

# The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Welsh language

December 2020

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee is looking at the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the areas within its remit. Between 24 September and 20 October the Committee received written evidence and heard from organisations teaching and promoting the Welsh language at national and community level.

We are grateful to all those who contributed to this inquiry, the organisations and individuals are listed in the Annexe to this report.

This short report summarises the evidence on the impact of the pandemic on the Welsh language.

**Recommendation 1.** The Welsh Government should ensure that short term reallocations of Welsh Language funding, due to the pandemic, do not result in longer term funding allocations which could detract from achieving the aims of Cymraeg 2050. The Welsh Government should reinstate the budget allocations for supporting and promoting the Welsh language in full, as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 2.** The Welsh Government should ensure that jobs that support and promote the Welsh language across Wales are central to its economic recovery plan.

**Recommendation 3.** The Welsh Government should review and update its Cymraeg 2050 action plan and the Welsh language technology action plan to reflect the rapid change to online Welsh language learning, activities and cultural events that has facilitated its use at home and grown interest in the language abroad.



**Recommendation 4.** The Welsh Government should make training available for organisations and individuals to ensure they make the most of online opportunities to promote the use of Welsh and support their members.

**Recommendation 5.** The Welsh Government should update its Digital Strategy to reflect the greater need for fast, reliable internet service across Wales in light of the increased reliance on digital content following the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Recommendation 6.** The next Cymraeg 2050: Welsh language strategy action plan should take full account of the changes in learning opportunities now available. It will need to consider the ways in which online learning and in-person lessons can be blended to best suit learners, and the level of funding needed to ensure that the growth in online learning can be sustained.

## The economic impact of cancelling cultural events

**1.** The Committee heard from organisations responsible for holding live events, such as festivals, which have been cancelled due to the pandemic. The negative economic impact of cancelling these cultural events affects the local area as well as the organisation. For instance, independent research has shown that the week-long National Eisteddfod festival has an economic benefit of between £6 and £8 million locally.<sup>1</sup> Betsan Moses, National Eisteddfod, told the Committee:

‘We did have contracts worth £1.9 million out at the time, and we had to negotiate with suppliers in order to shift those.’<sup>2</sup> And ‘2,000 jobs are partly reliant or totally reliant on the Eisteddfod for their income, so that disappeared.’<sup>3</sup>

**2.** She also cautioned that there are many suppliers who only work on annual events and will have lost all of their income overnight.<sup>4</sup> She went on to say ‘It will certainly take until 2022 until we start to get out of this’.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/national-eisteddfod-task-and-finish-group-report-and-recommendations.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> CWLC Committee 24 September 2020, p 39

<sup>3</sup> CWLC Committee 24 September 2020, p 40

<sup>4</sup> CWLC Committee 24 September 2020, p 42

<sup>5</sup> CWLC Committee 24 September 2020, p 43