



The Culture Division  
Welsh Government

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04/09/2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Consultation on the draft Priorities for Culture in Wales 2024-2030**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. It is stated in the consultation document that the Welsh Government's culture priorities recognise the importance of the Welsh language. We would like to discuss a number of the ambitions that support those priorities, and their potential to have positive effects on the Welsh language and its speakers.

In short, we would like the Government to take firm steps with concrete objectives to put the Welsh language in a central position when promoting culture, in the context of Welsh-speaking communities, the education system, economic growth, tourism, digital development and workforce planning.

### **Priority 1: Culture brings us together**

**Ambition 1:** Culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse.

**Ambition 2:** Cultural democracy and cultural rights are central to culture in Wales.

**Ambition 4:** Culture is integral to place-making and community well-being.

We support the Government's emphasis on inclusiveness, cultural rights, community empowerment and the value of local participation in the decision-making process. This should include empowering Welsh speakers in communities throughout Wales to ensure that the culture sector includes them and welcomes and facilitates their input and participation as Welsh speakers. We are glad that the Government recognises that

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communities have their own cultural identity and links that to elements that include place names, which are an important part of local history and heritage. Understanding and appreciating place names should be encouraged as part of the work of promoting our culture.

**Ambition 5:** Culture reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people, and inspires the next generation of cultural participants and leaders.

We support the Government's intention to ensure regular cultural experiences for children from an early age. It can be ensured that all children learn about Welsh culture through the education system. The new Curriculum for Wales plays a key role in this context. One of its four purposes is to support children and young people to become ethical, informed citizens, and that includes learning about their culture, community and society. The Curriculum also intends to ensure that children and young people learn to use the Welsh language confidently in order to assist them, among other aspects, to understand the unique culture of Wales.

By supporting a programme of regular cultural experiences the Government could present theatrical experiences, for example, to a new generation of children. That would also ensure employment for artists, bringing economic benefits to the culture sector. It would be good to know more about this intention, for example would it involve an annual theatre trip for all pupils, shows visiting schools or artists in residence in schools? The Government should provide more information about these proposed experiences and its plans to ensure that they will be offered through the medium of Welsh.

**Ambition 6:** Culture strengthens the connection between generations.

We note the Government's recognition of the value of older people's contributions to the culture sector and the sector's role in supporting the well-being of older people and connecting generations. We believe that it should be possible for Welsh speakers to engage with culture through the medium of Welsh throughout their lives.

### **Priority 2: A nation of culture**

**Ambition 7:** Culture supports and promotes the Welsh language and reflects Wales as a bilingual and multilingual nation.

The Government discusses the potential of Welsh language culture to promote the progress of Welsh learners, as well as the challenge of ensuring the sustainability of cultural activities and Welsh language activities in vulnerable Welsh-speaking communities. We support the Government's wish for the Welsh language to be central to economic development and for that development to promote our culture, supporting Welsh-speaking communities and their language.

We believe that culture has a role as a catalyst for a positive change in attitudes towards language. Attending cultural events and being connected to Welsh language culture is a way of increasing use of the language. When using Welsh in social environments and



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enjoying doing so, speakers make positive connections with the language and become more confident and more willing to use their Welsh. That in turn can lead to more use of Welsh language services more generally.

The Government should promote efforts to ensure that cultural activities and the organisation of events can be carried out through the medium of Welsh. Welsh language cultural events offer one of the few monolingual Welsh domains that Welsh speakers can attend. Through that they create a valuable space which normalises the use of the language.

Welsh speakers at all levels should be supported to use their Welsh when attending Welsh language cultural events. Ensuring support for new speakers or Welsh learners to attend cultural events is crucial to introduce them to life through the medium of Welsh. Good partnership work has taken place between Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to create lessons around theatre works and organise talks before shows for new speakers.

The Government should support local and national organisations that promote the Welsh language and provide cultural experiences, for example the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Mentrau Iaith Cymru and Urdd Gobaith Cymru. As part of its work supporting Welsh speakers and their communities, the Government should support local initiatives to take ownership of buildings to turn them into community and cultural centres, as well as the events held in those centres afterwards. This would be in line with the intention expressed in the consultation document to consider more cross-sector work, including economic development.

**Ambition 8:** Cultural well-being is deeply embedded into policy making across Wales.

**Ambition 9:** Cultural engagement supports individual and community well-being.

The Government recognizes the benefits of engaging with culture from a health and well-being perspective. We know how valuable the opportunities are to enjoy Welsh language cultural events and experiences since the COVID-19 pandemic when those opportunities were lost. It must therefore be ensured that promoting the Welsh language culturally is a crucial part of how Wales develops in the future. It will be essential to do so in order to ensure that we keep the talent, expertise, experience and commitment of volunteers, professionals and centres that promote opportunities to use the Welsh language.

**Ambition 11:** Culture supports tourism; tourism supports culture. Culture has a high profile in how our nation is marketed to visitors.

The Integrated Impact Assessment Summary refers to evidence which indicates that the motivations of visitors to come to Wales include the Welsh language. In the consultation document, the Government discusses the importance of linking culture to tourism as well as sustainable development methods. Its aim is to promote economic growth that is compatible with environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits for residents and visitors. We support these principles and the Government's



desire to ensure that the culture of Wales and the Welsh language can be seen at events in Wales. We believe that the Welsh language and its culture should be central to tourism in Wales in order to ensure benefits for Welsh-speaking communities. The Government should plan purposefully to ensure that tourism develops in a sustainable way which makes a positive contribution to Welsh culture and Welsh-speaking communities.

### **Priority 3: Culture is resilient and sustainable**

**Ambition 17:** Culture is supported and enhanced by good digital practice.

The Government discusses digital connectivity and its ability to connect Welsh communities together through online cultural content, as well as drawing the world's attention to our culture. This means that there is potential to create an audience of Welsh speakers for our culture, not only in Wales but internationally. It is explained that exhibition text can be translated into any language. This should mean that all texts are available in Welsh and that this choice is promoted to every possible member of the Welsh-speaking audience in Wales and internationally. The Government has recognised an opportunity to review the state of digital development in Wales and to tackle the opportunities and challenges in the field. We support this intention and encourage the Government to ensure that the Welsh language is a central part of its planning for the digital development of the culture sector in the future.

**Ambition 19:** The culture sector in Wales is a great place to work and volunteer, with a professional and skilled workforce.

The consultation document refers to a lack of Welsh language skills in the culture sector workforce in some areas of Wales. The Government has recognised the need for careful and deliberate planning to develop the workforce and we support that. We believe that it is necessary to protect the role of the Welsh language culture sector as an employer that makes an important economic contribution to the viability of Welsh-speaking communities and as a domain where the Welsh language is used naturally in the workplace. Workforce planning should include collaboration with the education sector in order to promote young people's awareness of career paths in the culture sector, the importance of Welsh language skills and the possibility of maintaining a career through the medium of Welsh in the field. This would mean ensuring that Welsh-medium education and training is available for the workforce of the future.

The Integrated Impact Assessment Summary states an intention to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Government's proposal in the future. This work should include considering any impact on Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking communities and acting on the basis of the findings as necessary. The findings and any subsequent actions should be published.

We welcome the statement in the Integrated Impact Assessment Summary about making recognition of the value of the Welsh language, and promoting and celebrating the language, an integral part of cultural activity across all our sectors. We also support the



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objective of the new priorities to reinforce the Welsh-medium cultural offer and make it a strategic objective in the future. We hope that the comments above will contribute to reaching that goal.

Yours faithfully,

**Efa Gruffudd Jones**  
Welsh Language Commissioner