

Bethan Sayed AM
Chair, Culture, Welsh Language and Communications
Committee
National Assembly for Wales

5 February 2019

Dear Bethan,

Supporting and promoting the Welsh Language

The Public Accounts Committee considered the Annual Report and Accounts of the Welsh Government in October as part of our wider scrutiny of accounts, and we are due to report shortly. The Welsh and English versions of the Welsh Government consolidated accounts were not laid concurrently, with the Welsh language version published on 15 October 2018 – 12 days after the English. The Committee is very concerned about the failure to publish a Welsh version of the accounts alongside the English language version. It is particularly disconcerting that senior Welsh officials suggested the delay was a result of typographical errors.

As you will be aware, failure to publish simultaneously the accounts in English and Welsh contravenes the standards set out in the The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015. These require that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. We are of the view that the publication of the Welsh language version of the accounts on the day of the evidence session, approximately two weeks after laying the English version, is not acceptable and is a worrying indicator with regards to the Welsh Government's culture around the Welsh language.



Alongside the specific issue around the publication of the Welsh language version of the accounts, the Committee raised wider concerns about the Welsh Government's commitment to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in its internal arrangements. The Permanent Secretary confirmed that she had delayed publishing the final report of the Welsh Government's working group for the facilitation and promotion of the Welsh language since there was, in her view, further work to be done. She informed the Committee that she had asked for reviews to be undertaken in respect of the definition of bilingualism, best practice in Welsh language standards and the Welsh language training available to Welsh Government staff.

We understand that the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee is undertaking an inquiry into Supporting and Promoting the Welsh Language looking at the legislative, policy and wider context. We wanted to draw these issues to your attention and ask that you consider inviting the Permanent Secretary to give evidence as part of your inquiry. As a significant employer of Staff, with substantial delegated responsibility from Welsh Ministers, we believe that there are some significant questions to ask around the approach to bilingualism in the Welsh Government and the commitment to delivering the standards set out in the legislation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair

