

Response to the Welsh Language Commissioner following submission of the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012

Section: Compliance with the scheme

Comment from Welsh Language Commissioner	Response from Bridgend County Borough Council
<p>Action Plan: Recruitment and Selection: We note that the Council now publishes bilingual job advertisements where proficiency in the Welsh language is deemed essential or desirable, and that guidance and training for managers have been updated to include Welsh language issues.</p> <p>Action required: Please provide a copy for our records along with the recruitment guide given to managers.</p>	<p>Please find attached appendix 1 which is the council's manager's guidelines on recruitment and selection. Additionally, managers are alerted to the need for Welsh language consideration at vacancy management stage. This is an underlying theme and an identified outcome from the Recruitment and Selection Learning and Development course.</p>
<p>Action Plan: Staffing and Training: We note that a Welsh Language Training Plan was developed recently. The plan aims to provide staff training on the basis of business needs identified through a training needs assessment survey.</p> <p>Action required: Please provide a copy of the Welsh Language Training Plan for our records</p>	<p>Please find attached appendix 2, the council's equality and diversity training plan. Welsh language is outlined from page four onwards. The approach taken by the council is to identify via senior business managers, those individuals and groups of staff whose role(s) require(s) them to use Welsh in the workplace. Such employees would include those with a customer interface. The University of Glamorgan is currently designing a bespoke six week Welsh course. This course aims to address regular enquiries the council is likely to receive on subjects such as benefits, housing and blue badges. This will put advisors in a better position to deal with</p>

	some of these regular enquiries.
<p>Action Plan: Customer Services: We note that Menter Bro Ogwr monitors the use made of the Customer Service Centre and Telephone Contact Centre by Welsh speakers.</p> <p>Action required: Please provide a report detailing the outcomes of this monitoring work.</p>	<p>We have not received a formal written report from Menter Bro Ogwr that we can forward on. However they have contacted us via email about concerns they have following contacting the council's Customer Service Centre and Telephone Contact Centre. Menter Bro Ogwr and the Fforwm Iath monitor the Customer Contact Centre via telephoning the council with the aim of speaking to a Welsh language advisor. They have alerted us to the instances where this service was not available to them. The council's policy is that if there is no Welsh speaking advisor available to speak to a customer, the customer's contact details are taken and a Welsh speaker returns the call. The council notes that it must also increase the number of staff wearing the 'iaith gwaith' badge showing that they are a Welsh speaker.</p>

Section: Frontline Services

Comment from Welsh Language Commissioner	Response from Bridgend County Borough Council
<p>Action 3.b WLI 2: We note that the Council's records management system can record the customer's language preference.</p> <p>Action required: Please explain the steps taken by the Council to identify a customer's language preference.</p>	<p>The council, in its day-to-day business, sends bilingual general correspondence to customers in line with the Welsh Language Scheme. Where a customer requests correspondence in Welsh (where this is not a general circular), the customer's preference is recorded on the council's customer relationship management system so that future specific correspondence can be sent in Welsh. Welsh preference is also recorded if the customer converses with the council in Welsh during a face-to-face visit.</p>

Section: Management and Administration of the scheme

Comment from Welsh Language Commissioner	Response from Bridgend County Borough Council
<p>Action Plan: Commissioning and Procurement, 4.a WLI 1:</p> <p>We note the council is revising its arrangements for commissioning and procuring services, in line with the requirements found in the guidance produced by the Welsh Language Board. We note the council's concerns regarding the Welsh Purchasing Consortium's arrangements. The Welsh Language Board was informed that work was ongoing to allow the council to report on this indicator.</p> <p>Action required: Please explain what is preventing the council reporting on this indicator.</p>	<p>The council has now developed a toolkit (appendix 4) to allow for this information to be collected. Initial sampling as per the detail included in appendix 4 has been undertaken to better understand the council's position regarding where adult social care contracts sit against the PIs. These requirements have been built into the new contracts which are rolled out. Over the next three years, the council plans to ensure all contracts include the requirements. The council has already consulted with a number of providers (47) to pilot this approach, with 37 providers considering that Welsh language requirements were being addressed. This toolkit is now a requirement of the contract procedure.</p>
<p>Action: 4. b:</p> <p>The number of complaints received in relation to the operation of the scheme and the percentage dealt with in accordance with council's corporate complaints standards was reported in full.</p> <p>Action required: Although the number of complaints is low please provide information on any exercises undertaken by the council to measure public satisfaction with the Welsh language services provided.</p>	<p>The council has not undertaken any targeted satisfaction surveys with citizens, customers or visitors to Bridgend regarding their satisfaction with the Welsh Language provision within the council. However, consideration will now be given to undertaking such a survey. Customer satisfaction questionnaires are bilingual. Between 2008 and 2012 no questionnaires have been completed in Welsh neither has there been a complaint regarding Welsh provision. The council will target Welsh speakers when recruiting members to the council's Citizens' Panel.</p>

