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Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref JMEWL/02328/22

Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn llywelahafowain@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

15 December 2022

Dear Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn,

Thank you for your letter of 17 November regarding the provision of simultaneous translation by default at Welsh Government meetings.

When arranging meetings, we encourage our staff to use their judgment when it comes to meeting arrangements. Attendees from organisations operating through the medium of Welsh are one of those considerations, along with the subject of the meeting and its location, so that they can decide whether or not to provide the service. We provide simultaneous translation at meetings beyond our statutory duties but that has limitations as we prioritise our translation resource. As I explained to Mr Gibbard in my letter in June, our resources would not allow us to do so by default for all meetings arranged by the Government.

The result of our latest partnership with Microsoft – to allow simultaneous translation in scheduled Teams meetings – has just been released. In fact, we have already tested the new function in a number of meetings with considerable success. Our collaboration with Microsoft to secure this development will see the availability of a simultaneous translation facility that will enable even more of us to use our language in virtual meetings. I think the lack of a simultaneous translation facility, during the pandemic, adversely affected the use of Welsh in virtual meetings, and this is why I'm delighted that we've been able to work in collaboration with Microsoft to make it available to everyone who uses Teams, at no additional cost.

As I set out in my letter to Mr Gibbard, this development is a case of Wales and the Welsh language leading a development that will increase the use of languages around the world, including minority languages.

I have already stated that I will use it at every possible opportunity so that I can make further use of Welsh in meetings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a wavy line underneath.

Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for the Welsh Language and Education