

## National Strategy on Bilingualism in FE

### Introduction

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In its document ***One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales***, the Welsh Assembly Government coalition states:

- *“Everyone, from whatever background, of whatever age and whether Welsh-speaking or English-speaking, has the right to an education.*
- *We will provide a government-guaranteed right, backed up with new money, to education and credited training until the age of eighteen, including a broader-based baccalaureate, incorporating vocational and academic learning opportunities, with a legislative framework.*
- *We will set out a new policy agreement with Local Education Authorities to require them to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education, including surveying parental wishes, and to produce a resulting School Organisation Plan, setting out clear steps to meet need.*
- *We will create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy to develop effective provision from nursery through to further and higher education backed up by an implementation programme.*
- *We will continue to develop a distinctive curriculum that is appropriate for Wales”.*

In May 2009, DCELLS published a draft *Welsh-medium Education Strategy*, which sets a direction from the pre-statutory phase to Higher Education. The section of the document that is most relevant to Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales members is 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.*

The Strategic Objectives of Strategic Aim 2 include:

- To increase high quality opportunities for study or training through the medium of Welsh under the 14-19 Learning Pathways, in line with the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009
- To secure linguistic progression from the statutory education phase into post-16 and post-18 course options that maintain and strengthen linguistic skills in Welsh in preparation for a workforce where skills in Welsh are increasingly valued
- To encourage plans for Transforming Education and Training Provision which improve the extent and range of post-16 Welsh-medium provision

The Welsh-medium Education Strategy places much responsibility for developments at the door of Further Education Institutions. This strategy is a considered and integrated response that lays out how ColegauCymru / CollegesWales member colleges will respond to those responsibilities.

Estyn's new Inspection Framework from 2010 will continue to place a focus on bilingualism. Estyn is committed to the opinion that learners should have the right to vocational opportunities through the medium of Welsh at age 16 and within the options proposed by 14-19 learning partnerships. Estyn will give detailed attention to Welsh-medium learning opportunities 14-19 and progression rates from a language point of view.

Note: this ColegauCymru / CollegesWales strategy is concerned in the main with developments for the 14-19 age-groups, in line with the Estyn inspection framework and the Learning & Skills (Wales) Measure. Although each of the Strands contained within this strategy will pertain to all post-14 learners, there is no mechanism offered through this strategy to coordinate or focus the planning and development work for increasing bilingualism for post-19/lifelong learning.

## Some principles for future development

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In accepting the challenge to play a fuller and more proactive role in the planning and delivery of bilingual learning and training, FE colleges in Wales recognise that they serve a variety of areas and communities – differing in their economic, cultural and linguistic nature. It follows that each college will respond in ways appropriate to their local situation and in ways that recognise their current situation. Their responses will also be dependent on the collaboration between them and other learning providers in their area. But respond they will.

This desire and determination to respond positively leads to some key principles that will underpin developments:

- All colleges will respond and contribute to a greater extent to the learning requirements of bilingual learners in their area than they do at present.

- Colleges will need to recognise their own position vis-à-vis Welsh-medium and bilingual learning.
- Colleges will need to prioritise the areas in which they wish to act and to adopt an approach that reflects their position but that will also lead to positive outcomes for the learners. The process of prioritising development areas should be done in consultation with local partners.
- Colleges will promote innovative collaboration with existing and new partners to enable learners to access the provision they deserve and require. This should be of benefit both to learners at the colleges and also those at their partner institutions.
- Colleges will need to adopt a strategic approach and build in actions that will also support further, future development.
- Developments and partnerships will need to be driven by the desired outcomes, with actions and roles of partners evolving from these.

## Our vision

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That colleges be full and pro-active partners in the **planning and delivery** of a post-14 education and training system that provides appropriate opportunities for learners to study and learn through the language of their choice, thereby preparing them for work and life in a bilingual Wales.