Section: Welsh Language Skills

Comment from Welsh Language Commissioner	Response from Bridgend County Borough Council
<p>Action 4.2 WLI 4(a): The number and percentage of staff who received training in Welsh to a specific qualification level was reported in full.</p> <p>Action required: Please outline the council's approach to identifying and / or targeting staff for training. Does the language Skills Strategy address this?</p>	<p>Please find attached appendix 2, the council's equality and diversity training plan. Welsh language is outlined from page four onwards. The approach taken by the council is to identify via senior business managers, those individuals and groups of staff whose role(s) require(s) them to use Welsh in the workplace. Such employees would include those with a customer interface.</p>
<p>Action 4.2 WLI 4(b): We note the council has developed a Welsh Language Training Plan. We also note that corporate induction training is being updated to include Welsh Language Awareness.</p> <p>Action required: Does the council have any measures in place to raise awareness of the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme amongst new recruits? Please explain when the council will be in a position to provide training to staff members. Will this training be compulsory or optional? Please explain when a new system will be put in place. The council must report on this indicator in full in the 2012/2013 Annual Monitoring Report.</p>	<p>Please find attached appendix 2, the council's equality and diversity training plan. Welsh language is outlined from page four onwards. The approach taken by the council is to identify via senior business managers, those individuals and groups of staff whose role(s) require(s) them to use Welsh in the workplace. Such employees would include those with a customer interface. The council utilises its induction programme to raise awareness of Welsh language issues at the workplace both at a strategic and an operational level. It is not envisaged that training will be provided to employees without identification of a business need, however, where such training is in place the council will support the employee. Where a business need is identified, the training will be compulsory.</p>
<p>Action WLI 5: The number and percentage of staff within the</p>	<p>The council is mindful that further work is required in order to ensure that, where appropriate, Welsh language services are</p>

<p>council's services who are able to speak Welsh was reported in full. The council's Welsh Language Scheme contains commitments to provide managerial support during recruitment campaigns and to establish a system for recording the language skills of staff.</p> <p>Action required: What is the latest in terms of meeting these commitments?</p>	<p>provided. This will particularly be the case where the post to be recruited to has an identifiable customer interface such as a Customer Contact Centre employee. The service manager will be supported during the entire recruitment and selection process (including the interview itself) to ensure that Welsh speaking job applicants are encouraged and that their skills are tested during the process.</p> <p>In terms of recording the language skills of staff, the council is currently undertaking a data capture project whereby all employees will be asked to update their personal data such as address and sensitive equalities data. This will include the employees' ability to speak Welsh, read Welsh and/or write Welsh and their skill level. The project is expected to continue until the end of 2013.</p>
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Section: Mainstreaming the Welsh Language

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<p>Action 6. A: All new policies and initiatives are subject to a linguistic impact assessment and that a support pack and guidance is provided to managers responsible for undertaking assessments.</p> <p>Action required: Please provide a copy of the impact assessment tool along with support and guidance for managers. Please provide a list of the</p>	<p>Attached is appendix 5, the council's equality impact assessment toolkit. The relevant section to the provision and promotion of the Welsh language appears in section five of the initial screening form.</p> <p>EIAs undertaken during the reporting period included those on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to relocate Bridgend Library • Proposal to redesign Bridgend Recreation Centre

policies and initiatives subject to a linguistic impact assessment during the reporting period.

- Strategic Equality Plan
- Customer Charter
- Council's budget proposals
- Gypsy and traveller protocol