Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

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POLICY ON USING WELSH IN THE WORKPLACE

SCOPE STATEMENT

This Policy applies to all employees of Bridgend County Borough Council

Date of Issue: September 2019

1.0   Introduction and Guiding Principles

1.1   This policy sets out the council's internal arrangements for using the Welsh language in the workplace. This provides managers with relevant information to ensure compliance within service areas with the Welsh Language Standards.

1.2   The following principles underpin how the council is working towards ensuring the provision of language choice in service delivery and within our internal processes:

- The council must deliver services in Welsh and encourage the use of the language
- Customers have the right to communicate with the council in Welsh
- Welsh must be positioned to be read first, i.e. to the left or above the English
- Language choice is available for employees when dealing with Human Resources (HR) matters
- The quality of service and a positive attitude are important.

2.0   Developing a Five Year Strategy

2.1   The council has produced and publish a 5-year strategy that sets out proposals to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the council.   This includes the plans for maintaining the number of Welsh speakers by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and details of how it is intended to reach this target.

2.2   This strategy must be reviewed to assess its impact and evidence has to be provided to demonstrate the measures the council has taken to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the council.

2.3   An annual report must be produced which will demonstrate the way in which the council has complied with service delivery standards, policy making standards and operational standards and relevant records of such.

3.0   What Does This Mean for our Customers?

Publications

3.1   All publications, paper and electronic, must be bilingual. Some, e.g. signage must display Welsh first. Others, e.g. correspondence Welsh and English are to be treated equally

Correspondence

3.2   The council must state that it welcomes correspondence in Welsh.

3.3   If a customer or organisation writes to the council in Welsh then the response must be in Welsh.

Telephone Calls

3.4   Callers to the council (via the main contact centre, other reception services, helplines and direct lines) must be greeted in Welsh first and if requested, be able to access a Welsh speaker. Where there is no Welsh speaker available an offer of a call back from a Welsh speaker should be made, wherever possible.

3.5   Every attempt must be made to meet the needs of our customers and individuals who wish to use Welsh.

3.6   Where contact numbers and helplines are published, the document must state that we welcome calls in Welsh.

Reception Areas

3.7   All employees working in the reception areas of the council, who are able to provide a Welsh language reception service, must wear a lanyard to show language ability.

3.8   Badges for lanyards are provided for learners to wear.

3.9   Signs must state "You are welcome to use Welsh" and all council notices on display must be bi-lingual.

Public meetings

3.10   Any advertising material and invitations must be bilingual and confirm the use of Welsh is welcome at the meeting.

3.11   Where this is requested by an individual or guest speaker, all attendees must be advised ahead of the meeting that they are welcome to use Welsh and simultaneous translation is provided.

Text and or Logo for e-mail Signatures including contact details

3.12   The council's brand guidelines set out details that must be included on employees' e-mail signatures which will enable them to indicate if they are able to speak Welsh fluently or learning the language.

3.13   These guidelines also contain instructions for employees to enable them to include a Welsh language version of e-mail contact details and out of office messages (where Welsh is positioned to be read first).

Social Media

3.14   When using social media if an individual uses Welsh then the response if required, must be in Welsh.

3.15   All social media information must be bilingual.

4.0   What Does This Mean for our Employees?

Vacancies

4.1   When a vacancy arises, managers must undertake an assessment of the language skills required by considering the duties and requirements of the individual post as well as that of the team. The Recruitment and Selection Managers' Guidelines provide further advice on this screening process.

4.2   In order to increase the number of Welsh speaking employees and improve the Welsh language service provided by the council, all posts will be advertised with Welsh desirable, unless the assessment identifies Welsh is essential.

4.3   Relevant details must be included on the Vacancy Management form which will be held and recorded in HR. These details will be included in the Annual Monitoring Report.

Recruitment and Selection

4.4   All advertisements are published bilingually via the council's web recruitment pages and any external advertisement must also be published bilingually.

4.5   Application information states that those submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications in English.

4.6   Applicants are able to complete and submit their application in Welsh and can indicate that they wish to use Welsh in the selection process (interview and any assessments). Where this is the candidate's choice, simultaneous translation must be provided.

4.7   New employees can choose to receive correspondence relating to the contract of employment in Welsh.

Assessment of Skills

4.8   An audit of employees' skills in the Welsh language will provide a foundation for developing a training plan. Assessing the Welsh language skills of employees will enable the council to :
   - Plan its capacity to deliver services through the medium of Welsh, and;
   - Help plan a Welsh in the Workplace training programme.

4.9   All employees should, ensure that their personal details, including Welsh language skills are updated via the iTrent Self Service. A reminder will be included in the annual appraisal.

4.10   A hard copy of the survey form is available for all non IT users and all new employees are required to complete this information as part of their on line application form.

Induction

4.11   All new employees must undertake the Corporate Induction e-learning module which includes information on the Welsh language for the purpose of raising awareness and language requirements within the workplace. This policy will also be linked to the induction framework.

Training

4.12   A training plan is in place and is reviewed annually to respond to business needs and also encourage employees to take up learning the Welsh language. This includes a range of learning and development activities such as face to face training, e-learning, briefings and the use of IT resources and written materials.

4.13   Training is targeted and prioritised to meet specific business needs, e.g. for front line/public facing employees.

4.14   There is also an opportunity for employees to have time off to access basic Welsh language lessons and, if desired, to progress to advanced training, to develop their language skills.

Employment Issues

4.15   All existing employees are given the opportunity to state if they wish to receive documentation relating to their employment in Welsh. It is part of the recruitment process and is recorded on the HR system.

4.16   Employees have the right to: make complaints in Welsh; receive related correspondence in Welsh; and have simultaneous translation at related meetings (unless the meeting is conducted in Welsh without translation services).

4.17   Equally, employees have the right to: respond in Welsh to allegations made against them in any internal disciplinary process; receive related correspondence in Welsh; and have simultaneous translation at related meetings (unless the meeting is conducted in Welsh without translation services).

5.0   Roles and responsibilities

5.1   The roles and responsibilities for the use of Welsh language in the workplace are as follows:
- **Corporate Management Board (CMB)** - will agree and ensure implementation of the council's Welsh Language Strategy
- **Chief Executive** – will lead and oversee the work of the Welsh Language Standards project board
- **Welsh Language Standards Project Board** – comprising Directorate representatives will take responsibility for interpreting requirements of the standards, collating and disseminating data
- **Heads of Service** – will be responsible for briefing employees and reinforcing and ensuring compliance within their service areas
- **Group Manager HR/OD** – will take the lead on employment and learning and development matters

- **Welsh Language Champions** – will facilitate 2 way communication
- **Line Managers** – will review service need and identify recruitment and training requirements
- **Employees** – will adopt a positive attitude to service delivery and the Welsh language and be open to opportunities available to learn Welsh