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Context

In 2016, the Welsh Government transferred responsibility for the Welsh for Adults sector to the National Centre for Learning Welsh (National Centre). The National Centre allocates funding and provides strategic direction and quality assurance in the sector. It funds 11 providers to deliver Welsh for Adults courses in their designated geographical areas. These providers are branded as Learn Welsh providers. In 2017-2018, 12,680 individual adult learners registered on mainstream Welsh for Adults courses with these providers (Welsh Government, 2019c).

Following the implementation of the National Centre's Data Management Plan, this is the first full year of data available to share and is a national baseline for the sector. It will be possible to make year-on-year comparisons from the baseline established under this new structure. Learning opportunities are offered at five levels. In 2017-2018, 51% of learners were at Entry (beginners) level, 18% at Foundation level with 31% at Intermediate or Advanced levels, (including Proficiency level courses). In 2017-2018, 42% of all learning opportunities were delivered on courses of between 50 and 79 hours duration (Welsh Government, 2019c). The National Centre has a strategic objective to offer more intensive courses, in order to accelerate learners' progress towards fluency. In 2017-2018 12% of learning opportunities delivered more than 110 hours of learning.

Sector summaries:

Welsh for Adults

The National Centre receives extra funding from the Welsh Government for the 'Cymraeg Gwaith/Work Welsh' programme that aims to strengthen bilingual skills in the workplace. Nearly 13,000 learners have taken part in the programme since it commenced in April 2017. As well as being a valuable addition to the Welsh for Adults sector, the scheme has extended into other areas such as further and higher education. Under the scheme, staff and lecturers access Welsh language lessons to develop their Welsh language skills and use them in their work and teaching. The scheme has also extended its work to courses for the early years' education and childcare workforce, the health and care sectors, apprenticeships providers and the private sector. During the present inspection cycle (2018-2024), we aim to inspect the National Centre twice.

Between September 2018 and July 2019, we inspected one Welsh for Adults provider.

Inspection findings

In May 2019, we carried out an inspection in Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Area, Swansea University. All inspection areas were judged to be good.

Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Area is a close-knit and inclusive community that offers suitable care and support to learners. Most learners develop a range of linguistic skills with the main emphasis on speaking Welsh within useful and meaningful contexts. Over time, most learners become increasingly confident Welsh speakers. Nearly all learners have very clear reasons for learning Welsh. Most are enthusiastic and ambitious learners who enjoy their learning.

Most tutors plan lessons effectively to meet learners' needs. They vary the activities during lessons skilfully and maintain a lively atmosphere whilst introducing and practising the language. Most tutors provide useful and encouraging oral feedback, which helps learners improve important aspects of their work. The quality of written feedback to learners about how to improve their written work varies too much.

Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Area's provision includes a wide range of formal and informal activities to practise the language. These include opportunities to use Welsh socially and take part in visits that extend learners' knowledge of the Welsh language and culture, for example visits to the Urdd Eisteddfod and the Christmas Festival in St Fagans National Museum of History.

Leaders and managers have established a clear vision and purposeful strategic aims that are consistent with the plans of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Senior leaders have successfully maintained a high standard of provision during a period of re-organisation.