

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The purpose of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is to outline the Authority's vision of a Welsh-medium and bilingual education system that puts the needs of all our learners at the heart of the provision. These first plans came into effect on 1 April 2014 for a period of 3 years to March 2017, and the Plan was updated for the following three years. Due to the unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19, that period was extended by one additional year. This new Scheme will run for a period of ten years, from September 2022 until 31st August 2032.

The Strategy is designed to address the aims and requirements of the public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including Welsh public sector duties). Under these legal duties, when making decisions, the Councils must have due regard to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) to promote equality of opportunity and (3) to foster good relations on the basis of the protected characteristics, and pay due regard to the socio-economic duty under Section 1 of the Act.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 refers to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The law places a well-being duty on public bodies to achieve 7 well-being goals where the Welsh language thrives. The Strategy has been prepared to address the aims and requirements of the Act.

The Plan sets out a clear commitment and direction for ensuring that Gwynedd's learners achieve the highest standards in order to sustain the local language, culture and economy.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Rhian Parry Jones.

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

The assessment began as the document was drafted and completed following the final drafting of the Plan.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Representatives from the county's schools - teachers, language co-ordinators, Governors. Officers of Gwynedd Council.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

A public consultation on the draft Plan, for a period of eight weeks, took place from 15 October to 17 December 2021. In accordance with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessment of the Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013, external

stakeholders as well as the Welsh Government. Adjustments to the WESP have been made following some of the main comments received to strengthen the revised document.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The main changes that have been added to the document are a brief explanation of the language designations and Language Policy, and the addition of data to the 10 year target tables at the end of each outcome.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan incorporates the vision of the Promoting the Welsh Language in Gwynedd (2013-23), and consideration is also given to the requirements of the following laws and strategies when formulating the Scheme:

- *The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)*
- *Prosperity for All: The National Strategy: Taking Wales Forward (2016-2021), A Progressive Agreement (2016)*
- *ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018)*

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

No, there are no gaps that we are aware of.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	Although the Scheme does not discriminate on grounds of race or nationality, pupils of all backgrounds are required to learn Welsh and be educated through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the Authority's Language Policy. Pupils are helped to cope with this change by supporting them in the Immersion Education System and offering them appropriate support in school. Gwynedd schools

		have relevant policies in place to protect individuals from any racial discrimination, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying policy provided by Gwynedd Council sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race at school. In addition, the Equalities policy implemented by Gwynedd primary schools states that the schools are <i>".. opposes all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognizes that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i>
Disability	Positive	The WESP does not discriminate on the grounds of disability.
Sex	None	The WESP does not discriminate on grounds of sex. The requirements of the Equality Policy are implemented which state the need to: <i>".. oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognize that pupils have different needs, requirements and goals."</i>
Age	None	All pupils educated in the County are included in the WESP outcomes. Age is not discriminated as specific outcomes apply to particular ages.
Sexual orientation	Positive	The WESP does not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	The WESP does not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief. An Inclusion Policy outlines the steps to follow in the event of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.
Gender reassignment	None	The WESP does not discriminate on the grounds of gender reassignment.
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	None	Not applicable
The Welsh language	Positive	The Welsh language is central to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The scheme is in accordance with Gwynedd Council's Language Policy and therefore a positive impact on the Welsh language is expected in achieving the targets outlined in it. The same expectations are set for all schools,

		and therefore with regard to the implementation of the WESP, no negative impact on the language is foreseen.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	Pupils from all backgrounds are prepared to understand the social and economic benefits of bilingualism.

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	No effect. Implementing the WESP would not alter the statutory duty of Gwynedd schools to protect pupils from discrimination, harassment or victimization.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	The Strategy aims to promote equality of opportunity in terms of access to and use of the language across all educational establishments in the County. There will be strong support for learners from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds through the Immersion System in particular, and in the individual schools, and appropriate support will be offered to ensure parents' understanding and commitment to supporting their children's educational development. These actions are outlined as part of the Outcomes Action Plans in the WESP.
Encouraging good relationships	Yes / No	The proposed Schemes in the WESP outcomes encourage positive relationships between learners from a variety of backgrounds - Welsh or non-Welsh speaking backgrounds.

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated

less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

See 2.4 above.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

Not applicable – see 1.2 above.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

See previous responses which outline how this will be done within the Strategic Plan.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

Not applicable.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

The WESP will have a positive impact on the prosperity of the Welsh language within the County.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

No.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Risks identified within the Plan and considered - see above.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

It is not anticipated that the adoption of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will have a negative impact on any of the equality characteristics referred to in this assessment.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The implementation and development of the WESP will be constantly monitored. There will be opportunities to listen and respond to stakeholders when assessing the effectiveness of the Plan.

Approving the WESP will enable the Welsh Government to monitor the authority's response to the requirements of the outcomes set out in it, and to:

- ensure that all stages of the local authority's education processes take full account of Welsh-medium education;
- expanding Welsh-medium education, where required, on the basis of better planning;
- ensure that Welsh-medium education support services are delivered on a consortia basis;

- improve standards and extend the use of Welsh among children and young people; a
- demonstrate progress against the specific targets of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy.