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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Consultation Document

Talk with me

Talk with me: Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Delivery
Plan 2020-21

Date of issue: 30 January 2020
Action required: Responses by 23 April 2020

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview	This document covers the Welsh Government's national drive to promote SLC development, primarily in the early years, but does have relevance for the age range 0-25 years as covered in the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act.
How to respond	Please complete the questionnaire at the back of the document and return to FlyingStart2@gov.wales Attend the events held.
Action required:	This consultation document sets out proposed arrangements to further promote and support SLC development throughout Wales and the Welsh Government invites comments on the proposals.
Further information and related documents	Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.
Related document:	Flying Start Guidance on Speech, Language and Communication
Contact details	If you have further queries about this document, please contact: Children and Families Division, Communities and Tackling Poverty Directorate, Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 03000 253344 E-mail: FlyingStart2@gov.wales

Audience: All professionals working across the children's sector with a focus on speech. Language and communication including:

- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists,
- Flying Start Clinical Excellence Network,
- Wales Early Language Pathway Task and Finish Group,
- DLD Task and Finish Group,
- Multilingualism Clinical Excellence Group,
- WSLTAF,
- Midwifery,
- All Wales Health Visitors Forum,
- School Health Nurses, Public Health Wales,
- Psychology / Infant Mental Health Leads,
- Flying Start Leads – Health Leads / Education Leads,
- Families First Leads – Health Leads / Education Leads,
- Foundation Phase Professionals from Local Authorities and Regional Education Consortia,
- ALN Transformation Lead,
- Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer,
- ACES Hub, Third Sector – Children in Wales,
- Barnardos,
- Save the Children,
- Bookstart,
- Mudiad Meithrin,
- Social Care Wales,
- Cwlwm,
- PACEY,
- National Day Nurseries Association,
- Early Years Wales,
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Wales,
- The Early Years Transformation Pathfinders,
- Care Inspectorate Wales,
- Estyn,
- Pupil Development Grant (PDG) Advisers,
- Regional Education Consortia – ERW,
- GWE,
- Central South Consortia and
- EAS (Educational Psychology / Advisory Service / Healthy Schools).

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ

e-mail:

Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

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Overview - *Talk with me*

Speech, Language and Communication (SLC): Delivery Plan 2020-2021

The Welsh Government aims to raise awareness of the importance of SLC and ensure that interventions are delivered universally at the point of need.

More than 10% of children and young people have long-term SLC needs which create barriers to communication or learning in everyday life¹.

Research shows that children living in poverty suffer disproportionately from delayed language². By this we mean, those children whose language skills are developing significantly more slowly than those of other children of the same age but who do not have a specific disorder. Language skills are a critical factor in the intergenerational cycles that can perpetuate poverty, as poor communication skills are passed down from parent to child³.

Key facts

- Over **50%** of children in socially deprived areas may start school with impoverished speech, language and communication skills⁴.
- **One in four children** who struggled with language at age five did not reach the expected standard in English at the end of primary school, compared with one in 25 children who had good language skills at age five⁵.
- Researchers have found that, after controlling for a range of other factors that might have played a part (mother's educational level, overcrowding, low birth weight, parent a poor reader, etc.), **children who had normal non-verbal skills but a poor vocabulary at age 5 were, at age 34, one and a half times more likely to be poor readers or have mental health problems and more than twice as likely to be unemployed as children who had normally developing language at age 5**⁶.
- **Vocabulary at age 5 is found to be the best predictor (from a range of measures at age 5 and 10) of whether children who experienced social deprivation in childhood were able to 'buck the trend' and escape poverty in later adult life**⁷.

¹ ICAN, 2006

² Law, 2013

³ [Hart and Risley, 2003](#)

⁴ [Locke et al, 2002](#)

⁵ [Save the Children, 2016](#)

⁶ [Law, 2010](#)

⁷ [Blanden, 2006](#)

The way forward in Wales

The Welsh Government continues to work constructively with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) in Wales to raise the profile of SLC in the early years and put in place measures to remove the barriers which prevent younger children from progressing with early language acquisition.

The RCSLT has told us that we need to take a fresh look at the way in which SLC support is offered and delivered across Wales to ensure that services are equitable and reach all children who may need help.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of a child's development in the early years. This includes acquisition of speech and language skills and oracy which underpin their ability to learn to read and write and to problem-solve. This development is strongly associated with a child's success in school and entry into the workforce⁸.

Any child, irrespective of where they live or their family circumstances, might require additional support to address delays or difficulties with SLC. Our aim is to ensure that children throughout Wales have access to high quality, universal, targeted and specialist support in the early years – if required – to develop their SLC skills.

To progress this, we are exploring how we could take the learning from the speech and language therapy services within Flying Start and generic provision and embed this good practice more widely.

This draft delivery plan aims to drive improvement in the way in which children in Wales are supported to develop their SLC skills. It has been developed in consultation with the RCSLT and the Flying Start SLC Clinical Excellence Network which has helped us identify the actions we need to take over the coming years.

Ministers and officials have worked collaboratively on the draft plan to ensure that we take a cross-sectoral approach (to include education, health and 'social' policy) that engages families, and builds upon existing policies and what works.

It is recognised through commissioned research⁹ that Wales does not need to invent a new model for delivery. Instead, there needs to be a more strategic approach to make the current activities work across all settings in Wales.

The necessary programme governance will be put in place to ensure that all partners discharge their responsibilities in delivering the commitments in this draft plan. Regular progress updates will be provided to all Ministers to ensure this important work remains firmly in the spotlight.

⁸ EIF.ORG.UK

⁹ [Study to map the current educational provision of speech, language and communication support in Wales, for learners aged 0-25](#)

The draft delivery plan is organised into 4 key objectives:

Objective 1: Raise Public Awareness – describes how we will reach parents¹⁰ with our key messages about the importance of talking, engaging and playing with babies and young children.

Objective 2: Improve the assessment of SLC in children (Early Years) – describes how we will standardise the assessment process, identify SLC issues early and ensure a timely intervention is put in place.

Objective 3: Upskill the childcare workforce and relevant health professionals in Wales to address SLC needs – describes how the childcare workforce will be highly trained and equipped with the skills to support interventions for children and families where there are identified needs in the development of SLC.

Objective 4: Embed SLC in Welsh Government policies – describes how we will review our policies and strategies to ensure they highlight the importance of SLC in the early years and beyond.

Consultation aims

We invite all those whose work and responsibilities have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on SLC development to contribute to the conversation and identify any further actions we may need to take to further raise the profile of SLC. We will need all parts of the system (education, health, social 'policy' etc.) to work well together to help us succeed.

Our ambition is to do more to support children with SLC needs and to build upon what we know works so that every child gets the best start in life.

This draft delivery plan will focus on potential actions and/or commitments required of all key partners to ensure children and young people with SLC needs receive appropriate support in order to fulfil their potential.

The purpose of this draft delivery plan is to inform conversations with key stakeholders; to tease out what works to support children with SLC needs; and identify what other action we might consider taking in the future.

¹⁰ The collective term parents is used throughout the document however, this includes foster carers and adoptive parents/guardians.

Objective 1: Raise Public Awareness

Outcome 1: Parents will be better informed and equipped to understand the importance of Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) in their child's early years

Key Action	Activity	Timeline	Lead for Delivery
1. To promote key messages to parents about the importance of talking, engaging and playing with children in the early years to develop language acquisition.	1.1 The Welsh Government will undertake a national publicity campaign.	From April 2020	Welsh Government – Children and Families Division
	1.2 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is developing and delivering a digitised version of the agreed national SLC key messages. National roll out across Wales will follow a trial period.	Ongoing from April 2020	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
	1.3 The BBC delivering its flagship programme <i>Tiny Happy People</i> over a 5 year period. Bridgend County Borough Council has been involved in piloting resources in the second phase for children 0-12 months of age.	Official launch February 2020	BBC
	1.4 The Welsh Government's Parenting Give it Time (PGiT) campaign will include SLC with its overall communications approach and help disseminate key messages.	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Children and Families Division
	1.5 The Healthy Child Wales Programme (HCWP) has a specific focus on SLC at the 15 month health visitor family health review. As part of the proposed expansion of the HCWP, opportunities to incorporate SLC will be considered.	Ongoing (since 2016)	Welsh Government – Health

	1.6 Continued delivery of the <i>Time to Talk, Play and Listen</i> campaign which encourages parents, carers and guardians to take time to talk, play and listen to their children to help their language development and communication skills (targeted at 3-7 year olds).	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Education
	1.7 Public Health Wales is currently producing a suite of parental information resources with a view to replacing <i>Bump, Baby and Beyond</i> . We will seek to ensure that SLC awareness will be part of the new resources.	From April 2020	Public Health Wales and Welsh Government – Health
	1.8 Whilst <i>Cymraeg for Kids</i> messages regarding Welsh language development are shared with parents and prospective parents through a number of methods, we recognise that there is an opportunity to develop these messages and tailor them to the needs of different audiences. We will consider how these messages can be strengthened over the coming year so that families understand their role in developing their child’s Welsh language skills, as well as the support available to them.	By the end of the financial year 2020-21 (March 2021)	Welsh Government – Welsh Language

Objective 2: Improve the assessment of SLC in children (Early Years)

Outcome 2: We will identify early signs of SLC needs and ensure that we deliver appropriate interventions universally at the point of need.

Key Action	Activity	Timeline	Lead for Delivery
2. To ensure that assessments of children's SLC development are undertaken at the right time, using the most effective screening tools and any necessary interventions are put in place without delay.	2.1 The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Flying Start Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) working with the Welsh Government, will review WellComm – the early language screening tool currently used in the Flying Start programme.	From April 2020	The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Flying Start Clinical Excellence Network
	2.2 To ensure there is consistency in the assessment of children's SLC needs, following the review of WellComm, any decision to either continue with WellComm or introduce a new screening tool will be consulted on with the aim of developing a consistent approach throughout Wales.	Following WellComm review at 2.1	Welsh Government – Children and Families Division
	2.3 The CEN, working with Cardiff Met and Bangor University, will undertake work to ensure a bilingual version of the approved screening tool is available throughout Wales.	Following WellComm review at 2.1	Welsh Government – Early Years & Welsh Language
	2.4 An assessment of Care Inspectorate Wales level of training needs in respect of children's early language development will be undertaken to help inspectors gain a better understanding and appreciation of children's early language development	Assessment October 2019 and Training from March 2020	Care Inspectorate Wales The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

	<p>Following the assessment it has been agreed that, where appropriate, inspectors will receive introductory training in children's early language development provided by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.</p>		
	<p>2.5 The Early Years (EY) Pathfinders will develop a more integrated and joined-up approach for practitioners working with young children and families. This will ensure that identification of children's development needs, including SLC needs, will be identified early on through improved early intervention and access to services.</p>	<p>By March 2021</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Children and Families Division</p>

Objective 3: Upskill the childcare workforce and relevant health professionals to address SLC needs

Outcome 3: The childcare workforce and relevant health professionals in Wales will be highly trained and equipped with the skills to support interventions for children and families where there are identified needs in the development of SLC.

Key Action	Activity	Timeline	Lead for Delivery
<p>3. To ensure the childcare workforce and relevant health professionals in Wales are highly trained and motivated so that SLC support is provided to children at the right time and that interventions are monitored to ensure they are making a positive difference to the child's development.</p>	<p>3.1 The Welsh Government's Education Directorate is working with the South East Wales consortium (SEWC) to develop and pilot an SLC training pathway for staff in the childcare workforce, aligned with descriptors from the ALN Act. The pathway has been designed to align with the ALN transformation programme and the SLC Framework. The pathway is intended as a tool that childcare practitioners can use to determine their own training needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Education</p>
	<p>3.2 In December 2017, the Welsh Government published its 10 year <i>Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan</i>. A key action of the plan is to build capacity and capability across the sector and the importance of SLC is recognised as one of those core elements within the EYs Sector. We have been working with Social Care Wales, HEIW and the wider sector to develop a level 4 professional practice qualification in Speech, Language and Communication as part of the suite of new Children's Care Play Learning and Development (CCPLD) qualifications. This is planned to be available from September 2020.</p>	<p>From September 2020</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Childcare, Play and the Early Years</p>

	<p>3.3 Allied health professionals (AHPs) work with children, young people and their families to help them protect and improve their health and well-being. Including speech and language communication skill. This will be delivered as part of the new AHP Framework implementation programme.</p>	<p>From November 2019</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Health</p>
	<p>3.4 An online training package is being developed for the SLC workforce to help them to be ACE aware and provide advice on working with people whose lives have been affected by ACEs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Welsh Government - Children and Families Division</p>
	<p>3.5 It is recognised specific skills are required for practitioners in Welsh-medium settings employing Welsh language immersion techniques. Training for practitioners working in Cylchoedd Meithrin to develop Welsh language immersion methodologies has been rolled out across Wales in 2019-20. Building on this, we will ensure workforce development is a key component of any further steps undertaken to strengthen Welsh-language immersion provision.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Welsh Language</p>
	<p>3.6 Ensuring the sharing of best practice for speech and language therapists and early language development practitioners.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists & Flying Start Clinical Excellence Network</p>

Objective 4: Embed SLC in Welsh Government policies

Outcome 4: The Welsh Government will ensure that relevant policies and strategies reflect the importance of SLC from the early years and beyond. All future policy initiatives will encompass an aim to support citizens in Wales to address adverse issues around SLC, where they are identified.

Key Action	Activity	Timeline	Lead for Delivery
<p>4. As standard practice, the Welsh Government's policies and strategies will be subject to regular review to ensure, as far as possible, they highlight the importance of SLC in the early years and beyond.</p>	<p>4.1 The Welsh Government is developing an integrated approach to early childhood education and care (ECEC) which will be based on key principles of child development. The aim of the single system is to ensure a consistency and coherency for children, providers and parents.</p> <p>This work is cross cutting covering provision and workforce and related to actions listed in this document such as supporting practitioners to support children with SLC needs and extending quality principles across all settings.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Welsh Government – Childcare, Play and the Early Years</p>
	<p>4.2 Supporting the development of SLC is essential to realise the four purposes of the new curriculum. Descriptions of learning for early oracy development, including the systematic development of phonological awareness, have been developed as part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience. The refined</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Welsh Government - Education</p>

	<p>Literacy Framework will provide further detail regarding listening and speaking. Overarching guidance will support settings and schools to develop their curricula and will include information on Accessibility and Additional Learning Needs (ALN).</p> <p>To ensure the new curriculum supports the development of SLC and reflects evidence in this area we will consider the needs of younger children who might have early speech and language delay in the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements before Progression Step 1 in the new curriculum; • new curriculum guidance for funded non-maintained settings; and • materials for education practitioners on child development to support the implementation of the new curriculum. 		
	<p>4.3 As part of the <i>Pupil Development Grant (PDG)</i> terms and conditions (under EY 2. Strategic Targets/Outcomes):</p> <p>Ensure that Foundation Phase providers address priorities for the EYPDG when planning and setting targets for early speech and language development</p>	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Education
	<p>4.4 <i>Working Wales</i> provides employability advice and guidance services to individuals in Wales. The service, which is delivered by Careers Wales and was launched in May</p>	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Employability and Skills

	<p>2019, provides one access point to further appropriate employability support, with qualified careers advisors ensuring that individuals are directed to the right place at the right time depending on their needs.</p> <p>Advisers will use an advice and guidance-led enhanced needs assessment of the individual's circumstances and barriers preventing them from progressing to employment, education or training, to enable them to refer the individual to the right support,</p> <p>The <i>Working Wales</i> service holds a wealth of information and links closely with other advisory services that will provide an all-Wales entry point to employability support.</p>		
	<p>4.5 The current suite of employability programmes, Traineeships, ReAct, Jobs Growth Wales, Access and the Employability Skills Programme, is intended to be replaced by one programme, <i>Job Support Wales</i> in April 2020. <i>Job Support Wales</i> will support people into employment. It will be responsive to individuals' needs to ensure they receive the right support to enter employment.</p> <p>As part of this support, help will be provided to help overcome barriers to participation including essential skills and additional learning needs.</p>	From April 2020	Welsh Government – Employability and Skills

	<p>4.6 <i>Offender Learning</i>: The Welsh Government funds the education and learning provision and prison libraries in Welsh public sector prisons through a joint <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i> with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS are responsible for commissioning all education and learning delivery in Welsh public sector prisons to achieve sustainable employment prospects. The funding supports training in essential skills; WEST is currently operational in HMP Cardiff and HMP Swansea and will be rolled out as an assessment and development tool to all prisons in Wales by the end of 2020. The Welsh Government will be engaging with HMPPS in developing a new curriculum for prisons by summer 2020, as part of the curriculum development consideration will be given to supporting prisoners with speech, language and communication needs. The funds also provide library services in prisons providing resources for offenders to access to further enhance their speech, language and communication skills.</p>	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Employability and Skills
	<p>4.7 On the 21 May, the Welsh Government published the Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints, which were developed jointly with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and Youth Justice Board Cymru; to help identify the additional support</p>	Ongoing	Welsh Government – Crime and Justice

	<p>required for the delivery of appropriate justice services in Wales.</p> <p>The Blueprints are predicated on the basis of early intervention and prevention; considering how we can further divert people away from crime in the first place, but when people do offend, they are supported in a holistic and rehabilitative way.</p> <p>The Blueprints aim:</p> <p>To divert women, where appropriate, away from crime and into women-centred, community-based, sustainable support services. Options for trauma-informed services to be explored.</p> <p>To align preventative services offered to children with a joint framework model and shared risk or intervention trigger factors to improve outcomes for children.</p> <p>Develop effective monitoring of prevention activity to demonstrate impact and to align reporting to Welsh Government, Youth Justice Board and Police and Crime Commissioner.</p>		
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**Consultation
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

Please enter here:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Title: Talk with me

Speech, Language and Communication (SLC): Delivery Plan 2020-2021

Consultation:

Question 1(a): Do you think our suggested actions to promote key SLC messages to parents will help them to understand their role in nurturing their child's early language development?

Yes	No	Don't know

Additional comments:

Question 1(b): What more could we do to enable parents to engage with the key SLC messages?

Free text:

Question 2(a): Do you think that a publicity campaign aimed at all parents could result in an increased demand for SLC services due to increased awareness (such as speech and language therapy)?

Yes	No	Don't know

Question 2(b): If the publicity campaign does increase the demand for SLC services, what could be done to manage this?

Free text:

Question 3(a): Do you think our suggested approach to improving the assessment of SLC in the early years will help facilitate better SLC outcomes for children and young people?

Yes	No	Don't know

Additional comments:

Question 3(b): Is there anything missing from our suggested approach to improving the assessment of SLC in the early years that we need to include?

Free text:

Question 3(c): Do you feel the Wellcomm screening tool is as effective as it could be?

Yes	No	Don't know

If not how could it be improved?

Additional comments:

Question 3(d): Other than the WellComm screening tool, what other tools would you recommend?

Free text:

Question 4(a): Do you think our actions to upskill the workforce to address SLC needs will result in better identification of SLC issues?

Yes	No	Don't know

Additional comments:

Question 4(b): Do you think our actions to upskill the workforce to address SLC needs will result in more timely interventions being put in place?

Yes	No	Don't know

Additional comments:

Question 4(c): Is anything missing from our plans to upskill the workforce to address SLC needs?

Free text:

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Question 5(a): Do you think we will be able to affect change and drive improvements in SLC in the early years through better policy making? If No*, please explain.

Yes	No	Don't know

Free text:

Question 5(b): Other than the ones specified, are there any other policy areas we should include in our plan?

Free text:

Question 6(a): Is the information provided in the overview clear, if not how could it be improved?

Yes	No	Don't know

Free text:

Question 6(b): Is the information provided in the overview helpful, if not how could it be improved?

Yes	No	Don't know

Free text:

Question 7: Other than the 4 objectives contained in the delivery plan, are there any others we should include? Please provide details.

Yes	No	Don't know

Free text:

Question 8: We would like to know your views on the effects that the delivery plan to further promote and support SLC development throughout Wales would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Free text:

Question 9: Please also explain how you believe the proposed delivery plan to further promote and support SLC development throughout Wales could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Free text:

Question 10: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Free text: