

CFA01: Bethan Collins, Myfyriwr PhD

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol |
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Cymraeg i bawb? | Cymraeg for all?

Ymateb gan: Bethan Collins, Myfyriwr PhD* | Evidence from: Bethan Collins, PhD Student

1. What are the main barriers that prevent wider use of the Welsh language in areas with fewer Welsh speakers, and what might help to change this?

Inadequate teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools - many pupils attending English-medium schools leave with a very poor ability in Welsh. If more emphasis was placed on ensuring high-quality teaching of Welsh in school (including ensuring positive attitudes towards the language), then pupils would leave school with better skills and a more positive attitude. Additionally, this would likely lead to more pupils choosing to take GCSE full course and A-Level Welsh, as they feel more confident in their skills with the language.

2. What sort of spaces and opportunities might encourage greater use of, and increase confidence in, the use of the language in areas where day-to-day use of the language is limited?

Spaces for learners - where Welsh is being used, it's important to encourage learners to communicate in Welsh, especially when their Welsh isn't 'perfect'. Many people do not have enough confidence to communicate in Welsh because they believe that they have to have reached a certain level of proficiency to do so. Making sure it is clear that all levels of Welsh are welcome is really important.

3. Can you share examples of successful initiatives or activities that have encouraged Welsh language use in areas where use of the language is limited?

I attended English-medium primary and secondary schools in an area with very little community Welsh, but I had a fantastic Welsh teacher from Year 7-11. She inspired me to take the full course GCSE and continue onto A-Level - I then completed my first year of my degree in Welsh and I now lecture through the medium of Welsh. We need to invest in the workforce, ensuring that there are plenty of passionate and capable teachers to teach Welsh in areas where it isn't really heard in the community.

4. What sort of spaces and opportunities might encourage greater use of, and increase confidence in, the use of the language in areas where day-to-day use of the language is limited?

Fun events targeted at speakers at all levels of proficiency. It's important that Welsh language events are not just for first language or fully fluent speakers, and that all capabilities are welcome and supported

5. What impact, in your view, do cultural events such as national Eisteddfodau or Welsh language festivals have on Welsh language use, particularly in areas with fewer Welsh speakers?

They're fantastic! I attended the Eisteddfod in 2024 in an area with extremely low community Welsh. It was great to see so many families who do not speak Welsh at home attending, and getting to experience the language and the culture for the first time. The events show children that it's possible to have a job or a career that revolves around speaking Welsh and inspires them to continue learning the language

6. How might these events (whether large or small in size) be adapted or improved to better serve communities with fewer Welsh speakers?

Advertising is key - making sure that it is clear that all proficiency levels are welcome at the event. It's also important to ensure that people outside of the Welsh speaking community actually know about the event and that you don't have to be a fluent speaker to attend- if they don't know it's happening then they won't attend

7. Are there any other matters you would like to draw to the Committees attention about the Welsh Government's approach to supporting the Welsh language in areas with fewer Welsh speakers?