

## 1. Introduction

ColegauCymru / CollegesWales is a charity and limited company that raises the profile of further education among decision-makers in order to improve educational opportunities in Wales. It is a member-led body, representing all 14 further education colleges and institutions in Wales.

ColegauCymru represents its members on a wide range of matters that directly or un-directly affect FE. One element of our work involves promoting and facilitating Welsh/bilingualism learner opportunities in FE.

FE's focus is on bridging the link between school and work – supporting people to gain the vocational / academic qualifications and skills they need to secure and progress into employment or further learning.

FE are that under utilised link in workforce planning and supporting linguistic progression. The FE sector can play an intrinsic role in supporting this vision, it is the missing part of the jigsaw in terms of Welsh language development opportunities for learners in Wales.

FE is crucial to delivering a Welsh language workforce fit for purpose with sufficient bilingual skills to be responsive to employer needs.

## 2. Further Education statistics

- Over **2/3 of 16-19 year olds** are enrolled at an FE college.

<b>2014/15 Enrolments on learning programs</b>	<b>FEI (college)</b>	<b>WBL (work based learning)</b>	<b>ACL (adult community learning)</b>	<b>HE</b>	<b>Total in FE</b>
	167,325	65,405	28,710	1,875	263,315

- Of these learners enrolled, **12,000 learners had been educated at a Welsh or bilingual school**, and unless they are adult learners or have moved to Wales would have all received some form of Welsh medium

education. (allbeit the old Welsh second language GCSE qualification, that as evidenced has not created confidence in speaking Welsh).

- With Wales Welsh speaking population roughly 20%, measuring the demand is important, however **creating the demand and planning for growth to achieve this vision and beyond is crucial.**

### 3. Provision

- College provision is diverse, over 250 courses at some colleges across 8 campus within one college alone. The largest proportions of delivery being in, Engineering, Health care (especially for older, part time learners), Business management, Construction and IT as well as retail, performing arts, agriculture and sport.
- FE colleges recognise the importance of bilingualism and Welsh language skills for employment in Wales. In 2010, WG identified 6 key priority areas for FE of Welsh/bilingual provision and delivery, identified by LMI as to where there is a demand for Welsh language skills. They are;
- Child care, Health and Social Care, Business Services, Creative industries, Tourism and Agriculture. All colleges can provide some Welsh/bilingual provision in Child care and Health and Social care across Wales. (to varying degrees) We need to research this data more closely - the LLWR data input still remains vulnerable.

### 4. ColegauCymru Normalisation of Bilingualism strategy:

Launched in 2010 as a national FE response to the Welsh medium education strategy, this strategy was adopted by all 14 colleges and institutions. This strategy remains at the core of how FE compile their individual language action plans for Welsh, based on the following three elements:

1. Developing a bilingual ethos
2. Developing bilingual skills to augment English medium provision
3. Developing Welsh medium provision

We are in the process of updating this strategy in line with the new strategy and will be including an element on employability and employer demand.

## 5. Welsh Government Targets

Welsh language provision: Colleges have surpassed the Welsh Government targets in its Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The WG's latest annual report on the Strategy (published July 2015) showed that the FEI figure for 2013/14 was 8.5%.

Surpassing the 2015 target of 7% and well on track to achieving the 2020 target of 10%.

FE and WESPS work are closely aligned however there needs to be greater partnership and clearer progression routes and opportunities for learners in their area. If the opportunities that FE provide are to be realised in supporting achievement of this strategy/ vision we need to identify what percentage of this growth FE can deliver and set higher targets and provide resources/funding to support sustainable growth of bilingualism and achievement.

## 6. Progression

More needs to be done to evidence do these FE learners then progress into HE or jobs where they use their Welsh language skills. (or are they part of the pool of lost Welsh speakers)

## 7. FE WG Welsh language / bilingualism support

Although not to the same degree as HE or Gen Ed, FE has received some financial support, that has been key in Welsh language / bilingual developments at FE, and recognition must go to the following projects:

- **Sgiliaith** - that provides support and training to FE practitioners and managers on bilingual teaching methodology and bilingual provision integration and planning.
- **Bilingual Champion Scheme** – a huge success as identified in the ARAD report (has since come to an end)
- **Sabbatical scheme** – this scheme works and it creates Welsh speakers, however due to staffing pressures and filling the covering positions this scheme hasn't been fully utilised or suited to FE needs.

Following a discussion with a secondary school, they also felt that support within the school and on site would be more beneficial. Are there collaborative opportunities for 14-19 collaboration on Welsh language training for staff. It might be worth looking and re-evaluating the flexibility of the sabbatical scheme with providers and practitioners on what would work and increase participant levels from FE.

All of the above support the planning and delivery of a bilingual workforce.

