

## Item 9c: Wales report

### Update from Erasmus+ Country Advisory Group Meeting 24/11/20

Discussions around the UK's participation in the Erasmus+ programme are still ongoing. The Welsh Government position is the best outcome would be to participate in Erasmus + programme if possible. There is also work going on at pace to develop a domestic alternative. By the end of this week (week ending 27/11/20) we should know if we are continuing with Erasmus+ or if we are pivoting to the domestic alternative.

### Languages Trends Wales 2020

The British Council's Languages Trends Wales report took a different format this year, with a shorter report and the addition of 'The Conversation', with interviews and responses with key stakeholders [<https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/language-trends-wales-2020-conversation>]. These include:

- Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of the British Council (Introduction)
- The case for international language learning and how we can secure its future - Jenny Scott, Director British Council Wales
- Languages and Multilingualism in Wales: Preparing for Global Futures - Professor Claire Gorrara: Chair, University Council of Modern Languages and Dean of Research Environment and Culture, Professor of French, Cardiff University
- Routes into Languages Cymru - a pan-Wales approach. How can we encourage more young people in Wales to learn international languages? Are their peers the key? - Meleri Jenkins, Project Coordinator, Routes Into Languages Cymru
- Language students are inspiring the next generation of linguists: Inside the MFL Student Mentoring Project - Lucy Jenkins, National Coordinator, Modern Foreign Language Student Mentoring Project

Headlines from the report include:

**Pupil entries for MFL** continue to fall with a **10% decrease at GCSE** and a **16% decrease at A Level** since 2019.

Numbers for **French and German GCSE stabilised slightly** but **Spanish saw a 19% fall at GCSE** and a **15% decrease at A Level** since 2019.

The **largest decrease in entries 2019-20 has been for 'other languages'** with a fall of 54% at GCSE and 34% at A Level.

## Routes into Languages Cymru

Routes into Languages Cymru continues to work with the other Routes franchises under the UCML umbrella, sharing good practice. Since July:

- 9 returning Student Language Ambassadors from Cardiff and Bangor Universities have been trained to deliver online support for schools in Wales this year.
- A new member of staff has been appointed and will be working on the Primary Toolkit to support primary teachers with the delivery of International Languages as part of the New Curriculum for Wales.
- Routes Cymru has contributed to the British Council Wales Languages Trends 2020: The Conversation and the item will be published on their website shortly.
- The Pupil Language Ambassador scheme will be delivered as pre-recorded sessions this year for schools in Wales with the aim of organising a national virtual conference in the summer term to celebrate achievements and to share good practice.
- To extend the influential role of Routes Cymru a Governors Toolkit will be available on the Routes Cymru website to support governing bodies to assess the 'health' of modern languages in their schools.

## Student Mentoring Project

The 2020 public health context has created multiple challenges across communities on both a national and local level. The education sector has been particularly affected by the outbreak of Covid-19, initially prompting whole school closures and even now requiring periods of home schooling for whole swathes of school communities where outbreaks of the virus are located.

Since the outbreak in March 2020, the project has sought to react as usefully as possible to support these challenging circumstances. In the first instance, this meant implementing a 12-week programme of engagement for Post-16 learners which learners could engage with from home. Through the summer of 2020, the project team have mobilised to proactively tackle the problems envisaged for the academic year 2020-21 and have sought to mitigate, support and implement structures that keep languages high on the agenda whilst also prioritising and limiting teacher workload. The project continues to adapt and evolve to provide support as required.

**The Post-16 Languages Recovery Project** was developed as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of schools in March 2020. The project sought to provide learning and wellbeing support for learners and students across the secondary school and Colleges sector, as well as offer our university mentors a beneficial opportunity. The project sought to provide excellent learning opportunities during a period of great uncertainty for learners by providing positive online learning experiences which both upskilled and motivated learners. The project also aimed to show the breadth and depth of languages as a discipline.

It offered a range of sessions including:

- Live A-Level language conversation classes
- Live language taster classes in a variety of languages: Italian, Nepalese, Taiwanese, Mandarin Chinese etc.
- Live seminars on weekly themes
- Pre-recorded and live lectures based on weekly themes

- A series of Q&As on study abroad, university life and university admissions.

The project achieved the following reach and impact:

- 441 learners engaged with the project over the 12-week period
- Eighty sessions were delivered with 11 asynchronous and 69 synchronous
- 202 instances of feedback from learners via structured surveys given at the end of sessions
- 12 survey responses from mentors after completion of the project and feedback from 2 teachers
- 35 schools from across Wales engaged in the project and 25 schools outside Wales.

Further details are available in an external report published here:  
<https://mflmentoring.co.uk/research>

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