

Plan to put education at heart of ambition to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050

The plan builds on the 2010 Welsh-medium Education Strategy and sets the direction for the development of Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the next four years with the aim of ensuring that all young people, from all backgrounds, come out of the education system ready and proud to use the language in all contexts.

The plan's five main objectives, to be delivered by 2021, are:

- to develop a new Welsh language curriculum that will inspire learners to learn and use the Welsh language;
- to increase opportunities for children and young people to use their Welsh in various contexts and embed their language use patterns from an early age;
- to support leaders and practitioners in Wales to continue to develop their Welsh language skills and have the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh and Welsh as a subject;
- to increase the number of learners in Welsh-medium settings;
- to ensure that all learners can have equal access to Welsh-medium education and experience the best opportunities to develop their language skills.

The Minister made the announcement at her former school, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf. When the Minister attended the school it was the only Welsh-medium secondary school serving Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. There are now three in Cardiff and one in the Vale.

Making the announcement, the Minister said:

"I was one of a handful of children from my estate in Cardiff who had my education through the medium of Welsh and distinctly remember having stones thrown at our bus full of primary school children as they objected to having a Welsh language school in their neighbourhood. I am delighted that the attitude towards the language has changed fundamentally from when I was a child and that we now have the opportunity to build on this goodwill.

"Reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is a significant challenge. Inspiring the next generation, particularly those from non-Welsh speaking families, to embrace the language and to use it in all contexts is vitally important in achieving this target.

"Whether our children attend Welsh-medium schools or learn the

Welsh language in an English-medium school, education is key to the success of this ambition. This is why the Welsh in Education Action Plan is so important and why it is a priority for the rest of this Assembly term.”

During her visit, the Minister watched rehearsals for the Christmas concert and spoke to pupils and teachers, many of whom come from non Welsh speaking families, about their experience of Welsh-medium education. She said:

“My visit today highlighted the excellent all round education provided through the medium of Welsh. 61% of the pupils come from non-Welsh speaking homes but at school, all are immersed in the language, culture and traditions of their nation and they will be able to carry that with them right through their lives and pass it on to their children.”

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

“Our national mission of education reform seeks to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that enjoys public confidence and is a source of national pride. The Welsh language is integral to those reforms and this action plan will ensure that it will be at the heart of the new curriculum, the professional development of the education workforce and the reform of how we support our learners with additional learning needs.”

Head teacher of Glantaf, Alun Davies said:

“We welcome the publication of the Welsh in Education Action Plan. As a Welsh-medium school whose motto is ‘Coron Gwlad Ei Mamiaith’ which translates to ‘A Country’s Crown is Her Mother Tongue’ we are of course committed to putting the Welsh language at the heart of school life. This action plan provides us and other schools with a framework and support to work towards ensuring all learners leave school confident to speak Welsh in everyday life”.

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[Valleys to be globally recognised for emerging technologies by 2027](#)

That is the message from Economy Secretary Ken Skates as he publishes a Vision document for “Tech Valleys” – the planned Technology Park that he announced earlier this year.

The Economy Secretary also announced that as part of the Tech Valleys project

the Welsh Government has agreed to lease the former Techboard Building in Rassau.

Both TVR and the Welsh Government hope that the building will eventually house the iconic car maker's first manufacturing facility Wales.

The Welsh Government will now work with the Dewan Foundation Trust, which owns the former Tech building, and invest in a multi million pound refurbishment project in order to attract the key sector businesses the project needs.

Over ten years Tech Valleys is expected to create at least 1500 jobs, predominantly within new technologies and advanced manufacturing. Ebbw Vale and Blaenau Gwent will sit at the heart of this.

The Welsh Government expects Tech Valleys' focus on creating higher quality jobs to provide the entrepreneurial spark to enable existing and new entrepreneurs to fulfil their business ambitions.

Meanwhile its focus on developing advanced skills in the existing workforce and the next generation, will enable local people to live and work within their communities whilst competing on the international stage.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"We have allocated £100m to Tech Valleys over the next ten years with the aim of creating 1500 jobs. In reality the value of overall activity will be much higher as we work to leverage in other private and public sector investors.

"And in line with our new Economic Action Plan, Tech Valleys will have the principles of growth, fair work and decarbonisation at its heart while seeking to spread the fruits of economic growth to areas that have not fared so well in recent years.

“I expect projects at Tech Valleys to include innovative areas such as the development and testing of battery and motor technology, 5G activity, and the infrastructure needed for automated and ultra low emission vehicles, and to include a mix of short, medium and long term activities and targets.

“On that note I am proud to announce that as part of Tech Valleys the Welsh Government has agreed to lease the former Techboard Building in Rassau, and we will now swiftly be investing in its refurbishment to ensure the project attracts the key sector businesses the project needs to succeed. Indeed we know this is a building that TVR would like to use for its planned manufacturing facility here.

“Our vision document for Tech Valleys sets out exciting and ambitious plans, and I have no doubt that these are dependant on national leadership and effective partnership working. We will be building on the valuable work already undertaken by Ebbw Vale Enterprise Board to progress these plans while also building on wider national and international expertise from Business, academia and the public sector.

“Through a partnership approach and sustained clever working, I look forward to us making this ambitious but achievable vision a reality to benefit Ebbw Vale and stimulate growth across the heads of the valleys.”

Extra £10m to support Welsh Government mission to end youth homelessness

The Welsh Government will work with partners, including local authorities, housing associations, homelessness agencies and the End Youth Homelessness Cymru Coalition, to help young people avoid crisis situations and support them into stable accommodation.

Speaking at Llamau’s headquarters in Cardiff, the First Minister said:

“Too many young people are facing a future that can seem bleak, unfair and inevitable. Without a home, living a hand-to-mouth

existence, being forced to move from house to house, or, worst of all, sleeping rough.

“That is why I am leading a 10-year mission to end youth homelessness in Wales.

“In Wales, we have some of the most progressive homelessness and social services legislation in the world, which has prevented 11,514 households from becoming homeless between its introduction in April 2015 and the end of June 2017.

“And yet I continue to hear of young people becoming homeless after leaving care, young people dropping out of education, young people in custody and young people with nowhere else to stay but a Bed and Breakfast. This is not good enough.

“Wales must lead the way on tackling homelessness. I want us to be bold – to take new approaches, focus on interventions that make a real difference and work with partners to help young people avoid crisis situations and support them into stable accommodation.”

Frances Beecher, CEO of Llamau, said:

“We believe that we have a wonderful opportunity in Wales to deliver real change. Estimates show that every year over 7,000 young people ask for help with homelessness, but we know that many more young people don’t know where to turn or who to ask for help when they become homeless.

“Today’s announcement shows the Welsh Government’s commitment to tackling this issue, and we look forward to working closely with them to ensure that young people who are at risk of becoming homeless are supported as soon as they need it, and to ensure that youth homelessness is a thing of the past.”

[Ambitious new plan to develop Wales’ childcare workforce](#)

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families. During this Assembly term, the Welsh Government will provide 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks a year.

The Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan sets out the Welsh

Government's vision for delivering this commitment, by developing and professionalising the childcare and play workforce and attracting the right people into the sector, ensuring they have the right skills and qualifications, and supporting new and existing business to grow.

To support childcare providers to grow and operate sustainably, the Welsh Government will prioritise support for the care sector, as outlined in the Economic Action Plan launched earlier this week, by supporting new and existing business to increase the number of childcare places on offer across Wales.

Currently, around 23,300 people work with our youngest children in childcare settings and Foundation Phase settings across Wales.

The plan's three key priorities are:

- **Prioritising support to invest in building capacity and capability across the sector**, this includes working with CWLWM and Business Wales to provide business support services to childcare businesses; provide enhanced Small Business Rate Relief for the childcare sector from April 2018 which increases relief from £12,000 to £20,500; and £100,000 over the next 3 years to support those providers participating in the early implementer pilots and those seeking to expand or start-up their business.
- **Attracting high quality recruits** by developing a recruitment framework to promote a career in childcare and play.
- **Raising standards and skills** by offering a structured training and development route based on a new suite of qualifications for the sector from September 2019, and by developing a career pathway for child-minders and home carers and working with Welsh Universities to embed competency into Early Years and Childhood degrees.

Launching the new plan, the Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"The provision of affordable, accessible, quality early years provision, available at the times parents need it, plays an essential role in boosting the economy, helping parents to return to work and creating further employment opportunities within the childcare sector itself.

"Those who care for our youngest children play a vital role in helping us give our children a flying start in life. High-quality early education and childcare produces greater long-term benefits for our children and strongly influences their future life chances.

"Where the workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide high-quality childcare and play, the effects on children can be profound, with particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or children who are disabled or

have additional learning needs.

“The plan I’m unveiling today recognises the challenges the current economic climate presents to the sector and sets out clear and tangible actions to prioritise support to build the capability and capacity of the childcare workforce and the sector to drive our ambitions forward. It also sets out a longer term vision which is ambitious, but also essential if we want to enhance the quality of care we offer our children and to fully realise the potential of this committed sector and its workforce.”