

New measures to support and promote the Welsh Language

The Commissioner has played a crucial role in the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards system to ensure the availability of services in Welsh. The Welsh Government intends to expand and build on the work of the Commissioner to bring promotion and regulation of the Welsh language together to ensure the most efficient structures to achieve our vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Government's White Paper, [*'Striking the right balance: proposals for a Welsh Language Bill'*](#), outlines a range of proposals that aim to strike the right balance between promoting the Welsh language and regulating compliance with Welsh language duties.

Suggestions in the White Paper include:

- Establishing a Welsh Language Commission to organise and coordinate work to promote the Welsh language across all parts of Wales.
- Making it clearer to people, public bodies and businesses who they can turn to if they want to develop their use of the Welsh language.
- Giving greater clarity for Welsh speakers as to which services bodies must provide in Welsh, and to work to increase the use of those services.
- Helping bodies develop their capacity to deliver services in Welsh.
- Streamlining the processes involved in making and imposing Welsh Language Standards, and removing the bureaucracy involved in handling complaints of bodies' non-compliance with Standards to ensure people receive a quick remedy.
- The Welsh Government to be responsible for imposing Standards on bodies through regulations and compliance notices. The Welsh Language Commission to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Standards.
- Removing the restrictions in the current legislation so Standards could be placed on any body, so long as it is within the Assembly's power to do so.

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Alun Davies said:

"Earlier this year I asked organisations across Wales to give us their views on the current Welsh Language Measure and Standards, the responses show there is general support for the Standards and their positive impact on Welsh language services. It is important that we acknowledge the hard work of the Commissioner and her staff in rolling out the Standards to bodies across Wales.

"However, the responses also highlighted the bureaucracy around the Standards and led us to believe that we have not struck the right

balance in our work to promote the Welsh language on the one hand, and regulate Welsh language services on the other.

“These proposals in the White Paper reflect what we were told. We want to refocus our efforts on promotion and make changes to the way the Welsh Language Standards system works to make sure it is as efficient and effective as possible in giving people rights to use Welsh. I believe the Welsh Language Commission will be a powerhouse for achieving both these aims.

“I will be looking to make improvements to the Standards process whilst we agree the future direction of policy and prepare the necessary legislation to enact it. As I set out in my statement of 19 July I remain committed to the roll out of Standards and will be laying Standards regulations for health bodies before the end of the year. The Commissioner will continue to play an instrumental role in delivering this work until any new arrangements are in place.

“Today, in announcing the White Paper, I am beginning a period of public consultation which will run for 12 weeks until the last day of October. I will be holding events in September and October. I hope that the proposals will stimulate an energetic debate to help inform the next steps.

“A little under a month since I published our strategy on reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the proposals in this White Paper are another step on the journey to delivering our ambitious vision for the Welsh language.”