

## Summary of Paper: Welsh-medium Labour Market

A socio-economic strategy to set stronger foundations for the Welsh language by:

- Lowering emigration
- Recognising the demand for Welsh language services
- Expanding Welsh language services
- Coupling local needs with work and training opportunities
- Recognising economic opportunities

### Introduction

In response to the 2011 Census figures relating to the Welsh language Mentrau laith Cymru are eager to respond in a constructive and innovative way. In order to prevent any further decline of the Welsh language we believe that it is essential to couple the Welsh language with the economy.

Our paper demonstrates the need to establish a Welsh-medium Labour Market in Wales which will strengthen both the economy and the Welsh language.

### Emigration

According to research by the Welsh Language Board (2010) on the yearly demographic of Welsh speakers, the factors which weaken the position of the Welsh language largely stem from the lack of work opportunities, specifically work through the medium of Welsh, which in turn leads to high levels of emigration. According to this research it is estimated that Wales loses 3,000 Welsh speakers each year.

***"Around a third of 1991's 15-year-old Welsh-speakers had migrated to England by 2001."***

Delyth Morris (2010) 'Welsh in the 21st Century', Cardiff; University of Wales Press

### Lack of Services

Whilst the Welsh language and Welsh-speaking communities suffer a significant loss of speakers through emigration (and indeed migration) Welsh speakers are also faced with a lack of services through the medium of Welsh which significantly reduces their ability to use the language in all aspects of life. Whilst these factors represent significant threats to the future of the Welsh language we believe that purposeful action to tackle these issues, via the development of a Welsh-language Labour Market plan, provides practical means for the future protection and strengthening of the language.

### The Current Situation

At present there are no specific schemes or plans in Wales which aim to promote and strengthen the Welsh language through influencing emigration, immigration and by raising the economic value of the language.

From the information we have collected through our work within communities across Wales, there are several challenges which need to be addressed:

- Historically, the Welsh language has suffered a lack of economic value
- Fluency in Welsh is not recognised as a valuable skill by a high percentage of employers

- Young Welsh speakers are leaving Wales and their native areas in pursuit of work
- Some people who attend Welsh-medium education lose the ability and / or confidence to use the language due to a lack of opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace
- There is a lack of language transmission within families
- It is a constant struggle to access services through the medium of Welsh
- A relatively low number of second-language learners become fluent in Welsh.

Recent developments in relation to the Welsh language have given the language higher status. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 increases the duty on statutory bodies to provide services through the medium of Welsh. We see this as a driving factor in the need for a Welsh-medium Labour Market which aims to couple Welsh-language skills with service needs.

## Welsh-medium Labour Market Working for the Benefit of the Economy and the Welsh Language

Encouragingly, there are examples of specific situations which increase the economic value of the Welsh language, key examples of which are Cardiff and Caernarfon where the 2011 Census showed an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers. This was largely due to an increased and sustained level of employment opportunities through the medium of Welsh in these areas.

### The Mentrau Iaith

There are examples of the Mentrau Iaith creating a local Welsh-medium Labour Market in certain fields. The Mentrau Iaith employ hundreds of members of staff across Wales in order to offer services locally through the medium of Welsh and to provide opportunities for Welsh speakers to develop work in important sectors in their local area.

### Our Vision

- Establish a Welsh-medium Labour Market
- Establish a Development Body to co-ordinate the scheme
- Work in partnership
- Stabilise the demographic of Welsh speakers

We want to create a model which will provide an **Economic Foothold** for the Welsh language by:

### Satisfying the Need for Services

- Identifying the needs for services
- Identifying individuals who are suited to jobs which would lead to an increased provision of these services, including a mapping system similar to “Llwybro Routes Project”, attracting qualified individuals back to Wales by informing them of Welsh-medium work opportunities in their specific fields.
- Identifying training needs to meet increased needs in the future.

### Recognising Local Potential

- Identifying and recognising local economic opportunities and acting on them: e.g. open air activities, alternative energy, conservation
- Identify individuals who are suited to jobs via a mapping system such as “Llwybro Routes Project” described above.
- Identifying training needs to meet increased needs in the future, as above.

### Operational Model of the Plan

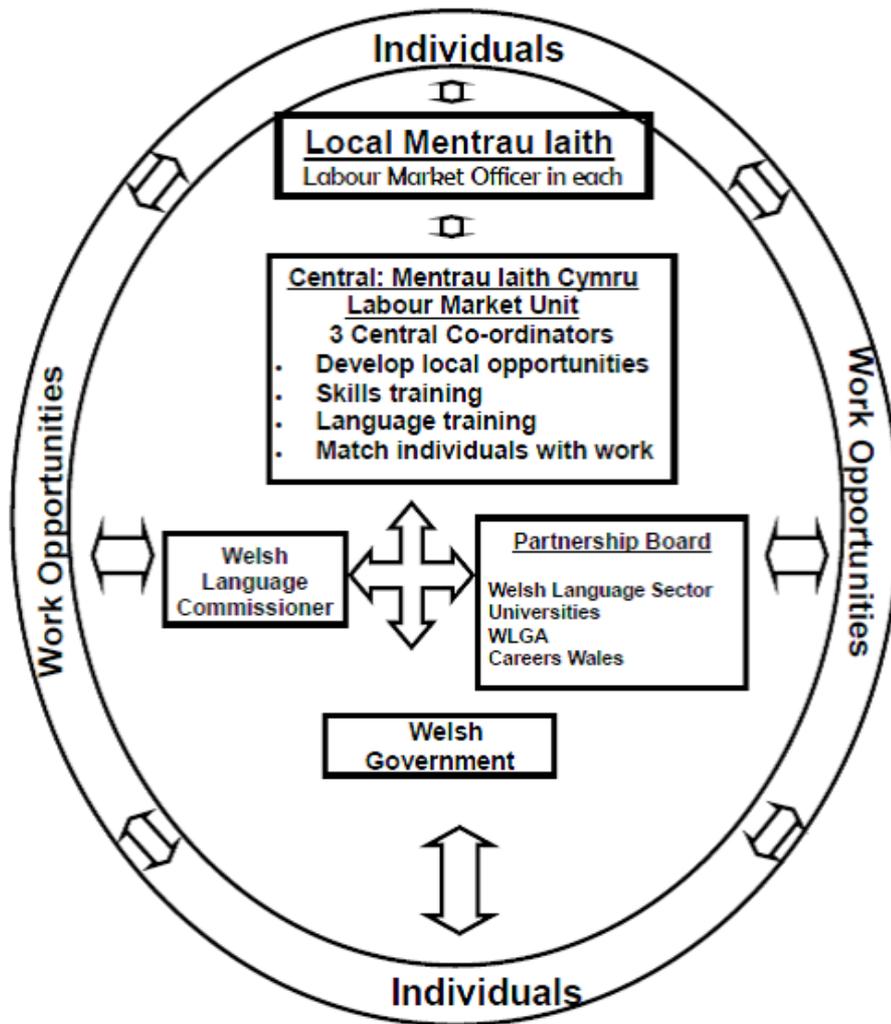
In the diagram below we see an outer circle representing the usual labour market cycle where individuals come into contact with work opportunities.

Within this cycle is the mechanism we believe is needed in order to create a Welsh-medium labour market, including work by the local Mentrau Iaith and key partners such as the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Language Commissioner and others.

We believe that there is a need for a Labour Market Officer within each local Menter Iaith in order to recognise and identify local opportunities for work and training through the medium of Welsh.

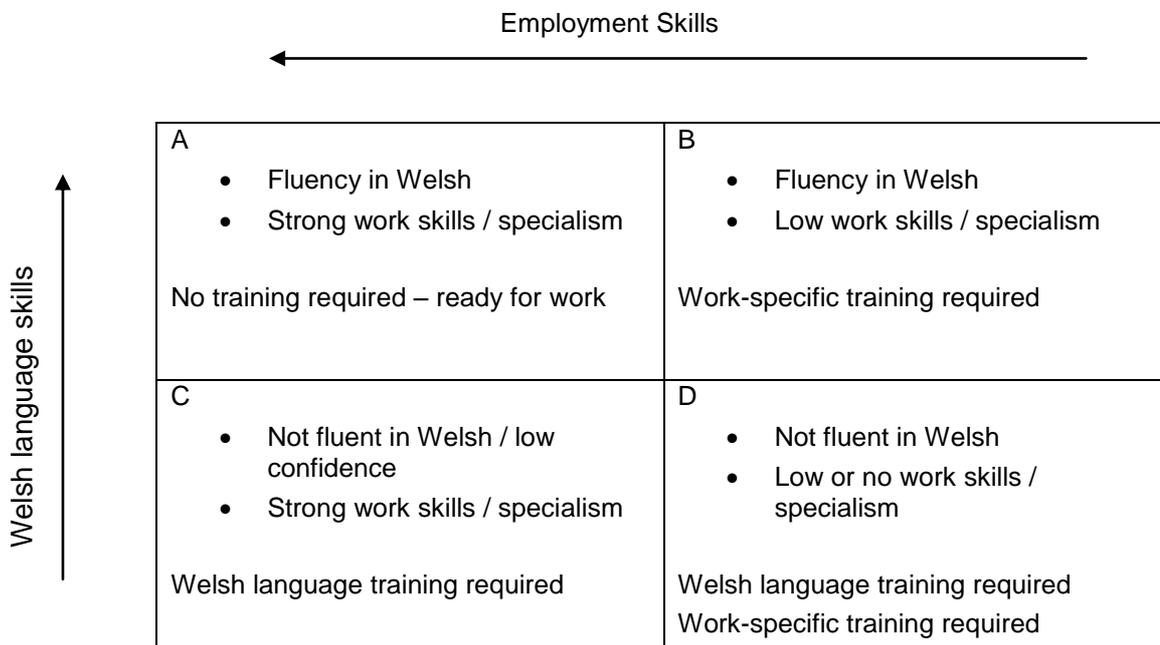
These officers will have access to a central key fund which will fund two types of training:

- Skills training for Welsh speakers
- Welsh language training for those with low confidence in their ability to speak Welsh, or those who wish to improve their Welsh language skills through intensive courses.



## Recognising Different Skills needs for Each Individual

We can summarise the examples of work-based and Welsh language skills, along with training needs, into 4 main types:



## To Conclude

We believe that employment, more than any other factor, holds people within a geographical area and provides a basis for strong, resilient communities which in turn sustains the language of those communities. If we succeed to influence the significant factors of employment, migration and emigration which have led, in part at least, to the current situation faced by the Welsh language this will also contribute to strengthening and sustaining the Welsh economy whilst also sustaining the long-term future of the Welsh language.