



**y ganolfan cynllunio iaith**  
welsh centre for language planning

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# **Research into Parents' Support Needs**

**Final Report**

**April 2010**



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welsh centre for language planning

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## 1.0 Project Aims

- 1.1 Previous research (e.g. Jones and Morris 2005) shows that the education experiences of young children through the medium of Welsh benefit greatly from having a Welsh or bilingual home environment. Welsh Early Years Practitioners in Cardiff have recognised the possible need for greater and better support for parents who don't speak Welsh themselves in methods of supporting and embedding their children's Welsh medium Early Years experiences by providing them with family and social experiences through the medium of Welsh.
- 1.2 Therefore, the aim of the research was:
- to recognise the support needs of non-Welsh speaking parents with regards to ensuring a holistic Welsh language experience for their children during the Early Years, and
  - to focus on the practical support that parents feel they need in order to bridge the linguistic contexts of the family, community and Welsh medium Early Years education in the Cardiff area.
- 1.3 Through this, the intention is to:
- Assist parents to enrich and meet their children's bilingual development needs;
  - Lead to a better awareness and better access to sport, culture and leisure activities through the Welsh language for families with Early Years children; and
  - Improve the information and advice available for parents who don't speak Welsh but who are eager for their children to receive a Welsh medium education.
- 1.4 The task included preparing for the research work; reviewing the policy context and relevant research in the field; and arranging the field work with a view to interviewing a cross-section of parents and Early Years providers in Cardiff.

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## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Gathering evidence

Evidence was gathered for the report by:

- desk top research
- interviews with parents in four focus groups
- telephone interviews with Early Years providers.

### 2.2 Desk top research

2.2.1 In order to set the context for the work, desk top research was conducted in the following fields:

- A review of the priorities of Early Years and Welsh language policy documents;
- Research into the factors that facilitate or prevent bilingual/multilingual language transfer and minority language socialisation in the Welsh and international contexts;
- A review of the practical methods and advice given to parents of young children regarding language transfer and acquiring two or more languages;
- Research into supporting families' needs regarding language transfer and acquiring language in the home;
- Research into bilingualism / multilingualism, poverty and children's welfare.

2.2.2 We referred to a number of sources whilst undertaking the above, including:

- Aitchison, J. and Carter, H., 2000 *Language, Economy and Society: The Changing Fortunes of the Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Aitchison, J. and Carter, H., 2004 *Spreading the Word: The Welsh Language 2001*. Talybont: Y Lolfa.
- Fishman, J. A., 1991 *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- Jones, K. and Morris, D., 2008 'Language Socialization in the Home and Minority Language Revitalization in Europe,' in P.A.Duff and N.H.Hornberger (eds) *Encyclopaedia of Language and Education.*, 2nd Edition, Volume 8. *Language Socialization*. 127 – 143. Springer US.
- Jones, K. & Morris, D. 2005 *Welsh Language Socialization within the Family*. Report to the ESRC.

- Gathercole, V.C.M. *et al.*, 2006 *Language Transfer in Bilingual Families*. Cardiff: Welsh Language Board.
- Harbert, W., McConnell-Griset, S., Miller, S. A Whitman, J., (eds) 2009 *Language and Poverty*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- Irvine, F., Roberts, G., *et al.*, 2008 *Twf and Onwards: Impact Assessment and the Way Forward*, Cardiff: Welsh Language Board.
- Bialystok, E., 2009 *Bilingualism in Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## 2.3 Focus Groups Interviews

### 2.3.1 There were 4 focus groups:

- Cylch Meithrin Pili Pala Lloneirwg – The Cylch is located in south east Cardiff and it feeds Bro Eirwg, Berllan Deg and Oakfield primary schools. Around 42 families (43 children) attend the cylch with 80% coming from two parent families and 20% from single parent families. These figures are reflected in the work patterns, with 80% working full time and 20% unemployed. The vast majority (70%) of attendees are older mothers (60% over 35 years old and 20% between 30 and 35 years old) who work full time and travel to the Cylch in cars. Only a few fathers (10%), grandmothers (10%) and other carers (10%) bring children to the sessions. The vast majority are of British ethnic background with only 4% coming from other ethnic origins. Regarding the children's languages, there are no languages apart from English and Welsh. At the time of conducting the focus group with non-Welsh speaking parents, 3 mothers, 1 grandfather, the cylch leader and a representative from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin were present.
- Cylch Meithrin Treganna – This Cylch feeds Treganna Welsh Primary School and Pwll Coch School and is located in west Cardiff. 40 children from 40 families attend with 66% coming from two parent families and 33% from single parent families. Exactly half the parents work full time and the rest work part time. It is usually the mothers (70%) who bring children to the Cylch but there are also some grandmothers (15%) and other carers (15%). 40% of the children travel to the Cylch in cars and 60% come on foot. These parents are also older parents with 90% of them being over 30 years of age. The majority (90%) are of British ethnic origin with 10% from other ethnic backgrounds. However, English or Welsh are the only languages of the children at the Cylch. The focus group was conducted with two non-Welsh speaking parents and another representative from the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.
- Cylch Meithrin Grangetown a'r Bae – The Cylch is located in south west Cardiff and feeds Pwll Coch School, Tan yr Eos School, and Treganna Welsh Primary School. The Cylch has 20 children from around 30 families. 90% of the adults who come to the Cylch with their children are mothers and other carers make up the remaining 10%. 80% of the mothers work full time and 20% are unemployed. Only 10% travel to the Cylch in their cars and the rest walk. Once again, the majority of parents are older parents with 80% being over 35 years old and 10% over 30. This was the Cylch with the highest percentage (20%) of children who didn't come from British ethnic backgrounds with 5% speaking a language or languages other than English or Welsh. In the focus group, 4 non-Welsh speaking

parents were present; one father who used to bring his child to the Cylch before he started at the local Welsh primary school. A member of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin was also present.

- Cylch Meithrin Trelái – Situated in west Cardiff, this Cylch feeds Coed y Gof Primary School. 54 families bring 56 children to the Cylch. Mothers represent 60% of the adults with a number of fathers (20%), grandmothers (10%) and other carers (10%). In contrast with the other Cylchoedd in this study, 80% of the parents are between 20 and 25 years old. In addition, 80% of the parents are unemployed, 15% working part time and only 5% are in full time employment. 60% travel to the Cylch in cars and 40% walk. 75% of the children have two parent homes with the other 25% living in single parent homes. The vast majority (95%) are children from British ethnic backgrounds and there are no children who speak languages other than English or Welsh. The focus group was held with 4 non-Welsh speaking parents (two with older children and two with young children who currently use the Cylch); two Cylch workers who are also parents; two NVQ students and a representative from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

2.3.2 The same format was used for all the above discussions using six sentence starting cards to stimulate a discussion amongst the parents about their experiences, needs and recommendations. (See Appendix 1)

## 2.4 1:1 interviews with Early Years providers

2.4.1 Telephone interviews were held with the following Early Years providers:

- Health Visitors
- Language and Play
- Flying Start
- Menter Iaith Caerdydd
- Welsh Medium Primary School

These were also planned discussions with copies of the talking points sent to each one in advance. (See Appendix 2).

## 2.5 Constraints and obstacles

2.5.1 The views of 13 parents and 8 Early Years providers were gathered. It must be noted that the sample is very small and that it was not possible to make an entirely objective selection. However, every effort was made to include *cylchoedd meithrin* from various locations in Cardiff with a cross-section of parents from various socio-economic backgrounds, and we are extremely grateful to the staff of *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin* for that support. We were also dependent on the support of *Cylchoedd Meithrin* staff to identify parents who met the requirements of the work and who would be prepared to take part. All parents were non-Welsh speakers according to the project requirements. Although the majority of parents had children under the age of 2, some had children who were older.

2.5.2 This study provides an insight into the situation of non-Welsh speaking parents in Cardiff and refers to the experience, perspective and views of a small number of parents and professional workers. Having said this, this work coincided with a similar piece of research for *Twf* in Carmarthen, Cross Hands, Ponterwyd, Aberdare and Bangor. A number of similar patterns and experiences were seen in that work also.

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## 3.0 Context

### 3.1 The increase in the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff

3.1.1 As Table 1 below indicates, there has been a significant increase in the number of Welsh speakers between the 1991 and 2001 census and it is expected there will be a further increase when the results of the 2011 census are announced.

Table 1: Number of Welsh Speakers by electoral division				Number of children age 3- 4 who speak Welsh*	
Electoral Division	Welsh Speakers 1991	Welsh Speakers 2001	Percentage change 1991 - 2010	3- 4 Age group 1991	3- 4 Age group 2001
Adamstown	309	591	91.3	11	12
Butetown	111	358	222.5	6	6
Caerau	411	876	113.1	24	42
Canton	1,030	1,941	88.4	42	60
Cathays	615	1,330	116.3	8	7
Creigiau / Sain Ffagan	474	720	51.9	-	23
Cyncoed	933	1,156	23.9	13	15
Ely	601	1,342	123.3	26	58
Fairwater	580	1,090	87.9	18	26
Gabalfa	341	811	137.8	11	23
Grangetown	408	1,221	199.3	13	39
Heath	979	1,327	35.5	12	32
Lisvane	272	339	24.6	6	6
Llandaff	989	1,329	34.4	26	37
Llandaff North	410	864	110.7	25	40
Llanishen	908	1,688	85.9	26	44
Llanrumney	322	789	145.0	16	22
Pen-twyn	735	1,189	61.8	17	27
Pentyrch	489	640	30.9	-	22
Pen-y-lan	918	1,359	48.0	-	43
Plasnewydd	973	1,711	75.8	21	25
Pontprennau / Old St. Mellons	100	700	600.0	-	20
Radyr	512	683	33.4	5	15
Rhiwbina	1,199	1,375	14.7	18	26
Riverside	973	1,556	59.9	33	42
Rumney	301	703	133.6	11	20
Splott	306	1,026	235.3	16	31
Trowbridge	430	1,239	188.1	26	42
Whitchurch & Tongwynlais	1,435	1,991	38.7	51	69
<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>18,064</b>	<b>31,944</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>874</b>

Source: [www.caerdydd.gov.uk](http://www.caerdydd.gov.uk) , 1991 Census. Local base table 67. and 2001 Census Table CAS146  
 © Crown Copyright \* The changes in the electoral divisions between 1991 and 2001 make it impossible to make a direct comparison in the change in the numbers of 3-4 year old Welsh-speakers.

### 3.2 The current Welsh Early Years education provision

3.2.1 In September 2009, there were 17 Welsh medium schools in Cardiff in addition to the English medium schools that also teach Welsh and offer pupils opportunities to practise their Welsh in extra curricular activities.<sup>1</sup> There has been an annual increase in the number of children who receive Welsh medium education in each statutory school year. Table 2 below shows the situation in the city's primary schools.

Pupils learning through the medium of Welsh January 2010	Age							Total primary children
	4/5	5/6	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	
1998/9	397	361	354	320	279	279	264	2272
1999/0	379	387	355	350	314	274	291	2350
2000/1	386	373	383	350	344	312	271	2419
2001/2	438	384	361	391	331	337	304	2546
2002/3	454	422	379	359	374	337	330	2655
2003/4	448	437	413	368	350	367	336	2719
2004/5	421	435	430	400	358	343	362	2749
2005/6	455	418	430	424	397	355	341	2820
2006/7	465	450	408	424	417	394	355	2913
2007/8	519	460	437	404	417	408	390	3035
2008/9	555	520	452	433	402	406	404	3172

Source: Mid Year Welsh Education Statistics, Cardiff Council Education Department.

3.2.2 Although the number of Welsh medium schools has increased during the past decade, they don't meet the current need for Welsh education. The number of Welsh speakers is expected to increase further and therefore the demand for Welsh education will increase further more. A similar increase was seen in the pre-school Welsh medium provision provided by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. At the beginning of 2010, there were 5 day nurseries that provide wraparound care, 20 Cylch Meithrin and 10 Cylch Ti a Fi in Cardiff that were members of the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. And as seen below, from parents' experiences, there is a further demand for Ti a Fi / Cylch Meithrin provision that is locally accessible for parents.

3.2.3 According to the evidence of the *20% Forum* for Cardiff Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, 80% of the children and young people who attend Welsh medium education in the county definitely come from non-Welsh speaking homes. A report by Cardiff City and County Council acknowledged that the Welsh medium leisure and play provision available through the medium of Welsh is far from meeting the provision levels that should be available for a city with 24.5% of its population of 3-15 year olds' able to speak Welsh. The *20% Forum* argues that the lack of leisure and play

<sup>1</sup> *Provision of Leisure and Play through the Medium of Welsh*. Draft Report of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, County Council of the City and County of Cardiff, November 2009.

provision through the medium of Welsh in Cardiff makes it difficult for pupils from non-Welsh speaking homes to maintain the standard of their Welsh during school holidays and weekends and are therefore under a great disadvantage when they return to school.

### 3.3 Providing Early Years children with Welsh: Assembly Government policies

3.3.1 Since establishing the Welsh Assembly Government, a more coherent approach to the provision of bilingual education and public services has been seen. As part of the Government's agenda to create a *truly bilingual* Wales, a significant emphasis has been placed on developing Welsh medium provision for the Early Years in order to expand the opportunities for children in all parts of Wales to benefit from the cognitive, social and economic advantages from being bilingual or multilingual (Iaith Pawb, 2003:43).

3.3.2 One of the key targets of ***Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales*** since 2003 has been to see an increase in the percentage of children receiving pre-school education through the medium of Welsh in order to ensure that *“very many more under 5s have had sufficient exposure to Welsh to be able to move into either Welsh medium or effectively bilingual schools”* (Ibid., 43).

3.3.3 Following the publication of *Iaith Pawb*, additional funding was allocated to Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin in order to *“encourage more Welsh-medium nursery groups to open across Wales”* and investment was made in training for 150 practitioners as an *“imperative first step towards substantially improving the Welsh medium provision”*. (Ibid., 43)

3.3.4 The Assembly Government's aims for Early Years children are highlighted in its **Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales**.

*“The Foundation Phase contributes to the Welsh Curriculum by developing children's understanding of the cultural identity unique to Wales across all Areas of Learning through an integrated approach. Children should appreciate the different languages, images, objects, sounds and tastes that are integral in Wales today and gain a sense of belonging to Wales, and understand the Welsh heritage, literature and arts as well as the language.”* (Foundation Phase, 2008:12)

3.3.5 In the Foundation Phase, Welsh medium providers are expected to implement the **Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Area of Learning** education programme through the medium of Welsh as they did with the previous education programme. In locations where English is the main medium for communication, the Foundation Phase requirements placed upon them to implement the **Welsh Language Development Area of Learning** increase the expectations to give young children the opportunities to learn Welsh in all care and education contexts. The requirements include:

- *[Young children] should be assisted to develop an awareness of Wales as a country with two languages, and display positive attitudes towards those who speak languages other than English and Welsh.*
- *During the Foundation Phase, children should learn to use and communicate in Welsh to the best of their ability.*
- *Children should listen to Welsh being spoken and respond appropriately in familiar situations, using a range of patterns.*

- *They should be encouraged to communicate their needs in Welsh and should be increasingly exposed to Welsh. (2008:29)*

3.3.6 The Government's intention to further coordinate and strengthen the Early Years provision is seen in its **Welsh Medium Education Strategy** published in May 2009 for a period of consultation. The most relevant aims are quoted below:

***Strategic Aim 1: To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the pre-statutory and statutory phases of education, on the basis of positive response to parental demand***

***Strategic Aims***

- *To reinforce the monitoring work of local education authorities to measure parents' choices regarding the language of the provision for child care, Early Years provision and the statutory sector provision, and to expect local authorities to act upon the findings when planning provision on ward or authority level.*
- *To increase the ability to take advantage of the Early Years and statutory Welsh medium provision in the child's community.*
- *To promote the opportunity to take advantage of primary and secondary statutory Welsh medium provision when practising functions under the **Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008**.*
- *To improve the process of conveying clear information to parents and carers regarding linguistic provision and the linguistic ethos of schools and locations – including ensuring that the options are presented in a fair and reasonable method.*
- *To plan education provision and services through the medium of Welsh for learners with additional learning needs as an integral part of the national, regional and local education provision.*
- *To work with local authorities to identify the possible gaps in Welsh medium Early Years education provision, and consider appropriate support where needed.*
- *To facilitate more opportunity to benefit from Welsh medium opportunities in the Flying Start programme.*

***Strategic Aim 4: To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh-language skills and competence in teaching methodologies***

***Strategic Aims***

- *To increase the training available to child care and Early Years practitioners with Welsh language skills to ensure a sustainable provision.*

### **Supporting Action Steps**

- *To build on the current Welsh medium training provision for child care practitioners and class room assistants in order to ensure a provision in all parts of Wales, and ensure a coordinated infrastructure to support the training.*
- *Continue to fund training by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Trinity College, Carmarthen, for Welsh medium Early Years practitioners until 2011.*
- *Consider options to support a Welsh medium training provision and the Welsh language to each provider in the child care and Early Years areas.*
- *To prioritise the work of developing qualifications involving Child Care and Educational Assistants.*
- *To identify opportunities to work with other WAG departments and external bodies on initiatives to coordinate informal / non formal learning opportunities in the community.*
- *To target Welsh language courses for parents and families, especially parents with young children.*

## **3.4 The Early Years, parenting and child care agenda**

- 3.4.1 Over the past decade, the Welsh language has become increasingly embedded in the Early Years, parenting and child care agenda, forming both a national and county policy in Cardiff. However, even though the policy and research documents acknowledge the need to provide for Welsh language provision, it is apparent that there is still a long way to go to ensure that the provision meets the needs.
- 3.4.2 On a national level, the **Assembly Government's Parenting Action Plan (2005)**, for example, supports seven core aims for children and young people based on the United Nations Conventions on Child Rights and these therefore form the basis for all work in the Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Life Long Learning and Skills. The most relevant core aims in this context are that children and young people are:
- *Given the opportunity to benefit from a wide range of educational, training and learning opportunities, including opportunities to develop essential personal and social skills*
  - *Able to benefit from a range of play activities, leisure activities, sport and cultural activities*
  - *Being heard, and are treated with respect. And that their race and cultural identity is recognised*
  - *Not at a disadvantage due to any kind of poverty.*
- 3.4.3 Under Chapter 2 of the **National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services Wales** the 'parenting standard' promotes the importance of providing appropriate support and information for parents including:

- *Available access for parents/carers to information based on evidence regarding parenting matters through various suitable media*
- *To provide advice that is constant, achieved through multi agency training programmes.<sup>2</sup>*

The above principles are reflected in the Cardiff Parenting Framework and Action Plan.

3.4.4 The **Cardiff Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 11**, states:

*"The proportion of children and young people accessing activities is not commensurate in some groups, including children with disabilities, from ethnic minority communities, young carers and those choosing to access activities through the medium of Welsh".*

*"By consulting with children and young people, it became apparent that they would appreciate more events that celebrate their identity and race and, in particular, more bilingual and Welsh medium provision".*

There is a commitment in the Children and Young People's Plan to the following aims:

- *Improving the provision for disabled children and young people, those suffering from ill health and those choosing Welsh medium activities*
- *Increasing the opportunities to access physical, cultural and leisure activities through the medium of Welsh*
- *Developing, implementing and monitoring the action plan together with the 20% Forum in order to increase the number of children and young people accessing leisure, sport and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh.*

3.4.5 Even though it is encouraging that policy frameworks, offering guidance on what's happening on the ground, place some emphasis on the Welsh language, the Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee acknowledged that the Council does not fully meet with its duties regarding the Welsh medium provision:

*"Cardiff Council is not fully addressing its legal obligation to provide equality of opportunity in both Welsh and English languages, particularly in relation to the children and young people of Cardiff and their leisure and play opportunities"<sup>3</sup>*

In Section 4 of the report, there is evidence of parents' experiences who agree with the above statement.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/441/EnglishNSF\\_amended\\_final.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/441/EnglishNSF_amended_final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Provision of Leisure and Play through the Medium of Welsh: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Draft Report.* Cardiff City and County Council, November 2009:7.

### 3.5 Language, poverty and child welfare

3.5.1 The research into the relationship between language and poverty in bilingual and multilingual communities across the world (e.g. Harbert *et al.* 2009) shows a direct link between linguistic ability and individual and family access to economic resources. Here in Wales, the value placed upon the Welsh language since a statutory duty was placed by the Welsh Language Act 1993 on public bodies to provide a bilingual service to the public, has increased considerably. This means that having Welsh language skills increases an individual's opportunities to access a wider range of jobs in the employment market with these jobs being mostly professional posts. As shown in the analysis by Aitchison and Carter (2004) of the census statistics, there has been a clear shift in the socio-economic profile of Welsh speakers, particularly in areas such as Cardiff, where government agencies and the media have been mostly responsible for the increase in the number of middle class Welsh speakers in the city. In this study, as seen below, parents from all social classes are aware of the economic and social benefits of giving their children the Welsh language, and in Ely in particular, they see access to the Welsh language as a matter of justice.

3.5.2 It is important to bear in mind the advantages of introducing two or more languages to babies and young children. Firstly, research shows that early bilingual experiences can contribute to an improvement in young children's educational achievement, by:

- promoting cognitive skills
- increasing mental agility
- improving children's ability to concentrate on a variety of tasks.

Secondly, another set of advantages can be gained, resulting directly from the ability to use specific languages, namely:

- expanding social networks
- communicating with family members
- improving career opportunities.

3.5.3 These benefits connect with the great emphasis placed by the Assembly Government to end Child Poverty in its Children and Families Measure 2010. It states, for example, 'extensive aims to contribute towards ending child poverty' in Part 1, Chapter 1 of the act:

- (e) to decrease the inequality in educational achievement between children;*
- (f) to support child parenting;*
- (j) decrease inequality by participating in cultural, activities, sport and leisure activities between children and between parents (to the necessary extent to ensure their children's welfare)<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, Part 1, Chapter 1, 2 (e) (f) (j).

### 3.6 Arguments for including Welsh in mainstream provision

3.6.1 Looking at the legislative measures and the policies that derive from them in the Early Years parenting and child care area, it must be acknowledged that they don't generally place adequate emphasis on the Welsh language. But rather:

- there is a tendency to see the Welsh language as an additional option for those who choose to use it;
- there is an attitude that the demand must be proven and measured before providing;
- the Welsh language is not seen as a social / economic resource related to the agenda to end poverty; and as a result,
- access to the Welsh language is not seen as a matter of justice.

3.6.2 Access to the Welsh language should be seen as an Equal Opportunity matter as stated in the *Welsh Medium Education Strategy*:

*"Equality of opportunity is a cross-cutting theme integral to this Strategy and all policies of the Welsh Assembly Government. No one should be denied opportunities to access Welsh-medium education or learning Welsh as a language because of their race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion. Welsh-medium education should reflect the composition of the Welsh population as a whole, and should be available to, and accessed by, all communities, including those characterised by disadvantage and ethnic diversity. We will expect our partners, providers and stakeholders to recognise this principle and take steps to make it a reality. This Strategy will contribute to the Welsh Assembly Government's Mainstreaming Equality Strategy."* (2.6)

More than this, acquiring Welsh language skills in modern Wales is a social and economic resource of additional value and should be available for *everyone* in Wales. Parents' experiences in this report confirm that not only is the answer to reinforce the current Welsh medium provision but also to ensure that the Welsh language becomes an integral part of mainstream provision.

### 3.7 Research into supporting family needs regarding acquiring and transferring language

3.7.1 Section 3 comes to a close with a summary of the research evidence on language transmission and introducing minority languages to young children.

3.7.2 In the discussion about minority language transmission, Jones and Morris (2008) differentiate between the function of a civil society on the one hand, namely the family and the society in particular, and on the other hand, the functions of other formal state establishments, namely the education system and employment world, for example. And on the basis of their review of the relevant research from numerous parts of Europe, they come to the conclusion "... *it can be argued that the family should be the primary focus of*

*language planners who are concerned with reversing language shift.” (2008:2).*

- 3.7.3 Joshua Fishman’s authoritative work forms the basis for much of the research in this field. Fishman emphasises that it is not possible to either promote the use of a minority language nor prevent language shift through formal establishments alone, such as education and legislation, the economy and the media. A process must also be ensured to transfer the language from one generation to another through what Fishman calls “*the normal, daily, repetitive and intensely socializing and identity-forming functioning of home, family and neighbourhood.*” (1991: 162).

At the beginning of the 21C, however, the key role of the home and family is transformed in the wake of changes in employment, child care, and day to day living patterns. As a result, Fishman says that parents’ function as the transferers of the minority language is to an extent reduced. It therefore follows that those agencies and networks supporting the family by providing nursery education and child care, for example, have to create the appropriate climate in order to socialize young children in their language and minority culture.

- 3.7.4 Jones and Morris refer to the tendency in the early research to assume that language socialization, as suggested by the term ‘transfer’, is something that happens *by adults to* children. But they say that the process is, in fact, much more interactive and open than this.

*“More recent studies of child language acquisition stress the international nature of socialization and demonstrate that infants and small children play a part in socializing other family members and show how a child’s language acquisition is influenced by many factors other than parental decisions and wishes ... An analysis of the role of the community in supporting or undermining family language practices is particularly important in the case of minority bilingual contexts since individuals’ values and practices are intimately shaped by wider power relations and ideology.” (2008: 2-3)*

- 3.7.5 As seen in the evidence below, the parents who took part in this research acknowledge the importance of the relationship between the family and the wider community and in particular, the relationship with the agencies and networks working in the Early Years sector. Non-Welsh speaking parents in this study, who choose to introduce Welsh to their children, depend mainly upon exposing their children to Welsh through the education system, referred to as *secondary* language socialization. In general, there are few and limited opportunities for these parents’ to introduce Welsh to their children at home (*primary* socialization) although a great number are eager to be in a better situation to be able to support their children’s Welsh, by learning Welsh themselves.

- 3.7.6 The study by Jones and Morris (2005) with 12 mixed-language families refers to five basic factors that effect a child’s socializing process in the Welsh language.

- i. The time spent with the parent who speaks Welsh and the relationship between the parent and the toddler.
- ii. The contact and relationship with a grandmother / grandfather who speaks Welsh.
- iii. The role of older siblings. A few examples were seen among the parents in this research, that it was easier to introduce Welsh if an older child who could speak the language was present.

- iv. The parent's linguistic background and the linguistic habits of the parent and extended family; if both parents are agreed on using Welsh, it is easier to do so.
- v. Parents' attitude towards language and the power relationship within the family. Jones and Morris' research shows that the Welsh-speaking parent in mixed-language families tends to take responsibility and make the decisions regarding Welsh. In non-Welsh speaking families, there were a few examples to suggest that the mother was expected to facilitate things by learning a little Welsh.

3.7.7 The work of Gathercole *et al* (2005) offers some practical strategies to adopt in order to make it easier to embed habits in favour of using Welsh in the family: Among them, they refer to:

- promoting the skills and confidence of a parent to chat with a toddler in Welsh;
- promoting Welsh medium activities which give English origin parents the opportunity to be paired with Welsh speaking adults;
- providing support to create a cluster of speakers with a focus on interesting activities and support to make language choices;
- offering parents early advice before they establish language habits – from the pre birth period onwards;
- setting up a help line for parents.

It is apparent that many of the same points are raised in the recommendations made by parents in this research. Basically, parents are looking for opportunities to approach Welsh in an inclusive atmosphere, with practical support to learn Welsh every day so they can then use the language with their young children.

3.7.8 The work of Irvine, Roberts *et al.* (2008) based on their study of 153 families who had selected themselves, refers to three central issues regarding language use within the family:

- the influences of the home itself on language transfer;
- the influence of the inter-relationship between the home and the community on language transfer ;
- wider community influences on families.

*“Establishing Welsh language social networks beyond the family is a priority for parents who are committed to raising their children bilingually, particularly those from W/E and E/E families.”* (2008: 42)

The discussion on the importance of practical support continues,

*“One key determinant regarding language transfer in bilingual families in Wales is their access to a central language support system to facilitate and lead their use of Welsh in the home. This is available to Welsh speaking families through their family and friends network. However, for parents with mixed languages or Welsh learners, access to such support to improve their Welsh language skills and support their efforts to transfer Welsh in the home, may be more limited.”* (2008: 44).

3.7.9 Social context and language status and profile are central factors and they have a significant influence on a family's language behaviour, says Irvine, Roberts, *et al.* with

reference to literature in the health promotion area, they argue that an approach focusing only on encouraging people to change their behaviour is insufficient "... because the limited relationship found between information, attitudes and behaviour." (op.cit., 69). They continue by saying:

*"It is apparent that a number of key factors such as environmental circumstances, socio-political structures and cultures, which are to an extent beyond an individual's control, have a direct effect on ways of life. For example, our research shows, and the research of Aitchison a Carter (2000), despite good intentions, that many factors beyond parents' control come to play, such as the perceived status of the Welsh language, the childcare and Welsh medium education available, that can prevent or promote language transfer within the family."* (op.cit., 69)

3.7.10 As a result, Irvine, Roberts *et al.* argues the need for:

*"Disseminating ... programmes concentrating on improving parents' skills and confidence to use Welsh so that parents feel they have the necessary language and interpersonal skills to control language transfer with their children"* (2008: 68).

Therefore, there is a very important place for networks and organisations which support families to learn Welsh or help them get into the habit of using Welsh with young children. This kind of support and practical modelling will give families control over their decisions and the ability to act accordingly. Whilst Irvine, Roberts *et al.* focus on Twf and argue that it has a prominent place in the community networks to facilitate this, their comments are equally relevant to all Early Years studies.

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## 4.0 Parents' Evidence

There was a consistent focus to the discussions with parents. Attention was given, in particular, to the following elements:

### 4.1 Aspirations to provide their children with Welsh

The parents referred to a number of factors and among them:

#### 4.1.1 Attitudes towards Welsh

4.1.1.1 The non-Welsh speaking parents interviewed were unanimously in favour of introducing and supporting their children's process of acquiring Welsh. They had a clear perception of the advantages of introducing Welsh to their young children. For example:

- One parent said that she hoped her child would become fluent in Welsh and that this would open up new employment possibilities.
- Another parent felt that one was much more aware of Welsh in Cardiff now and that the language can be heard more often and its profile higher: "*Socially, the language is picking up.*"
- This was supported by another parent who said: "*The language isn't harking back any longer, it's more forward-looking.*"
- Another parent mentioned she had friends who were first language Welsh speakers, "*I want to be able to join in. I don't want them to have to change language for me.*"
- Parents in one group referred to the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and the fact that it appears to be easier to learn a third or fourth language.
- Another parent emphasised the importance of acquiring Welsh in order to be a part of the Welsh society. She mentioned how she had suffered a lot of discrimination against her "*as a Black person brought up in Cardiff and I hated Welsh,*" she said. She then talked about her experience of moving from Wales to London, "*I educated myself there,*" and as a part of this she became more aware of the value of bilingualism. Therefore, after moving back to Cardiff and having her daughter, she decided she'd like her to have the opportunity to have a real *stake* in Welsh society and therefore, decided that she should acquire Welsh through the education system. She now feels immensely proud that her daughter is bilingual, that she is able to take her family to the Mochyn Du and order in Welsh! "*If you haven't got Welsh, you won't have the jobs,*" she said.

#### 4.1.2 Welsh gives the children better opportunities

4.1.2.1 Parents also shared the perception that education in Welsh medium schools is better than that on offer in the main stream.

4.1.2.2 One parent said: "*I'm considering the Welsh school because [the mainstream school] isn't good enough. It's happening a lot in Cardiff. Parents like me are sending their children to a Welsh school because they think it's a better education.*" In addition to the advantage of

giving their children Welsh, some noted the perception that the discipline and standards are higher in the Welsh schools.

4.1.2.3 One parent referred to her personal experience being brought up in Ely and said - "*I wanted something better for my children.*" She mentioned her eldest son who was 16, and now in his final year at Plas Mawr "*I had to fight to get him in ... but it's been worth it, because I've never had the police on my door-step.*"

4.1.2.4 Another two parents said they wanted to choose a Welsh school because: "*I want my children to go to school where there's a balance of cultures ... These are the views of lots of parents in Cardiff. They choose Welsh-medium because they don't want their children to be in a minority in English-medium schools.*"

## **4.2 Things that make it difficult to provide the children with Welsh**

Parents referred to a number of factors including:

### **4.2.1 Being unable to speak Welsh themselves**

4.2.1.1 One of the main obstacles in the view of the parents questioned was their own lack of ability in Welsh. One of the mothers was learning some Welsh and in the case of the other parents, they were keen to learn Welsh but found it difficult to get access to convenient learning opportunities.

### **4.2.2 The opportunity to learn Welsh**

4.2.2.1 Parents' perception was that Welsh learning courses, in general, were inconvenient for parents. They said that it would suit parents, if there were:

- daytime courses
- courses especially designed for parents
- Welsh nursery rhymes and so on included in Language and Play programmes to introduce some of the language, become familiar with the sounds of Welsh, get used to pronunciations etc.
- Opportunities to gather as a group of parents to learn Welsh during *Ti a Fi* and *Cylch Meithrin* sessions. This would be convenient and would give the parents the opportunity to support one another in learning Welsh and establishing the habit of talking to each other in Welsh. It was also felt that this was an opportunity for the parent/carer and the young child to learn together.

### **4.3 Things that help non-Welsh speaking parents to provide their children with Welsh**

There was a discussion about the things that help non-Welsh speaking parents to give Welsh to their children. A number of factors were noted including:

#### **4.3.1 Welsh speaking friends**

4.3.1.1 A parent from Grangetown said that having Welsh speaking friends offered her support. Access to Welsh medium social networks will also help to normalize the language and make Welsh more common in family life. Most of the parents interviewed, however, were not part of such networks and therefore, it was much more difficult for them to acquire the language.

#### **4.3.2 The influence of an older child**

4.3.2.1 For parents with older children already attending Welsh medium schools, there is much more Welsh available for their younger children. One of the parents with an older child said it was easier to introduce Welsh to the younger child – *“Johnnie brings Welsh home.”* He saw that the toddler heard more than the older child would have heard at the same age. *“It’s easier for Eva because there’s more Welsh around for her.”*

#### **4.3.3 Television and other media**

4.3.3.1 Although a few parents said it helped to have as much Welsh in the house as possible, through radio, Cyw television programmes, books, *Wcw* magazine, CDs and DVDs, many of the parents were not aware of these resources. This highlights the need to cascade such information systematically amongst parents using *cylchoedd meithrin*.

#### **4.3.4 School support**

4.3.4.1 School plays a key role as children grow older. There were a range of experiences and some parents praised the local school for involving and supporting a parent who might lack confidence in the Welsh language.

4.3.4.2 Two parents, for example, were full of praise for the support they had received through the local Welsh medium schools. *“The teachers are brilliant, the homework is sent home bilingually and we have the timetable in English.”* Other parents talked about very different experiences (see below) and thought the school should strengthen the support available.

### **4.4 Things that concern parents**

Parents referred to a number of things that concerned them including:

#### **4.4.1 Lack of child care**

4.4.1.1 One of the main problems for a large number of parents with older children is the lack of after school Welsh medium child care, and linked to this, the lack of school holiday provision. It was stated that in Ely, English medium provision is available locally through a

network of children and young people's clubs, together with play schemes during holidays, which parents say are completely free of charge in some areas. However, if their children are to receive similar care through the medium of Welsh, there are three problems:

- a) the cost of the session
- b) travelling arrangements
- c) travelling costs.

4.4.1.2 For parents who choose to give their children Welsh, the lack of Welsh medium provision is a matter of fairness and equality. One mother from Ely voiced the opinion of a number of the parents, saying: *"If you have it in English, it should be available in Welsh too ... we get penalised here. We get treated different from English ... We want to be classed as equal. We want what the English children are having."*

4.4.1.3 In Ely, the mothers were keen for their children to have Welsh but repeatedly emphasised the financial cost of doing so. The feeling throughout the interview with this group was the lack of equality that existed between the Welsh and English medium provision. One mother referred to the effect this has in an area such as Ely. She mentioned a local family who had moved their children from the Welsh school to the local school because they saved at least £10 per week on transport cost in doing so. *"That's enough money for milk and bread for a week."*

4.4.1.4 This was supported by parents in one of the other groups. *"If you're poor, getting your kids to school is a problem. Getting them to Welsh medium is impossible."* Ideally, the parents say there is a need for a closer network of Welsh medium schools. One father argued it was a matter of equal opportunity and that Welsh medium education could improve opportunities for children from more difficult backgrounds. But furthermore, he said *"It's all part of the wider framework because those skills [i.e. bilingual skills] have to be valued post 16."* The grandfather in this group had the long term vision of main stream Welsh education, *"People are intimidated by Welsh schools."* He says, if you're not used to the system, if you don't have a friend or a relative who uses the system ... it's much more difficult.

4.4.1.5 Parents therefore, were pressing for normalising the Welsh medium provision across the mainstream and place value on Welsh in the education system, in the community and in jobs and employment.

#### **4.4.2 Lack of nurseries and Welsh medium education provision**

4.4.2.1 In Grangetown, and Canton, there were huge concerns for the future of Welsh medium education in their areas. They were concerned about the transition from nursery to primary and particularly concerned whether there would be a place for their child in the new school. These parents felt hopes were being raised for Welsh education and a lot of uncertainty followed regarding continuity and progression.

4.4.2.2 The leader of Cylch Meithrin Grangetown a'r Bae said they had 'lost' 7-8 families last year who had failed to find a place in Welsh medium primary schools and had therefore moved on to mainstream education.

4.4.2.3 Due to the limited provision, parents say, this makes Welsh medium education more accessible for families who are able to travel and/or pay additional costs. Therefore, the optimum for non-Welsh speaking parents is to work towards a situation where more and more children from mixed backgrounds have easy access to child care, nurseries and Welsh medium education locally.

4.4.2.4 Together with the issue of limited Welsh medium *cylchoedd meithrin*, there is a concept that the Mudiad is not succeeding in attracting as many parents as it possibly could. Some parents mentioned that it had not been easy for them to find out about local Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin provision.

*"It needs to be better advertised. Lots of people say we don't want to go because it's all Welsh. All the posters are in Welsh so if you don't speak Welsh you can't read them ... All these promotional things need to be bilingual and they need to be up in libraries, doctors surgeries ...,"* said one parent.

4.4.2.5 Some of the parents interviewed felt it was the health visitor's role to tell them about the nursery groups available locally. But it was also felt that they learn about such provision by chance. For example, *"We didn't know you were here,"* one mother said to a *cylch meithrin* leader.

#### **4.4.3 It is difficult to gain access to Welsh**

4.4.3.1 Talking to parents, there was a strong feeling that getting close to Welsh is not necessarily easy for these parents; there are numerous obstacles that hamper their efforts. One of those obstacles in an area like Cardiff is that English medium education is the *default medium*. One parent said, for example, *"I had to put my child on the waiting list for here. I have to go out of my way to get here."*

4.4.3.2 It was suggested that the network of *Ti a Fi* groups needed to be expanded because this is the first point of contact with the Welsh language.

*"In Flying Start areas you have that kind of support in English but not in Welsh .... People just don't know about Ti a Fi,"* according to one parent.

4.4.3.3 There is therefore a need to:

- ensure equal access to Welsh in Flying Start areas;
- give as much publicity as possible to parents about the *Cylch Ti a Fi*.

It was suggested that the *Job Centre Plus* could be a good information point for parents returning to work.

#### **4.4.4 Lack of welcome at Welsh medium schools**

4.4.4.1 In one area, two of the parents interviewed were at the centre of the dispute due to the uncertainty regarding the primary reorganisation. To make matters worse, they had contacted one Welsh School to introduce themselves and have an introductory talk etc. One parent was very concerned as the head teacher had said that 40% of their pupils

came from Welsh-Welsh families; another 30-40% from Welsh-English families; and the rest from English families. *"It's a Welsh school"* was how the Head teacher had apparently commented, and this had led the parent to fear that her child would be in the minority there also. *"I thought that the trend was for more and more children to come from homes like ours where both parents speak English."* The other parent said she was in a very similar situation.

4.4.4.2 Therefore, both parents were disappointed. Both had hoped that the Welsh school would be the best place for their child and were now rethinking and uncertain as to where to turn and what help is available as they decide. Both parents felt strongly that they needed the opportunity to voice their concerns but unfortunately had no guidance when needed. Talking about her experience of the Welsh education regime, *"I have the impression"* said one of the mothers *"that they don't want to know."* That is, the school is full and the school does not need to market any further.

4.4.4.3 Other parents talked about the lack of welcome they experienced *"We're trying to embrace it (the Welsh language) but English-speaking parents aren't being made to feel that we're being embraced in turn."* Parents' experiences highlight the need for providers to be more aware of the effort non-Welsh speaking parents make to approach Welsh and of the support needed.

#### **4.4.5 Lack of help and support from schools**

4.4.5.1 The support does not always improve once the child has started at a Welsh medium school, according to the parents. Although a few parents praised the support received from school, other parents were very critical of the lack of guidance available for non-Welsh speaking parents. For example: *"We don't have any guidance from school. We wait outside and there's no hope of catching a teacher,"* said one parent.

The parent who was a Welsh learner said that other non-Welsh speaking parents turn to her, *"They wait for me for help."* Another parent talked of her child coming home with homework, *"We had to look at translation sites on the internet to help. It took ages."* It was also noted that not all parents have easy access to the internet.

4.4.5.2 Therefore, the evidence gathered suggests that non-Welsh speaking parents have to go the extra mile to find help and try to support their children. The parents questioned suggested schools should tailor the support they offer to reflect the nature of their catchment area. For example, *"In an area like this, very few parents are Welsh-speakers, so the school ideally needs to tailor the support accordingly."*

#### **4.4.6 Tension regarding language and religious values**

4.4.6.1 Finally, one of the difficulties for some families is the tension between two sets of values, religion and language. One grandfather mentioned his desire to see moving out to the mainstream schools. At the moment, for a family like his, it is a choice between Welsh medium education and an education in the Catholic School.

There were two types of families in this group:

Family 1 – attending the Welsh school but as a result feeling that it is more difficult to immerse their children in the Catholic faith.

Family 2 – intend to send their child to the Catholic School, therefore, likely to lose their Welsh but keep their Catholic sustenance.

#### **4.5 The type of extra support that would help non-Welsh speaking parents**

Parents referred to numerous types of additional support that would help them, including:

##### **4.5.1 Introducing Welsh at Ti a Fi groups**

4.5.1.1 Parents had a varied opinion regarding their experiences of Ti a Fi sessions. It appears some Ti a Fi groups are more successful than others regarding operating through Welsh and introducing Welsh gradually to non-Welsh speaking parents. In one parent's experience the Ti a Fi she had been part of, consisted of two lots of parents, one Welsh speaking and the other non-Welsh speaking and there was not a lot of communication between the two. She felt that Ti a Fi groups need a facilitator / leader, someone who can create structured learning opportunities. This would create an opportunity to learn Welsh every day with a toddler, reading stories together, singing etc.

4.5.1.2 There was a feeling among parents who had attended a Cylch Ti a Fi that it offered a very good forum for hearing and practising a little Welsh in a safe environment and in the company of other parents who can offer support and encouragement. Similar messages were heard from the parents who were part of the Twf research and they also suggested that the Cylch Ti a Fi offered great potential to introduce Welsh and establish language habits. Therefore, there is scope for the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to look closely at how to cooperate with those cylchoedd in order to strengthen and increase their capacity to support non-Welsh speaking parents.

##### **4.5.2 Accessing social and leisure activities through the medium of Welsh**

4.5.2.1 In general, the opportunities for parents in the study to access Welsh medium experiences for their children outside the Cylch Meithrin or the Welsh school were very scarce.

4.5.2.2 Some parents expressed their disappointment that none of the local Leisure Centre's activities were available in Welsh, although the resources were otherwise very good there. One parent mentioned that her partner and daughter love doing kick boxing. She said it would be great, if kick boxing sessions could be held through the medium of Welsh. Just one example of what's needed, she said.

4.5.2.3 Leisure Centres are an example of mainstream providers who have tended to overlook Welsh when drawing up their provision of activities for the public. As part of the council's process of implementing the Language Scheme, the leisure centres could be persuaded to prepare plans to develop the provision of Welsh medium family activities over the coming years. Again, the 'demand' concept is not considered as very few people ask for such a provision, but this small study suggests that there is a substantial concealed demand for opportunities to hear and experience Welsh outside the Cylch or school.

4.5.2.4 The local Menter Iaith provides social activities tailored for families with nursery aged children. On average, less than half the parents who took part in this study knew about the work of the local Menter. In Grangetown, one parent said she had heard about some of the Menter Iaith activities, *"But I'm too tied to use them"*. One or two of the parents knew about the Fun Day organised by the Menter for families. They had enjoyed it immensely. But they said that not all parents get to know about them and not all parents have the transport anyway.

4.5.2.5 In St Mellons, parents with older children spoke positively that the Menter had met with the reception class parents to talk about some Menter activities and one parent mentioned that a Menter representative visited the Cylch Ti a Fi he attended. Regarding good practice, this appears to be something to continue and develop in order to reach parents with Ti a Fi and Meithrin aged children to share information and learn about parents' needs early on, and use this to inform the action plans, and so on.

### 4.5.3 Advice on Welsh medium education

4.5.3.1 A number of parents said they needed information as soon as possible about the Welsh medium provision available and the choices they have, and so forth.

*"If you're thinking of putting your child in a Welsh school, you need advice beforehand,"* said one parent.

*"When your child is accepted in Welsh school you need a welcome pack with things to help you and guidance,"* was a comment by another parent.

4.5.3.2 Talking of such resources, another parent referred again for the need to have a *Starter Pack* for non-Welsh speaking parents, including, for example: flash cards and stickers to label things around the home. And for the parents who wish to do so, there should be another opportunity when the child starts at primary school, they said, to learn Welsh or develop more skills. Another parent insisted:

*"There needs to be a formal recognition built into the system that parents like us need information and support. You're doing this [i.e. approaching the Welsh language], so we'll help you by laying on Welsh language courses, and having resources to help you."*

4.5.3.3 Therefore, what parents are suggesting is to have a support menu available and that you choose according to your needs. There is a clear idea here also about the school being a lifelong learning centre supporting the child's learning process, i.e. the idea of a threefold relationship between the school, child and parent.

4.5.3.4 For the parents interviewed in this study, the reality is a very different situation at the moment. *"You don't know that you've got a place in school until July."* And straight in then in September without much support. As one parent said: *"You take this big step and then you're all alone."*

#### 4.5.4 Cooperation between parents, Cylch Meithrin and school

4.5.4.1 From the experiences of the parents interviewed, it is also apparent that the nature of the relationship between parents, the Cylch Meithrin and the local Welsh school is a key issue. Unfortunately, in one Cylch, there appears to be difficulty in the relationship between the Cylch and parents. "*The door is shut ... we have zero information from the Cylch,*" said one parent, for example. Regarding good practice, cylch need to welcome parents; have an open door policy; liaising between Cylch activities and what could happen at home, e.g. through vocabulary sheets with phonetic pronunciations, and so on.

4.5.4.2 We were also told that the relationship between the Cylch and school is not always close enough and this has a negative effect on non-Welsh speaking parents' experiences. The message some parents had received from the Cylch was that the Welsh school "*doesn't want to bother with us.*"

In order to ensure the continuation and support that some parents were lucky enough to receive, the relationship between the Cylch and local Welsh school is important. There is a need to develop a two way relationship which involves, for example, a school representative visiting the Cylch to talk to parents; and then welcoming parents to school, and so forth.

#### 4.5.5 A comprehensive source of information for parents

4.5.5.1 It became apparent from the discussions with parents that a comprehensive source of information including a range of information was needed, for example:

- basic Welsh to use with your toddler
- information about Ti a Fi and Meithrin groups
- information about Welsh courses for families
- the research evidence regarding the value of bilingualism
- parents' experiences
- resources to help families
- a link to the local authority website in each area to find information about the primary/secondary education provision.

4.5.5.2 Among the parents questioned, a number of them were eager to receive information to help them make decisions about their children's education. One group of parents said clearly that a comprehensive website was needed to offer the above range of information. A website of this kind could combine or enable contact with numerous sites such as: Twf, Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Welsh for Adults, Local Authorities; authoritative sites on bilingualism.

4.5.5.3 In addition to an information source on a website or similar, a number of parents felt that the education system and the Early Years provision need to consider the information and support needs of non-Welsh speaking parents in a coordinated manner.

#### 4.5.6 Early support for non-Welsh speakers

4.5.6.1 “*Parents need information from the word go,*” according to one parent. As the Twf project is not in operation in Cardiff, the experiences of the parents questioned would suggest that parents did not benefit from receiving much information in the period before and after giving birth. Although the health visitor is able to offer parents information on the local Welsh medium nursery provision, the information shared by health visitors appears to be inconsistent.

“*I only heard of Ti a Fi by accident,*” said one mother. She had heard about it by accident through informal networks, although she was otherwise an informed parent.

“*Health visitors don't mention anything about Welsh medium provision. I think that you need to go right back to the Bounty Pack and make sure that there's something there to get you thinking right from the beginning,*” said another parent.

One parent mentioned that health visitors were still saying things like, “*If you're an English-speaking family, or if you're a mixed language family, two languages can confuse your child .... they grab hold of your uncertainty and the health visitor says, well, this is my opinion.*”

4.5.6.2 But when mentioning the health visitor, parents acknowledged that the bundle of books from Book Start distributed by health visitors included a Welsh book and they thought this was a good idea. It was suggested that the best time to give these to parents who want to give their children Welsh, would be around 18 months old when parents receive the Book Start pack. “*That's the time to give you comprehensive information about your options.*”

#### **4.5.7 Better integration of Welsh into mainstream parenting and child care**

4.5.7.1 From the interviews with parents, there is support for the need to take steps to integrate Welsh more into the mainstream provision and give children and parents opportunities to be introduced to the language without having to go in search of it.

4.5.7.2 Parents talked of the story time provision in the local library but that the provision should be developed in Welsh. In St Mellons, parents referred to the fact that story telling sessions were held at St Mellons Library and that a Welsh learner was holding the session. They saw this as a potential to have Welsh language story sessions. Ideally, they would like:

- a) to listen to a Welsh story being read to themselves and their child, and then
- b) to have the opportunity to practise reading the story with their toddler with the facilitator's help.

They see this as a means of familiarising with the pronunciation of Welsh words, establishing the habit of reading Welsh books with their children and gaining confidence.

4.5.7.3 We heard of a number of parents who had followed the *Language and Play* programme but without having the opportunity to experience any Welsh in them. One parent who was currently following a Language and Play programme said that the programme is run entirely in English and it would be good if it could include Welsh nursery rhymes and so on, in order to introduce some Welsh, familiarise with the sounds and get used to pronunciations etc.

- 4.5.7.4 *"We're in a Flying Start area but there's nothing here in Welsh except for the Cylch,"* was the parents' complaint. They said that alternative provision, e.g. Language and Play, Play and Stay, parenting programmes, are all in English. They liked the idea that Language and Play sessions, for example, could be provided bilingually if providers were willing to take the first steps towards normalising the use of the Welsh alongside the English language. In Ely, they have an Integrated Children's Centre and this also lends itself perfectly, they said, to providing Welsh language lessons for parents.
- 4.5.7.5 Grangetown a'r Bae, Pili Pala Lloneirwg and Trelai Cylchoedd Meithrin are either in Communities First or Flying Start areas or bordering with such areas. In St Mellons, we learnt of the intention to apply for money through Communities First to establish and run a group for parents to learn Welsh. We saw the need to ensure Welsh is integrated into the planning and provision process, e.g. by applying for Communities First funds, as in the St Mellons area, and by moving towards a situation where the Flying Start provision reflects parents' desire regarding introducing Welsh to their children and learning some of the language themselves.
- 4.5.7.6 For parents in Ely, Welsh is regarded as the key to improving children's life long opportunities. If so, it is very patronising to say, as providers in an area like this one often do, *'parents round here have enough on their plates.'* As stated in Section 3 above, Flying Start areas cannot operate on the basis of a lack of 'demand' for Welsh language provision. The concept of 'demand' is inappropriate when considering a minority language as users have been conditioned not to expect and not to ask for provision. It is also a matter of justice that everyone has the same opportunities to access Welsh and the social and economic resources the language now represents in a devolved Wales.

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## 5.0 Evidence from Early Years providers

During the telephone interviews with Early Years providers, we concentrated our attention on the following elements:

### 5.1 Parents' concerns

- 5.1.1 The comments of Early Years providers show the need for a lot of help and support if non-Welsh speaking parents are to approach the Welsh language. One of the main difficulties for non-Welsh speaking parents, according to one health visitor is fear of Welsh. They will often say, "*We'd love to, but ...*" One of the providers said, "*The difficulties are usually created by the parents themselves who tend to shy away as they fear that they're not going to be able to support their children.*" The Head teacher interviewed also said that one of the main concerns of non-Welsh speaking parents at the beginning of their young children's school career is the fear that they will not be able to help with homework in Key Stage 2.
- 5.1.2 Another provider talked of her experiences saying, "*In my experience it tends to be the more proactive parents who go for Welsh medium education.*" Parents like these generally know what they want and what support is available for them she said. She mentioned one mother telling her how she had received a questionnaire from the Welsh medium school's nursery department when her toddler started there and she now receives information via e-mail about Welsh social and family events. This was an example of good practise she said, and an example of what's available at its best. She also referred to another example where a mother was learning Welsh when her toddler started at the reception class. Both mother and child were learning phrases together. "It was great" she said. She has seen in this family that the toddler is really taking to learning Welsh. The child is also learning a little Spanish, she said, and this had convinced her of the benefits of introducing languages early on.
- 5.1.3 This research shows, however, that the majority of non-Welsh speaking parents have a number of concerns which makes it difficult for them to introduce Welsh to their children, no matter how strong their desire to do so. There is also support for the need to make Welsh a natural part of the mainstream in order to ensure the same opportunity for every child to experience the benefits of developing early bilingual skills.

### 5.2 The Welsh medium nursery education available to parents

- 5.2.1 It appears that the Welsh nursery provision is not easy for all parents to use, especially in some Flying Start areas in Cardiff. In this respect, another issue is raised regarding equal access to Welsh opportunities. If the provision is not accessible, parents under social /economic pressure are going to find it difficult if not impossible to have the same access as other parents.
- 5.2.2 At the moment, Flying Start children are sponsored in some of the cychloedd meithrin in this study. 9 children receive sponsorship in Pili Pala but the cylch is outside the Flying Start area and therefore, not all parents are able to attend the cylch as they wish. There

was a positive response in Ely where 24 children are sponsored and this is due, to an extent it would appear, to the charismatic and local leader and the Cylch being accessible to parents. In the Grangetown a'r Bae Cylch, 4 children are sponsored although this cylch is also outside the Flying Start area.

- 5.2.3 At the time of conducting our interviews, there was no Welsh medium nursery provision available for Adamstown Flying Start area. There appears to be a discussion between Flying Start and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to attempt to ensure places for Adamstown children in Cylch Meithrin Gwaun Sblot. 4 children had been awaiting a place but it is now too late for them. The matter of ensuring equal access to Welsh medium nursery opportunities is essential and it may be necessary to work across agency boundaries and consider options 'outside the box' in order to find creative solutions.
- 5.2.4 A number of sessions for parents and young children are held under the Flying Start programme. There are group sessions such as *Language and Play* for babies, *Baby Massage*, *Baby Rhyme Time*, and parenting programmes. In addition, sessions are held in the home, including advice and support with the early language development of the baby. Sessions of this kind all lend themselves perfectly to introducing a little Welsh here and there so that parents get some taste of the language.
- 5.2.5 Recently, Flying Start and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin have produced a bilingual leaflet to market the Cylchoedd Meithrin. These leaflets are included in the pack all parents receive when registering for the Flying Start Programme. Since November 2009, staff at Flying Start child care providers have the opportunity to learn Welsh. At the time of interview, ten members of staff were receiving Welsh language training. This development is obviously very promising for the future in order to be able to offer young children and their parents a taste of Welsh within the Flying Start provision.

