# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **More than just words** |
| **DATE** | **21 July 2022** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

*More than just words* is the Welsh Government’s strategic framework to strengthen Welsh language provision in health and social care. Its aim is to support Welsh-speakers to receive services in their first language.

In October 2021, I announced I would be establishing a small task and finish group to develop a five-year plan for *More than just words*, following an independent evaluation of the framework. I can update members about the outcome of that work.

The evaluation showed that, for many Welsh-speakers, being able to access services in Welsh made a significant positive difference to their overall experience and, in many cases, their health and wellbeing outcomes. But it also demonstrated people often found it difficult to access the services they need and were reluctant to ask when Welsh-language services were not offered.

The task and finish group, chaired by Marian Wyn Jones, has considered patients’ experience, evidence from Welsh Government, the NHS and social care, regulators, professional bodies and from the education and training sectors. A virtual stakeholder workshop was held in March to share emerging thoughts on themes and actions.

I am grateful to the members for their commitment, knowledge and expertise.

The five-year plan will be based on the following themes, which emerged from the task and finish group’s work:

* Culture and leadership
* Welsh language planning and policies
* Supporting and developing Welsh language skills of the workforce
* Sharing best practice and developing an enabling approach

A performance management framework will measure progress against actions in the plan and a new advisory board will be set up – I will meet the board once a year to discuss progress against the plan.

In Wales, almost 200,000 staff deliver health and social care, by far the largest employer in Wales. There is therefore a huge opportunity for health and social care to become exemplars in providing Welsh language services and to contribute to the Welsh Government’s ambition to increase language use and the number of Welsh speakers by 2050.

Our health and social care staff have done extraordinary work during the pandemic and they continue to work under intense pressure. They care deeply about providing the best possible care for people in Wales – for Welsh-speakers that means providing a service in Welsh.

I know our health and social care professionals and other stakeholders across Wales will rise to the challenge to implement the actions in the new *More than just words* plan, which I look forward to launching at the National Eisteddfod next month.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.