

**Consultation on a  
Welsh Government draft strategy:  
a million Welsh speakers by 2050  
31 October 2016**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals to introduce a draft strategy to realise the Welsh Government's vision of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (the Vision).
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing teachers and school leaders.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

3. In noting the Welsh Government's ambition to persuade the citizens of Wales to embrace the Welsh language and effectively double the number of Welsh speakers by 2050, which would see the percentage of the population able to speak Welsh rise to around 31.5% on current estimates, the NASUWT is pleased that the Welsh Government is proposing a pragmatic approach based on encouragement and on providing access to learning the Welsh language.
4. The NASUWT is, however, concerned about the potential implications and/or unintended consequences for the education workforce in realising some of the objectives contained within the development areas referred to in the consultation document.

5. The concerns of the Union are heightened by the lack of detail in relation to the costs and funding streams associated with each of the development areas, particularly in the field of education.
6. Consequently, the Union seeks assurances from the Welsh Government that it will militate against the possibility of the proposals impacting adversely on the education workforce.
7. The NASUWT expects the Welsh Government to:
  - identify additional and dedicated funding which will be provided for education establishments to assist in meeting the Vision through increased staffing and by providing the necessary resources and infrastructure changes. This would require sufficient additional capital and revenue funding;
  - provide an assurance that the significant increase in the number of teachers and early years practitioners who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh would be realised through additional staffing and/or access to courses to enable existing post-holders to learn the Welsh language through paid release from their teaching or support duties;
  - give a binding commitment that no members of staff would be under threat of losing their livelihood if they were not able to gain sufficient grasp of the language to enable them to teach through the medium of Welsh, where they are currently employed in either English-medium or bilingual schools;
  - ensure that the Vision is taken forward on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance and that the legislation envisaged, which, as stated in the consultation document, will provide an unequivocal basis for organisations to act in support of the language and for Welsh speakers to use, has this at its heart.

8. The NASUWT has long argued that the key to reinvigorating the Welsh language is to concentrate on the early years of education so that the journey can be an adventure for the citizens of Wales, rather than a crusade.

### SPECIFIC COMMENTS

9. The NASUWT offers the observations and comments that follow in relation to some of the questions posed on the consultation response form.

**Question 1** – Do you agree with the approach of creating a long term strategy for the Welsh language?

<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------

#### Supporting comments

The NASUWT agrees in principle with the Vision but maintains that the approach must be underpinned by dedicated and transparent funding and founded on the practice of mutual respect and tolerance.

**Question 2** – Apart from a million Welsh speakers by 2050, there are no specific targets associated with this draft strategy as it stands. In your opinion, are there any targets or milestones that should be used to map the journey and measure our progress towards a million speakers?

<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	--------------------------	-----------	-------------------------------------	---------------	--------------------------

#### Supporting comments

The NASUWT cautions against the use of a target-driven approach, as this could lead to undue pressure and demands being placed on those expected to assist the Welsh Government in realising its vision. Targets and milestones can become

counterproductive, as they can often demoralise and dampen ambition if they are not reached.

The success of the venture will be realised in the desire it creates in individuals for learning the language. This should be easily measurable without the need for targets or milestones.

**Question 3** – Do you broadly agree with the six areas of development outlined in the strategy – Planning, Normalisation, Education, People, Support and Rights?

<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------

**Supporting comments**

The NASUWT agrees in principle but with the reservation described previously at paragraphs 4 to 8 of this response.

**Question 4** – How can you contribute to achieving the strategy's vision?

The NASUWT believes that it is already ahead of the game in promoting the Welsh language. The record of the Union in producing bilingual materials is second to none within the trade union movement in Wales.

Further, the Union has ensured that it is able to offer support and representation for its members through the medium of Welsh, where it is requested, and provides support for employees who wish to learn the Welsh language.

**Question 5** – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve planning in relation to the Welsh language?

<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
------------	-------------------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------

### Supporting comments

As stated previously in this response, the NASUWT believes that there is a need to identify a dedicated and transparent funding stream to underpin the planning in relation to the Welsh language.

**Question 6** – In your opinion, how else can we engender goodwill towards the Welsh language in order to further normalise it?

As stated previously in this response, the NASUWT maintains that the practice of mutual respect and tolerance will be vital to engendering goodwill towards the Welsh language.

**Question 7** – What else is needed to convert positive attitudes towards the language into speakers?

As stated previously in this response, the NASUWT believes that the success of this venture will be in the desire it creates in individuals for learning the language. A positive attitude towards any language could easily be undone if unrealistic and unreasonable expectations are placed on either the workforce or the citizens of Wales in terms of the use of the Welsh language.

**Question 8** – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to increase the number of people who learn Welsh?

<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
------------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------

### Supporting comments

The NASUWT believes that the objectives and actions contained in the consultation document are broad enough to assist the Welsh Government in realising the Vision.

**Question 9** – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to increase the number of people who use Welsh?

<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
------------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------

**Supporting comments**

The NASUWT believes that the objectives and actions contained in the consultation document are broad enough to assist the Welsh Government in realising the Vision.

**Question 10** – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve the infrastructure that helps people to use Welsh?

<b>Yes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	-------------------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------	--------------------------

**Supporting comments**

Apart from the resources that will be needed to aid the learning of the language, and whilst not exclusively related to helping people to use Welsh, the NASUWT maintains that the Welsh Government should take the opportunity proved by its vision for the Welsh language to address the poor mobile phone coverage, Wi-Fi connectivity and broadband speed in many areas of Wales that currently blights both the culture and economy of Wales.

**Question 11** – Are there any other objectives or actions that should be included in this document in order to improve the rights of Welsh speakers?

<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Unsure</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
------------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------

## Supporting comments

The NASUWT believes that the objectives and actions contained in the consultation document are broad enough to assist the Welsh Government in realising the Vision.

**Question 12** – The Welsh Government will publish a series of detailed policies in specific policy areas during the strategy’s lifespan. Which policies do you think we should prioritise for publication during the first five years of the strategy?

The NASUWT cautions against the introduction of specific policies which are not supported by additional funding, staffing and appropriate infrastructure changes.

The Union believes that the education service is already committed to playing its part in realising the Vision of the Welsh Government. However, the introduction of policies which place unrealistic and unreasonable expectations on the education service, especially where they are not appropriately resourced, will only serve to impede progress towards the 2050 target.

**Question 13** – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

In noting that the six development areas are described as the basis for ‘deliberate action’ over the long term to realise the ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, the NASUWT trusts that the concerns and expectations referred to in this response will be heeded.



Chris Keates (Ms)

**General Secretary**

For further information on the Union's response, contact Rex Phillips, National Official Wales.

NASUWT Cymru  
Greenwood Close  
Cardiff Gate Business Park  
Cardiff  
CF23 8RD  
029 2054 6080  
[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)  
[nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk)