

Welsh Language Division  
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Welsh Government  
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18 October 2016

To whom it may concern,

### **Response to Welsh Language Strategy: A million Welsh speakers by 2050**

The Royal College of Nursing Wales is extremely supportive of the Welsh Language Strategy and welcomes the Welsh Government's aim to almost double the number of Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. We agree with the approach of creating a long term strategy for the Welsh language, and there are a few of points in relation to the draft strategy which we wish to comment on specifically.

In the context of nursing and the healthcare environment, there are nursing professionals who act as Welsh Learning Reps who we would urge the Welsh Government to engage with as part of implementing this strategy. They have the ability to act as catalysts to encourage the use of Welsh at work within the nursing 'family' context. Those involved would not necessarily have to be fluent Welsh speakers from the start, but learners can encourage and engage others to take up Welsh language learning for the benefit of Welsh speaking patients.

Continued...

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We would also like to raise the issue the importance of Welsh language provision when it comes to illnesses such as dementia. Existing evidence and research clearly show the benefits to Welsh speaking patients of having access to Welsh speaking healthcare professionals and being able to communicate in their preferred language. Some people suffering from dementia lose their second language, and it is vital in this instance that for those patients whose first language is Welsh, they have access to the right levels of health care through the medium of Welsh. Any long term strategy relating to Welsh language therefore must aim to meet the communication needs all of people using the health service, and for these needs to be an integral element of service planning and delivery.

Yours sincerely,



**TINA DONNELLY CBE TD DL  
DIRECTOR, RCN WALES**

*Royal College of Nursing Wales*

*The RCN is the world's largest professional union of nurses, representing over 435,000 nurses, midwives, health visitors and nursing students, including over 25,000 members in Wales. The majority of RCN members work in the NHS with around a quarter working in the independent sector. The RCN works locally, nationally and internationally to promote standards of care and the interests of patients and nurses, and of nursing as a profession. The RCN is a UK-wide organisation, with its own National Boards for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The RCN is a major contributor to nursing practice, standards of care, and public policy as it affects health and nursing.*

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