## 8. Success of integrating Welsh language and normalising bilingualism in workforce planning

- The success of this vision depends a lot on the people in further education – leaders, teachers and support staff. 3 of the 14 Principals speak Welsh.
- We need to further support and encourage FE to be confident leaders of Welsh language integration and normalisation. Whether this be through Welsh medium/bilingual teaching, our young people at 16 deserve the opportunity to have choice, be that in following a vocational or academic route and that the linguistic offer becomes a given.
- We are still playing a post code lottery with our learners. A growth in Welsh medium education at primary and secondary levels is being evidenced around Wales, however at 16 the Welsh language progression offer is treated less fairly than the English offer.
- If you live in certain areas of Wales, the vocational Welsh language route is extremely limited, and so parents, schools and students stay on at school and study A Levels, which sometimes is not the right route.
- We are aware of this and are keen to work with WG and Welsh language promotion bodies to change this.
- We welcome the review of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the establishment of the working group, to look at the possibility of a similar staffing scheme to CCC for FE as for HE. FE and HE are very different and so we are pleased that Barry Liles as an FE specialist is a part of this panel.

## 9. Leadership

Those who lead and teach in the further education (FE) and skills sector play a crucial role in serving people and employers in their communities and raising educational and skills levels –Welsh is a skills amongst a host of skills that FE supports, develops and maintains, thereby directly supporting both economic development and social mobility.

## 10. Education and Training

- **ITE and PGCE** – radical change and introduce a compulsory Welsh language element and language awareness part of the course (changing perception) – Welsh needs to be seen as a priority in literacy.
- **Dual professionalism** – the benefit in supporting workforce planning – can move across from schools to college (collaborative practice) as in place with shared learning (especially with digital and blended learning developments)
- **EWC** – FE lecturers and support staff as in schools are registered practitioners
- **Estyn** – FE is regulated by Estyn, 2 colleges received excellence this year

(Welsh language skills recognition – needs to be aligned and support workforce planning) Highlight demand and shortages

## 11. Young people

- According to 2011 census – at 16 people the number of people speaking Welsh compared to the 10-15 group significantly drops.
- Do they lose their language or not want to continue to use it?
- **Careers Wales, schools (English, Welsh and bilingual) and colleges have a crucial role to play in raising awareness and evidencing career paths with linguistic progression a key part of this advice.**

## 12. Employer engagement

Engage with employers - across all sectors to talk about their Welsh language skills needs? LMI is crucial to change. Colleges can support the delivery of

these needs and ensure that people are learning, developing and maintaining their Welsh/bilingual ability.

- Welsh language standards helping with the public sector under the Measure
- Health and Social care – supporting the ‘more than words’ strategy
- Must engage a new audience strategically – work with private sector (provider of services), retail, tourism and hospitality, business representative bodies – fsb, cbi, IOD -what skills are they looking for, and respond to these needs.

Evidence were the demand is and support links between education and training and skills providers (schools, colleges and WBL) to ensure a flow of people with these skills in the necessary areas coming through.

(similar research to WG report on identifying Welsh language skills needs in 8 sectors would be welcomed) – on the back of this, what plans are in place

- Role of the Regional Skills Partnerships – lightly touch on Welsh language skills
- WG Employability plan – reference Welsh language (when launched in 2017)
- Alignment across WG strategies and plans

### 13. Partnership

Colleges and schools – forum 14-19 was a welcome development that opened doors to cross sector collaboration between Welsh medium schools and colleges. It was just beginning to work, sadly funding cut and the partnerships came to an end. Both parties would benefit from a similar catalyst to reintroduce these partnerships.

### 14. Challenges

- Perception of Welsh language opportunities and progression is traditionally linked to compulsory education (not necessarily vocational)
- Welsh language not inclusive more exclusive – make it real for the whole of Wales – a sense of belonging and public support

- Need to engage new audiences (gain support from non Welsh speakers as well as new speakers)
- Changing perception of young people about Welsh as an employability skill

## 15. Opportunities

- Change in ITE and PGCE (like Basque model, all practitioners must have a certain level of Basque (North Wales police model) – (central Govt have a central bank of teachers who can be located as needed to support linguistic delivery)
- Work with Welsh language promotion bodies, Dysgu Cymraeg, Mentrau and Urdd to promote a more positive image of the Welsh language and bilingual skills
- Careers Wales and ColegauCymru to bridge the learner and employer links and highlight linguistic routes
- It's time to adapt operations of some Welsh language promotion bodies – to engage with a new audience (colleges) / the non Welsh speakers / the hidden speakers and create new speakers – create an inclusive feel to language learning

## 16. Conclusion

In order for this vision to be achieved we need to engage new audiences – FE as anchor institutions in communities in Wales can be that catalyst to this change. Collaboration and partnership working with new sectors to engage wider pan Wales support and relevance of the Welsh language to more will make that difference.

We are happy to be contacted to discuss these suggestions further and are committed to solutions and outcomes in this space.