### 5.3 Play and socialising opportunities for the young children of non-Welsh speaking parents

- 5.3.1 It was apparent from parents' comments, that there is a far greater demand for playing and socialising opportunities through the medium of Welsh than the provision available. This is stated clearly by Cardiff Council's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in its report *Leisure and Play Provision through the Medium of Welsh* (November 2009). It is also apparent that pressing to target an investment to meet the demand for provision is a priority for the *20% Forum* which has plans to invest in particular in Welsh medium after school and holiday care.
- 5.3.2 Some provision is available from the local Menter Iaith although the Menter places much more emphasis on the primary/secondary age group as they have 2.5 posts to enable them to run care schemes for older children and young people during the holidays; activity clubs, etc. The targets set for the Menter by the Welsh Language Board do not include the nursery age. Therefore, they don't have a member of staff with specific responsibility for this age as the Board nor Cardiff City Council has the budget for this. However, some provision is available for families with young children, which are:
- **Miri Meithrin** – these sessions are held weekly during some school holidays (but not during the summer holidays) in the east of the city in Pentwyn in an attempt to attract non-

Welsh speaking parents. These are opportunities for parents and young children to get together to use Welsh and have, for example,

- soft play,
- art and craft, and
- meet with *Cyw* characters

Ideally, it would be a good idea to hold these events more often but funding does not allow this. The Menter depends on the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin groups to distribute the promotional leaflets to parents.

- **Family Weekends at Llangrannog** – The Menter also arranges family weekends suitable for parents who are Welsh learners. These are marketed at the beginning of September each year through all Welsh schools and the city's *cylch meithrin*; the *Dinesydd*, and through the Menter's data base.
- **Welsh for Parents** – A short 10 week course tailored especially for parents of nursery or primary aged children. The course also includes wider information about Welsh as part of the sessions, e.g. some language history; the contemporary context; the significance of the language, etc. Parents pay £6 per session for the 10 week course. It would appear that these courses are suitable for parents who just want a quick and less formal introduction. Amongst the 15 or so parents taking part in the 10 week course, there will always be 2 or 3 who will go on to follow the 30 week accredited course for families provided by the local Language Centre.

5.3.3 The message we got from speaking to some providers was that there was room for the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, ideally, to take the lead role in organising and coordinating Welsh medium social experiences for families with young children. At the moment, the Mudiad's provision is limited to the *Cylchoedd Meithrin* and the *Ti a Fi* groups, with those groups meeting only during term time. Some felt that consideration should be given to expanding the Mudiad's responsibilities beyond the focus they currently have to include the aspects of providing support and social opportunities for the family. There was a need to fund an officer with specific responsibility for developing social opportunities / support networks for families with young children and that the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin would be the most appropriate agency to take on this role.

5.3.4 Therefore, in respect of developing a continuum of support and social opportunities for children and their families according to their age, it would seem appropriate for the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to take the lead role with the nursery age group, and for the Menter Iaith and the Urdd to take the lead as the children get older. The Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin could reach the parents early on, introduce them to Welsh networks, ensure they are part of the Menter data base etc. This would involve taking steps to introduce them to the 'world of Welsh' early and effectively. The unique challenge of supporting families who are keen to approach Welsh in Cardiff requires creative strategies that break the mould. Ideally, there is also a place for Twf to be part of the support consortium. If the scheme could be extended to Cardiff, it would be easier for parents to receive the information about the benefits of Welsh and bilingualism at the same time as parents in other parts of Wales. Due to the high annual number of births in Cardiff and the increase in the language's use and profile in the capital, it could be argued that there are strong reasons in favour of this.

#### 5.4 How should schools be supporting non-Welsh speaking parents?

- 5.4.1 The support available to parents from the Welsh medium schools seems to vary considerably from one school to another with some schools better than others at engaging and collaborating with parents. "*Some are up for it and some aren't,*" according to one of the providers interviewed.
- 5.4.2 We heard that some schools tended not to pay enough attention to the wider matter of how parents can expand their child's experience of Welsh through social networks, such as the Urdd and the Menter Iaith activities. But it was also emphasised that supporting parents was very different to educating children and it must not be taken for granted that all teachers would know how to approach it. "*Engaging adults calls for different skills,*" said one person. And there could be room for In Service Training in Welsh medium schools on how to support and engage with non-Welsh speaking parents in their child's educational process and experience through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.4.3 Following a discussion with one Head teacher at a Welsh medium school, many examples of good practise were highlighted and among them:
- Sending homework home bilingually, with guidance for parents.
  - Provide parents with information about the Welsh Language Board's helpline.
  - Explain and promote the value of converting from one language to another. When the young child translates the problem from Welsh to English in order to ask the parent for help, this helps the child think clearer and begin to solve the problem themselves. Moving from one language to another and thinking in both languages helps to children to think clearly and get a better understanding of the work in hand.
  - Work with the local Welsh for Adults Centre to provide Welsh language lessons for parents in school at a convenient time for parents (e.g. mornings after dropping their children off at school).
  - Give nursery parents a booklet containing information about the Foundation Phase; how to help with reading; information about local Welsh shops; DVD's and other helpful resources, as well as vocabulary and pronunciation guidelines.
  - Hold an After School Club – this runs until 5.30 and gives the children social experiences and an opportunity to use Welsh in a somewhat different context to the school.

#### 5.5 How to reach parents?

- 5.5.1 One of the main difficulties is reaching non-Welsh speaking families. There may be a need to rethink how to contact parents who are not familiar with being part of Welsh language events. For parents who can be lacking confidence or are a little reluctant regarding the language, establishing a relationship between the parent and worker on a community level could be a way around this (i.e. through the *Ti a Fi Cylch* and the *Cylch Meithrin*) rather than expecting the parents to have the incentive to do it all by themselves. This suggests that a joint structure should be put in place between the MYM and other possible agencies in some areas, to make it easier to get close to parents on a local level through a 'meet and greet' process; establishing a relationship; defining needs, and plan and provide support.

- 5.5.2 The Menter has a system in operation where they meet with parents in September in the Welsh schools. They see this as being important in order to inform the non-Welsh speaking parents (as many as 80% on average) about all the opportunities available for them as a family to have social contact with the Welsh language. In addition, the Menter has been actively taking part in parents' evenings during the first 3 months of this year – meeting parents; sharing information and gathering more names for their data base. As a result, family names on the data base have increased by 500 – 600 over the past few months.
- 5.5.3 Regarding parents of nursery aged children, it was felt that the same type of arrangement is needed with the city's cylch meithrin. This would be an opportunity for the Menter – or the Mudiad staff if a new, innovative post could be created to engage and support non-Welsh speaking parents to meet with parents in a specific meeting / event. If parents with nursery aged children could be reached, the message could be conveyed as soon as possible regarding the importance of using Welsh medium social networks to ensure that the child's Welsh medium education is not an isolated experience between 9.00 – 3.00 without additional support or structures. In our discussions with parents, the same requirement was expressed by some, i.e. an open day with information, not only about the cylch but also about all the other opportunities and support available to them as non-Welsh speaking parents.
- 5.5.4 Some, it seems, were in favour of a formal opportunity to meet parents right at the beginning of their involvement with the Cylch. A Formal Registration day was suggested and/or an open day at the Cylch Meithrin, inviting stands from, for example, S4C; the local Welsh school; library; publishers of Welsh books and DVD's; the local Welsh for Adults Centre, Flying Start, Menter Iaith Caerdydd, the Urdd etc. This could be an opportunity to present information not only about the cylch but about the continuation of Welsh medium education locally, and the resources and opportunities available to help families.

## 5.6 Including Welsh in mainstream parenting and childcare

- 5.6.1 As we have already seen, there is a strong argument for including Welsh in mainstream parenting and child care and, from our interviews with providers, it becomes apparent that there are a number of opportunities to do so by investing in staff training and cooperating with other agencies.
- 5.6.2 The *Language and Play* representative acknowledged the potential to introduce *Language and Play* and *Numeracy and Play* sessions bilingually as part of their mainstream provision so the parent and child could start to hear some Welsh and that this would lead to the opportunity for them to learn more if they wish to do so. At the moment, *Language and Play* have one part time member of staff who can speak Welsh in a team of six. *Language and Play* have produced a booklet *Learn Welsh with Me* to start introducing Welsh to the parent from the child's perspective and alongside their child.
- 5.6.3 We assume that the *Learn Welsh with Me* booklet would be a valuable resource to use in Ti a Fi groups. There is, indeed, a valuable potential for *Language and Play* to work with Ti a Fi groups. It would create opportunities to introduce Welsh to parents through activities that promote language development and enrich the relationship between the parent and the toddler. These sessions would, in turn, give the Ti a Fi leader the chance to work

alongside Language and Play and develop ideas and expand on the range of skills and embed various approaches and habits.

