welsh-medium provision in further education institutions and work-based learning remains low.

It has also been a theme in Estyn reports, with HM's Chief Inspector's **2015-16 annual report** noting:

There is ... a need to improve the collection of learners' destination data and data about the number of learners who train in Welsh. While post-16 providers offer aspects of training and assessment through the medium of Welsh, few learners undertake written assessments or qualifications in the language.

In FEIs, there is an **emphasis on bilingual**, rather than Welsh only provision, as the Welsh Language Commissioner's report stated:

The Welsh medium education model is fully practised within statutory education. Welsh medium education is the focus of the Government's strategy for education in Wales in its entirety. However, bilingual learning is the focus of Colleges Wales' National Strategy for Bilingualism.

The Welsh Government annually collates the results of the **Learner Voice Wales survey**, which includes learners in FE, Work-Based Learning, adult community learning and Welsh for Adults. The 2015 survey showed that around **half of learners** were given the **opportunity to learn in Welsh or in both Welsh and English (49%)**. This represented an increase from 2014. **One in ten learners** said that they would **prefer to learn in Welsh or in a mixture of both Welsh and English (11%)**. These statistics are not broken down per sector.

In June 2017, Estyn published a report on **Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education**. The aim was:

- To examine how effectively FEIs ensure continuity and progression in learning experiences through the medium of Welsh and bilingually;
- Identify and share good practice in Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching;

The report made 10 recommendations, 5 for further education colleges, and 5 for the Welsh Government. The work concluded that despite the fact that FEIs have achieved the Welsh Government's target for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in FE for 2015, provision remains sparse:

From a low starting point, there has been a small increase in the number of Welsh-medium or bilingual learning activities in further education colleges over recent

years... Overall, too few Welsh-speaking learners continue their studies through the medium of Welsh or bilingually in further education colleges.

The report added that the percentage of learners who study through Welsh or bilingually varies greatly between learning areas. However, 'a few colleges' have been successful in delivering bilingual courses. The report noted that the majority of learners who study their courses in Welsh or bilingually do not complete their final assessments in Welsh. Estyn argued that this could have 'a detrimental effect' on the status of Welsh-medium provision. The report noted the need for training and resources, leading to Recommendation 4:

Improve staff training on the methodology of training bilingually and ensure that there are significant resources and learning materials for Welsh-medium or bilingual courses.

Available statistics

The most recent statistics available on the Welsh Government's Stats Wales website are for **2015/16**, which provide **the number of learning areas and the medium of delivery**. The data shows:

- The total of **Welsh-medium** activities (defined as all assessments completed in Welsh) was **1,170, 0.29%** of activities.
- The number of **bilingual** activities (defined as at least 50% of assessments complete in Welsh) was **11,450, 2.8%** of all activities.
- The number of activities with **some elements of Welsh** (but assessment mainly or entirely in English) was **19,165** or **4.7%**.
- The total activities with some element of Welsh was **7.8%**.
- This was fairly consistent with the overall figure from **2014/15** of **7.9%**, although it represented a small **increase** in **Welsh-medium only** activities and activities with **some elements of Welsh** and a slight **decrease** in **bilingual** activities

Stats Wales also includes data on **Learning activities at Further Education institutions by subject and medium of delivery**:

- The subjects with the highest number of learning activities with some element of Welsh were **Retail and Commercial Enterprise (18.1%); Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care (17.7%)** and **Business, Administration and Law (14.2%)**.
- The subjects with the lowest number of learning activities with some element of Welsh were **Languages, Literature and Culture (2.4%)**.

The need for more data

There is a **lack of clear data** regarding Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the FE sector. The WMES offered a definition of bilingual provision in Further Education colleges, noting:

In further education colleges in particular, bilingual provision can refer to situations where classes are taught simultaneously in the two languages, or where courses contain Welsh-medium modules.

The second recommendation of the **Study of the work of the Bilingual Champions in FE** was that:

Colleges should, with the support of Colleges Wales, improve the quality of the data collected on the Welsh medium and bilingual learning options and the number of students who choose those options. This data should be in a consistent form that allows comparisons between institutions and over time.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's five year report also emphasised the lack of consistent and comprehensive data regarding what provision currently exists and the different interpretations of bilingual provision, noting:

It is relatively difficult to ascertain exactly how many are studying through the medium of Welsh and bilingually in further education colleges.

The report argued that this problem was partly due to individual colleges' different understanding of what is meant by 'Welsh medium and bilingual' and this is reflected in the approach to recording statistics.

Estyn's 2017 report also noted a problem regarding data:

Many colleges do not record information consistently and accurately about which learning activities are carried out bilingually or in Welsh.

This led to recommendations for both FE colleges and the Welsh Government:

Work more effectively with secondary schools to identify Welsh-speaking learners before they transfer to college and ensure that learners have all the information about support that they need in order to allow them to choose to continue their learning in Welsh (Recommendation 1)

[and]

Improve data collection fields, and their associated guidance, to ensure that colleges record accurate information about learners' linguistic abilities and the language of learning and assessment by activity (Recommendation 8)

CollegesWales

In 1993, 'fforwm' was created, re-named **CollegesWales** in 2009, with the aim:

To raise the profile of further education with key decision-makers to improve opportunities for learners in Wales.

This included developing opportunities for learners to study through the medium of Welsh or bilingually and to study in a college with a Welsh ethos and identity. In 2010, CollegesWales published a **National Strategy on Bilingualism in FE**, in response to the responsibilities given to FEIs in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (Strategic Aim 2). The National Strategy had three strands:

- Strand 1: The development of a **Welsh ethos** at the college;
- Strand 2: The development of **bilingual communication skills** to augment English medium provision;
- Strand 3: The development of **Welsh-medium or bilingual provision** for post-14 learners.

Sgiliaith

Sgiliaith was established in 2001, with the aim of providing **training** to members of staff on **bilingual teaching methodology** and sharing good practice in the post-14 sector. Sgiliaith is funded by the Welsh Government. In 2016, Sgiliaith signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with CollegesWales. Some of the aims of the memorandum were to:

Increase the sector's profile as a post-16 education and training sector that is renowned for its bilingual provision;

[and]

Be innovative and lead on bilingual best practice in terms of delivery and bilingual pedagogy and methodology.

Qualifications Wales

In 2012, the Welsh Government published Huw Evans' **Review of Qualifications 14-19** with the vision of creating:

Qualifications that are understood and valued and meet the needs of our young people and the Welsh economy

[and]

Responding effectively to the needs of a bilingual nation.

One of the principles underlying the decision was '**access to qualifications through Welsh and English.**' The fifth recommendation of the report was that:

The Welsh Government should establish a single body (Qualifications Wales) that is responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of all non-degree level qualifications available.

As a result, in 2015, Qualifications Wales was established through the **Qualifications Wales Act 2015**, as a regulator of qualifications below degree level, and the qualifications system in Wales. The Act had two principle aims:

Ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales

[and]

Promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.

In pursuing its principal aims, one of the 'matters' to which Qualifications Wales must have regard is:

The desirability of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, including through the availability of assessment arrangements that provide for assessment through the medium of the Welsh language, and of qualifications that otherwise promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language.

In 2016, **Qualifications Wales** published the **Regulatory Welsh-Medium and Bilingual Qualifications Policy (PDF 408KB)**. The aim of the policy was to ensure that learners in Wales:

Should have access to a range of qualifications that can be assessed through the medium of Welsh and bilingually.

The Act encouraged awarding bodies:

To make assessment available through the medium of both Welsh and English for as wide a range of Designated qualifications as possible.

6. The position in Higher Education

The Welsh Government's Welsh-Medium Education Strategy stated the importance of Welsh-medium education in the sector HE:

There needs to be effective progression into, and further development of, Welsh-medium course options in higher education as well as lifelong learning of all types.

The Strategy noted that Welsh-medium provision in the sector had increased, but there is a need to further develop provision:

In higher education, while there have been some significant developments in recent years, there is considerable variation in the Welsh-medium provision offered both between institutions and across subjects. In some cases, there is the opportunity to undertake all or substantial parts of a course through the medium of Welsh, and in others it may be limited to part of a module, such as seminars or tutorial support.

Statistics

The most recent statistics compiled by the Welsh Government are for the academic year **2014/15**, and showed that:

- **6,355 students** received some teaching through the medium of Welsh at **eight universities**, representing **5%** of students in Wales.
- This is a **21%** increase **from 2013/14**, largely as a result of the **increase in part time students** with some teaching through the medium of Welsh.
- Of these 6,355 students, **53%** were taught **entirely through Welsh** and **47%** were taught **part of their course** in Welsh.
- Of these 6,355 students, **72%** were **female** and **28% male**. Note that in 2014/15, there were more female Welsh students in Wales than male.
- The vast **majority** of students with some teaching through Welsh were on **undergraduate courses**, with almost two thirds of these studying full-time.
- The number of **full time undergraduate** students with some teaching through Welsh **fell** slightly compared with 2013/14.
- The number of **postgraduate** students receiving some teaching through Welsh **increased** from 2014/15.
- In 2014/15, there were 10,550 members of academic staff at universities in Wales. **9% of staff** were **able to teach in Welsh** and **6% of staff** were **teaching in Welsh**.

- The **most popular subjects** with some teaching through the medium of Welsh, excluding Welsh language and related subjects were **education, subjects allied to medicine** and **social studies**.

The most recent statistics available on [StatsWales](#) show the number of students enrolled on a course through the medium of Welsh in different Higher Education institutions in Wales. The most recent statistics are for the academic year **2014/15**. The data shows that the HEI with the highest number and percentage (21%) of enrolments on courses with some teaching through Welsh was University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

The main initiative to increase Welsh-medium provision in HE is the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

7. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is an initiative established to increase Welsh-medium provision in Higher Education. The Coleg was established as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity in March 2011. All universities in Wales are members and the Coleg works through branches located across eight universities. The aim of the branches is to promote and oversee the activities of the Coleg within individual institutions and to act as a local point of contact for students. For further information, see the Research Service's [blog article of 5 June 2017](#).

The Coleg's first Academic Plan, published soon after its foundation in April 2011, outlined the Coleg's aims. The first aim was an overarching statement of its purpose:

To advance learning and knowledge by promoting, maintaining, developing and overseeing Welsh medium provision in higher education in Wales, working with and through higher education institutions in Wales.

The other aims expanded upon this statement:

- To **oversee Welsh-medium provision** and to provide unity of purpose, cohesion and leadership through a national strategy;
- To create a permanent and robust structure, on a national basis, to secure full **status for the Welsh language as a medium of teaching** and research within universities;
- To enrich, deepen and broaden provision for students, stimulating and responding to demand, and **increasing the number of students** studying through the medium of Welsh.

The Coleg is referred to in the WMES:

S02.6: To encourage partnership working between the higher education sector (including the planned Coleg Ffederal) and the post-16 sector on effective progression pathways for learners from post-16 provision into Welsh-medium higher education.

S02.7: To improve the planning of pathways for Welsh-medium progression into and within Higher education, both in academic subject areas and in priority vocational areas.

The Coleg was also part of the [Welsh Government Policy Statement on Higher Education, 2013](#):

Through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Welsh Government will continue to support the development of Welsh-medium higher education and a confident bilingual Wales.

In **Welsh-medium Education Strategy: next steps**, the Welsh Government expressed the intention to:

Continue our discussions with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Welsh Universities and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to secure sustainable Welsh-medium higher education provision, and consult on the vision for the Coleg in order to build on the initial success.

The **Diamond Review** supported the work of the Coleg, and recommended that it:

Should continue to be the lead body in planning and supporting the provision of Welsh medium provision on a strategic basis across Welsh HE.