To ensure **provision** to satisfy the needs and aspirations of learners on the basis of equal opportunities across Wales

## Strategic Aims

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The Strategic Aims of this strategy are those identified in the WAG's draft *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* that are relevant to the members of ColegauCymru / CollegesWales i.e.

- To increase high quality opportunities for study or training through the medium of Welsh under the 14-19 Learning Pathways, in line with the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.
- To secure linguistic progression from the statutory education phase into post-16 and post-18 course options that maintain and strengthen linguistic skills in Welsh in preparation for a workforce where skills in Welsh are increasingly valued.
- To encourage plans for Transforming Education and Training Provision which improve the extent and range of post-16 Welsh-medium provision.

## Desired outcomes

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Member colleges of ColegauCymru / CollegesWales have agreed the following desired outcomes:

- Learners will experience a bilingual ethos in all colleges in Wales, irrespective of their locations.
- Learners will leave the post-14 education system in Wales with the linguistic skills needed to access further study or employment in a bilingual Wales.
- Learners with bilingual language skills that may have been developed by Welsh-medium or bilingual learning in their main course or by the development of bilingual communications skills.
- Colleges will play an integral part in the planning and delivery of Welsh-medium or bilingual provision throughout their local communities.
- Colleges that work in partnerships with other providers to allow learners (in all post-16 establishments) to access bilingual or Welsh-medium learning.

Colleges will respond to this strategy by prioritising developments in one (or more) of three strands. **Annex 1** shows how developments in the three strands respond to the Strategic Aims noted above.

The three strands that form the strategy are:

**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

The following section provides more detail about each of the three strands:

## Strand 1: The development of a Welsh ethos at the college

Colleges to work and plan together. Work towards raising awareness of the advantage of having and using two languages. Colleges to commit to plan opportunities for learners to maintain their language skills from their previous educational experiences.

Examples of responses:

### a. College-wide

- All signs in the college should be bilingual.
- Front-line staff should be able to meet and greet (at the very least) in both Welsh and English. The Welsh greeting should come first. Every effort should be made to ensure that all customer-facing units have at least one person who can converse freely in Welsh.
- Incoming telephones should be answered in Welsh first, with all telephone staff having basic “meet and greet” Welsh language skills.
- (identify list) documentation should be available bilingually. The Welsh version should be as freely available as the English version.
- Websites and marketing materials should explain how the college promotes a bilingual ethos (i.e. not simply state that it has a Welsh Language Scheme) and note clearly in prospectuses the courses/elements of courses that are available bilingually or through the medium of Welsh.
- Formal and social events that support and promote bilingualism.

### b. On a curriculum basis

- Relevant courses should try to promote a “sense of place” as appropriate to the courses being taught – use of branded Welsh produce in restaurants and canteens (and promoting them on menus – provided that they are economically viable); promotion of the Welsh language in tourism, music, drama courses; promotion of successful Welsh artists, musicians, scientists, historians etc on a range of courses; reference to Welsh examples and case studies in other courses.

Such developments would need to be supported by:

- Staff development (in particular front-line staff).
- Support on translation etc.
- An audit of current curricular practice and identification of areas for development.
- Funding to employ a Bilingualism Development Manager/Champion

## Strand 2:

### The development of bilingual communication skills to augment an English medium provision

In essence, this will promote bilingual communication skills amongst learners and allow them to follow a bilingual programme of learning. Ensuring linguistic continuity and development by developing bilingual communication skills are prerequisites to ensure the learner's success in studying a bilingual or Welsh medium main course or elements of it. There is considerable potential to roll out communication skills provision across colleges, in particular since the development and piloting of *Yr Iaith ar Waith* qualification.

Examples of possible responses:

- Delivery a Welsh-medium Communication Key Skill, or NVQ Language Units, or *Iaith ar Waith*<sup>1</sup> to groups of vocational students (or even all students) to allow them to develop their bilingual skills in parallel with their chosen vocational pathway. These modules would be of particular benefit and interest to students who are following courses that could lead to work in the public sector (or even customer facing work in the private sector). A viable group could be established by pulling together targeted suitable students from a range of vocational courses. There is potential to deliver communication skills through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ).
- Establishment of Welsh-medium tutorial groups for students (who may be following a range of different provision) that is sensitive to learners' different linguistic levels.

Such developments would need to be supported by:

- Awareness raising and marketing (internal and external).
- Staff training – inc Sabbaticals and mentoring of staff.
- Ability to track students' linguistic progress from school; mentor students/bridging between school & college
- Ensuring that all MIS data includes the learners' first language and the previous language of study.

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<sup>1</sup> Iaith ar Waith (The Language at Work) – bilingual customer service modules accredited by WJEC.

### Strand 3: The development of Welsh-medium or bilingual provision for post-14 learners

Purpose: enhancing provision and opportunities for learners through the medium of Welsh to help the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure through partnership between schools & colleges (not competition). It should be made clear to schools that colleges are not proposing to duplicate existing provision – the strategy is to help deliver the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure to Welsh-speaking students at whichever type of institution they are enrolled. Staff & expertise should be shared between schools & colleges.

The requirements for such provision should be identified by local 14-19 Learning Networks and prioritised as part of their annual plan. Progression routes built in – from school to college and from college to HE.

Examples of possible responses:

- Once curriculum areas for development have been identified and agreed, suitable staff for further language development (e.g. through the Sabbatical Scheme) should be identified or appointed. This could be done by an individual college or in partnership with other providers.... possibility of developing the provision and the contribution of the college to the local network or cross-network where that would best serve the entitlement of the learner
- To collaborate with local schools who may have a member of staff with the subject/language specialism to provide the course as part of the college provision. In such cases, staff could be “bought in” or seconded.
- College should “sell” the services of suitable members of staff to a local school to promote provision there with reciprocal arrangements from schools.
- It could also be possible for colleges to identify suitable staff and then prioritise that area for development. While this is not such a strategic approach, it may be useful in kick-starting developments.

Such developments would need to be supported by:

- Staff training, including the Sabbatical Scheme and mentoring of staff.
- Preparation of suitable Welsh-medium or bilingual resources (considerable amount already available).
- Marketing (internal and external).
- Development of a staff appointment process that aims to allow the bilingual provision to continue by ensuring suitable replacement for key staff that leave.
- Cross-border (and cross-region) learning networks to promote effective curricular planning and collaborative delivery distance learning.



## Supporting the development strategy

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Success of the strategy depends in large part on significant investment in staff development.

There is a need for **WAG** support to:

- roll-out Bilingual Champions pilot project
- plan and fund staff development opportunities including mentoring of Welsh-speaking staff who lack confidence (including those who have recently participated on the Sabbatical Scheme), as well as training for staff with lower-level Welsh-language skills; also staff development for front-line staff
- continue to contract Sgiliaith to deliver methodology courses and support its input on the Sabbatical Scheme, the MA in Leadership and Management (FE), and mentoring
- support the development of a central process (that could involve colleges and other providers) to prepare good quality resources
- work proactively with all examination and accreditation bodies (including all the related processes), to ensure they provide their active support to all providers and learners who are or wish to study bilingually or through the medium of Welsh
- commission research into Welsh-medium & bilingual teaching & learning methodology in FE
- build-in to the funding methodology (or other mechanism) the considerable translation costs required to substantially increase bilingual delivery. Also ensure that funding for Yr Iaith ar Waith is moved from the lower-funded “leisure” category (where it is at present).
- commit to revise upwards the weighting of bilingual teaching to a more realistic level.
- WAG to help raise awareness of usefulness of communication skills in Welsh and assist (with WJEC and providers) to market Yr Iaith ar Waith qualification (recognise a huge amount of marketing resource poured into Welsh for Adults and WBQ initiatives, for example).