- 5.6.4 We heard from our interviews, that the leader in a Ti a Fi group is often so preoccupied with the *arrangements* (e.g. preparing tea and coffee) that they can't advise parents on *how* to introduce the Welsh language, which is one of their key functions. "*Sometimes, it's a matter of organisation at the expense of facilitation*" we were told. Often, according to one interviewee, there will be a singing session in Welsh but no opportunity for a story in Welsh, which suggests the need to ensure Ti a Fi sessions are structured to give language and play appropriate attention. From our interviews with parents, the need for Ti a Fi leaders to facilitate the communication between Welsh speaking and non-Welsh speaking parents also became apparent. Again, there are valuable opportunities to draw on the experiences of Welsh parents to introduce some Welsh to other parents; establish friendships / language mentors to help each other and start establishing the habit of using Welsh in a friendly and homely environment.
- 5.6.5 The same possibilities arise for *Language and Play* staff to work with Cylchoedd Meithrin staff to develop guidelines / activities for the parent in order to try and bridge the gap between the language of the home and the *cylch*. "*This is the perfect opportunity to share our learning through play messages and how to encourage non-Welsh speakers into the Welsh-speaking world,*" said the *Language and Play* coordinator.

## 5.7 The role of the Health Visitor

- 5.7.1 It was suggested that the role of the health visitor be reconsidered in relation to offering advice to parents about the Welsh language, bilingualism and the educational provision in Cardiff. Some doubted to what extent health visitors share any information at all about Welsh, bilingualism, etc. with parents. Reference was made to this reaction by a representative from the health visitors' section as an example of the current situation— "*It's not the role of the health visitor to influence parents' choice. Our role is to signpost if we're asked.*" This suggests a very different approach to that promoted through the *Twf* scheme in other parts of Wales, for example, where health visitors work closely with *Twf* field officers to advise parents on the advantages of introducing Welsh to young children.
- 5.7.2 One health visitor had previous experience of working with *Twf* in the past. "*I think that we have a role to play in promoting bilingualism,*" she said. "*At 18 months we do a home visit and discuss nursery school, for example. A few parents ask me, should we consider Welsh-medium. I feel confident to say yes because it enhances brain development whichever languages you offer.*"
- 5.7.3 She referred to the fact that *Twf* packs were available in her area at one time but are no longer available. She said that those resources had been a great help "if a parent is interested in any subject, then they are going to be keen to get as much information as possible". She said that there was nothing in her health visitor training course to prepare her for some of the questions that can arise. The most difficult questions, she said, are similar to these ... "*What about Welsh medium education if my child has language learning difficulties or general learning difficulties?*" She said that she had no idea how to respond and always advised the parents to contact the school. Due to a lack of central strategy regarding this question in Cardiff at the moment, health visitors apparently depend greatly

on their individual approaches, experiences and views when advising parents, rather than a general source of information which would be available if *Twf* operated locally.

- 5.7.4 The health visitors interviewed said they would welcome more information along the lines of what *Twf* has to offer. These questions haven't had a lot of profile so far, they say. The city's health visitors often meet in professional forums as part of their continuous professional development and it is encouraging to note that a *Twf* representative will be addressing them in the next period in order to flag up important issues.

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## 6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 In this research, we saw a very strong desire among the non-Welsh speaking parents interviewed, to provide their young children with Welsh. The Welsh Language Act 1993 has been responsible for increasing the status of the language in the public sector in particular, and since establishing the Welsh Assembly Government, there has been a more coordinated approach towards the provision of bilingual education and social services. As a result, the Welsh language has gained a higher profile and has been increasingly used in Cardiff. The parents in this study were well aware of this and the social, economic and cognitive advantages Welsh brings their children.
- 6.1.2 It was apparent that Welsh is starting to become increasingly embedded in the Early Years, parenting and child care agenda, forming policy at both a national and county level in Cardiff. However, even though the policy and research documents acknowledge the need to provide provision in Welsh, it is apparent that there is still a long way to go to ensure that the provision meets the needs of parents and children. In mainstream Early Years provision, there is a tendency to see Welsh as an additional option for those who chose to use it, and that the demand for Welsh must be measured and proven before any provision is made. Welsh is not considered as being of additional social / economic value and therefore a resource that everyone in Wales should be able to access. Contrary to this tendency, the parents in this research were fully aware of the additional value of Welsh and felt that access to an Early Years Welsh medium education provision was a matter of justice.
- 6.1.3 Even though the parents were all united in favour of introducing and supporting their children's process of acquiring Welsh, they all faced a number of obstacles that deterred them from getting as close to Welsh as they would like. There was a clear demand among this small sample of parents for more support and for a more inclusive attitude towards non-Welsh speakers.
- 6.1.4 It became apparent that *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin* has a central function to act as a catalyst in response to these needs by:
- strengthening the practical support for parents through the *Cylchoedd Ti a Fi* and *Meithrin*;
  - jointly coordinating the effort with other agencies and providers in the Early Years field;
  - harnessing the existing potential through mainstreaming, abolishing poverty, parenting, education and child care policies and so on;
  - attempting to ensure close and careful cooperation between the agencies and Early Years providers and aiming to create a network of support that can be more extensive and stronger than any other partner could achieve individually.
- 6.1.5 The aim, therefore, would be to:
- i) strengthen the support for non-Welsh speaking parents in the Welsh medium sector through the *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin*, Welsh medium schools, the local *Menter Iaith* (language initiative) and the *Urdd*, as well as

- ii) normalising the use of Welsh in the mainstream (with Flying Start, Language and Play, nurseries, schools, health visitors, the County Council, libraries, leisure centres etc)

so that Welsh is increasingly reaching places it has not previously reached and so that it offers opportunities to children from diverse backgrounds.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### Recommendations for *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin*

- 6.2.1 Funding for a new post at *MYM* in Cardiff to support non-Welsh speaking parents through identifying their needs early, coordinating appropriate support and developing the skills foundation in *Cylchoedd Ti a Fi / Meithrin* in order for staff to work closely with those parents and create a supportive, welcoming ethos.
- 6.2.2 To create a training and development strategy to strengthen systems, partnerships and resources so that *Cylchoedd Ti a Fi* are able to increase their capacity to support non-Welsh speaking parents (by increasing the opportunities for them to hear and experiment with the use of Welsh in the *Cylch* and offer strategies that enable them to start embedding the use of Welsh outside the *Cylch*).
- 6.2.3 Continue the supportive contact with parents who use *Cylchoedd Meithrin* through paring schemes, information bulletins on resources, Welsh learners' sessions, social opportunities, etc, (see examples 3.7.7 and 3.7.10)
- 6.2.4 To hold induction events to offer information that is as comprehensive as possible and paths to further support for parents on the threshold of their first encounter with *MYM*.
- 6.2.5 To promote and market what the *MYM* have on offer in an inclusive manner.
- 6.2.6 Set up a coordinating and action group to link all providers in the Flying Start fields in order to create an operational plan over the next 2 -3 years that will increase Welsh and bilingual experience for a parent and child who are part of the mainstream activities.
- 6.2.7 To ensure equal access to the *Cylch Meithrin* for children in Flying Start areas across the city, (see 5.2.3).
- 6.2.8 To ensure firm contact links and a constructive relationship between the *Cylch Meithrin* and the local Welsh school in each case.
- 6.2.9 To cooperate with organisations / other associated schemes (*Twf*, for example) to develop a comprehensive source of information for parents as suggested in 4.5.4.1 above.

### Recommendations for the Education Sector

- 6.2.10 Continue to strengthen the Welsh language education system in the city together with increasing the Welsh language mainstream provision over the next period.

- 6.2.11 Broaden the good practice seen in the relationship between Welsh medium schools and their non-Welsh speaking parents by using the strategies stated in 5.4.3 and through In Service Training to equip staff with the appropriate strategies.

**Recommendations for policy makers**

- 6.2.12 Place pressure on the city's Leisure Centres to create practical operational plans in order to broaden their Welsh medium provision, as part of the local authority's Welsh Language Scheme.
- 6.2.13 Hold discussions with the Welsh Language Board to consider expanding the *Twf* scheme to Cardiff city in order to ensure equal access to information and support.

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## Appendix 1

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### MYM research on the Welsh language: some discussion points with parents

Beth fydden ni'n licio i'n plant yw ...

What we'd like for our children is ...

Y pethe sy'n ei gwneud hi'n anodd i ni roi Cymraeg i'n plant yw ...

The things which make it difficult for us to give our children Welsh ...

Y pethe sy'n ein helpu ni roi'r Gymraeg i'n plant yw ...

The things which help us give our children Welsh ...

Ry'n ni'n poeni am ...

We worry about ...

Y math o gefnogaeth sydd ei hangen arnon ni yw ...

The kind of support we need is ...

3 neges bwysig!

Dyma beth sydd ei angen arnon ni yng Nghaerdydd ...

3 important messages!

This is what we need in Cardiff ...

## Appendix 2

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### MYM research on the Welsh language: some points for discussion with providers

- 1) What type of activities do you organise for families with young children in Cardiff?
  
- 2) When assessing these, to what extent do they offer **non-Welsh speaking** families help and support to get close to Welsh and introduce their children to Welsh medium nursery / primary education?
  
- 3) Where are the gaps?
  
- 4) What are the challenges / obstacles that you face in trying to extend and develop the work with these families?
  
- 5) What are your plans for the next stage regarding e.g.
  - a) supporting parents of nursery and younger children
  - b) supporting parents of primary aged children
  
- 2) What are the possibilities regarding developing very local partnerships, e.g. in Flying Start / Communities First areas to experiment with new provision / support models for non-Welsh speaking parents?
  
- 3) What are the other issues that need to be considered?
  
- 4) Summarising core messages for the research report – 3 or 4 aspects that need to be tackled, whether they are on policy level or local work by partners, for example.

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