The Report contained two recommendations referring to the Coleg. The Panel recommended that the Welsh Government should:

Work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, HEFCW, the HEIs and other stakeholders such as further education institutions, schools, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, employers and national voluntary and community-based organisations in order to secure maximum impact and greatest value from public investment in, and support for, Welsh-medium higher education.

[and]

Support a sustainable funding model; annual investment from HEFCW in the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and its scholarship programme should be maintained at least at the level for academic year 2016/17 (£5.8m).

Since the development of the Coleg, the number of Welsh-medium courses has increased, and there are currently over **900 degree courses** where students can study **part of their course through Welsh**. In the majority of academic fields, there is **at least 40 credits** of Welsh-medium provision and around **5,300 students** are studying **at least 5 credits** through Welsh. Through its Academic Staffing Scheme, which came to an end in 2016, the Coleg allocated grants to universities to fund Welsh-medium lecturers. **115 lecturers** have been appointed at universities across Wales. The Coleg has awarded over **600 undergraduate** and **50 masters scholarships** to students studying all or part of their courses through the medium of Welsh, and has funded over **50 PhDs**.

In 2013, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with CollegesWales. One of the key aims of the memorandum was to work together to:

Improve Welsh-medium and bilingual progression routes for further education, work-based learning, adult learning and higher education by developing, promoting and supporting integrated educational pathways that respond to the evidenced needs of learners and employers.

This included:

[To] support the promotion of teaching and learning excellence and efforts to enhance quality by sharing teaching and learning resources (particularly digital learning resources) and cutting edge practice in pedagogy/andragogy in Welsh medium education.

In 2014, OldBell3 was commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to conduct **An evaluation of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's progress to date** (PDF 1.83MB). The report made 17 recommendations for improvements, whilst concluding:

The Coleg has achieved a great deal in a short time and has been highly successful in gaining the trust and respect of a range of stakeholders across government and the higher education sector in Wales.

The future of the Coleg

In January 2017, the Coleg published its new **Academic Plan: Towards 2020 and beyond**, in the context of the Welsh Government's target of **one million Welsh speakers by 2050**. The new Academic Plan marks a **new direction for the Coleg**. As opposed to responding to bids submitted from individual universities, the Coleg will now provide stronger strategic leadership. This will involve reducing the number of funded lecturing posts and moving towards subject grants. These funding agreements are due to come into force in 2017/18.

On her appointment to the Cabinet in June 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Education agreed **ten education priorities** with the First Minister. One of the education priorities was to explore a potential expansion of the remit of the Coleg to include Further Education. In a budget scrutiny session with the Children, Young People and Education Committee on **10 November 2016**, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language stated:

We know that the Coleg Cymraeg has been a success, and we all, I think, take pride in that success. And so how we grow and expand that success is the question... when the taskforce reports back ... to then be able to respond to that, and ensure that we see that expansion of the activity of the Coleg.

On **1 August 2016**, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced that:

Following five years of operation, it is now an appropriate time to consider the role of the Coleg for the future.

She announced the establishment of a Welsh Government **task and finish group** which aims to review the activities of the Coleg. Kirsty Williams gave further details on the membership of the group on **2 November 2016**. This task and finish are examining:

- How appropriate is the current model and structure of the Coleg and is it fit for the purpose of promoting and developing Welsh-medium higher education provision from 2017 onwards;
- Future funding options for the Coleg;
- The sustainability of the relationship between the Coleg and Welsh Higher Education institutions;
- The possibility of extending the remit of the Coleg to the post-16 sector;
- The role of the Coleg in response to the recommendations of the Diamond review and other recent policy developments.

On **14 June 2017 (PDF 353KB)**, the Cabinet Secretary for Education informed the Children, Welsh Language and Communications Committee that the report was 'imminent'. The results of the report will be central to taking Welsh-medium provision forward in the post-compulsory sector.