**ColegauCymru / CollegesWales** will lead on behalf of colleges in Wales and provide central support through:

- convening senior-level network from colleges to meet on regular basis to monitor progress and agree next stages of development programme
- establishing strong working relationship with Cydag, the Centre for Welsh medium HE and Regional Welsh medium Fora
- communicating progress (and barriers to progress) to relevant bodies – including colleges, Cydag, WAG, Welsh Language Board.
- continuing to contract with Sgiliaith:



The Sgiliaith centre (based at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor) has provided support and guidance to colleges and schools for a number of years, funded in the main by DCELLS (formerly ELWa). ColegauCymru / CollegesWales has also supported Sgiliaith for a number of years and much progress has been achieved. ColegauCymru / CollegesWales will continue to contract Sgiliaith to maintain its support to colleges in this field. In future years Sgiliaith should:

- assist individual colleges as they draw up strategies and plans – being proactive in suggesting changes and highlighting good practice wherever it exists
- support and advise individual colleges (or groups of colleges on regional and national basis using existing opportunities e.g. the WAG and ColegauCymru-convened networks) as they implement their plans.

## Implementation of Strategy

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An outline Action Plan for implementation of this ColegauCymru / CollegesWales strategy is seen at **Annex 2**. Individual member colleges will then develop their own Action Plans that will be the thrust of their Welsh Language Plans (in accordance with the 1993 Welsh Language Act).

Examples of steps colleges might take:

- nominate a specific member of the Senior Management Team and of the Governing Body to be responsible and accountable for implementing the Strategy and require generic steps e.g. inclusion in every college strategic plan and staff development plan
- ensure funding earmarked for the implementation of the Strategy
- build on FE-FE collaboration and ensure a step change in relationships with local schools (in particular the Welsh medium schools).
- create links with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education to ensure coordinated communication of progression routes to learners and also to ensure effective developments in the HE provision delivered by FE.
- include Welsh-medium planning in college Development Plans, including investment for targeted staff training with specified outcomes and incorporation of “Cwricwlwm Cymreig” across targeted programme areas etc
- include threshold baselines for benchmarking purposes
- undertake an audit of current delivery within the context of local networks or cross-networks and include specific responsibilities for colleges as well as flexibility for partnership approaches e.g. sharing of staff between schools and colleges

- specifically on Transformation proposals, to nominate a senior figure from each relevant institution involved in the proposal to ensure Welsh-medium/bilingual developments are increased as a result of Transformation.

## Monitoring

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Progress in the implementation of this strategy, and that of individual member colleges, will be monitored annually through self assessment reports from colleges and reporting via Sgiliaith (Sgiliaith reports to the ColegauCymru / CollegesWales Board as part of its contract). This will form part of the self-regulation processes coordinated by ColegauCymru / CollegesWales. It might be useful also to set up benchmarking clubs in which colleges at similar stages of the Strategy can compare progress.

It will be monitored on a strategic and statutory level by the Welsh Language Board. The Welsh Language Board is to adapt its guidelines for colleges in producing their statutory Welsh Language Schemes to conform to this strategy, such that FEIs produce a single progress report to be used both by ColegauCymru and the Welsh Language Board.

## Annex: Implementation plan for ColegauCymru

Action	Stakeholders	Lead Organisation	Implementation Date
Discussion of Strategy at ColegauCymru conference	All ColegauCymru member colleges	ColegauCymru	September 2009
Consultation with key stakeholders	Estyn, Welsh Language Board, DCELLS, 14-19 Learning Networks Cydag Mantais	ColegauCymru	October – December 2009
Formal adoption by ColegauCymru Board	All ColegauCymru member colleges	ColegauCymru	January 2010
Individual college assessment of their own situation	All ColegauCymru member colleges	ColegauCymru / Sgiliaith	February – April 2010
Formulation of individual colleges' responses and Action Plans	All ColegauCymru member colleges	Individual Colleges [with support from Sgiliaith]	April – July 2010
All Action Plans implemented	All ColegauCymru member colleges	Monitoring by ColegauCymru self regulation group (Welsh Language Board will continue to monitor Welsh Language Schemes)	September 2010