

Bridgend County Borough Council

Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2014/15

Introduction

This report outlines the council's progress in implementing its Welsh Language Scheme during 2014/15. It has been prepared in accordance with the monitoring and reporting framework outlined in the scheme and responds to the requirements of the former Welsh Language Board.

1. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

Cabinet Equalities Committee scrutinises progress through half-yearly reports and approves the annual monitoring report before it is submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner. Implementation of the scheme is also an objective within the council's Corporate Plan.

2. Frontline services

This section outlines data and information relating to language skills and provision in reception areas and contact centres.

2a) Youth Services

Provision – To what extent does your Welsh Language provision meet the needs and satisfy the requirements of young people?

During 2014/15 Bridgend County Borough Council Youth Service received substantial cuts to its budget due to ongoing austerity measures, which essentially affected the structure and the delivery of youth work. Open access services were reduced and the ability to deliver bilingual youth work, or youth work through the medium of Welsh was reduced. Open access provisions are still available to young people across Bridgend, all of which provide bilingual information resources to young people.

Post-restructure, the Youth Service engaged Third Sector services increasing the council's ability to identify and utilise responsive services and opportunities for young people. The following examples demonstrate the ways in which the Youth Service utilises Welsh Language provision to meet the needs of young people: -

- Duke of Edinburgh Award and Accreditation – the Youth Service employs a DofE Development Officer who establishes and supports the delivery of Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE awards across all schools, youth groups and youth centres. The DofE Award can be delivered bilingually, reflecting young peoples' requirements. Those young people wishing to receive the award in Welsh can do so via a DofE award centre in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (Llangynwyd) school. Accreditation is a large part of Youth Service provision and young people have the opportunity to receive Agored Cymru Accredited courses in Welsh.

- Open Access Services – Although there are no direct and specific open access services for young people available via the Youth Service in Welsh, information resources are readily available for young people should they need to access information in Welsh.
- Partnerships Links – Through a national funding initiative (Welsh Government Strategy Grant), the Youth Service has forged links with Third Sector services through commissioning small amounts of money via this Grant. The Youth Service has worked closely with Menter Bro Ogwr, providing open access support to young people, specifically through Welsh Language. All other young people accessing Youth Service support will be directed to Menter Bro Ogwr if they require direct support in Welsh.
- Lead Working – In line with the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Youth Service/Local Authority has employed a Lead (one-to-one) Worker to work with young people in each school to support them in accessing post-16 destinations. A welsh speaking Lead Worker has been employed to ensure that young people have access to this support in Welsh, this Lead Worker is currently working within YGG Llangynwyd.

Young people have the right to receive information and support in Welsh whereas previously the service has not had the capacity or resources to ensure this is available. Within the current context, the youth service, which now exists under an early intervention and family support approach, has more ability to provide services to young people in Welsh.

Joint working with partners

The Youth Service focusses on partnership working, particularly within the Third Sector. This provides a range of opportunities for young people to access information or support through the Welsh language, particularly through Menter Bro Ogwr. Within this context, staff training and development is available in order to develop skills when delivering services in Welsh language to young people. The Youth Service has developed links with Menter Bro Ogwr who will continue to provide support in ensuring young people have sufficient access to support in the medium of Welsh.

Staff skills

A recent workforce skills audit identified three fluent Welsh speakers in key service provision posts. This enabled verbal interaction with service providers to be undertaken in Welsh when required. Through the development of a new skills audit form the Youth Service is now able to identify Welsh speakers within full time projects and the part time service. In addition it will identify those employees who wish to participate in, or further their training through, the medium of Welsh.

Through supported funding (WG Strategy Grant) and through close links with Bridgend's Association of Voluntary Organisations, there are additional opportunities for staff to engage in collaborative training based on young people's needs. Welsh language introduction and refresher training was identified as a need within this audit and the supported funding will allow for training to be developed and implemented within the workforce reflecting these needs.

Consultation

The participation strategy within the Children and Young People's Plan sets out how young people are involved in the development of services. Young people are continuously consulted with in a number of ways both formally and informally via the Youth Service, particularly once they have received a specific intervention.

Due to funding cuts, and changes within the structure of the service, a full Youth Review will be taking place in collaboration with the Local Service Board who will be hoping to mirror a consultation exercise recently completed in Rhondda Cynon Taff. This collaborative venture, once developed will be translated fully into Welsh and, based on an action/implementation plan, will be available in Welsh through community groups and Welsh medium schools.

Finance

There are no specific financial plans in place to support Welsh-medium services for young people. However, the delivery of Welsh medium services is incorporated in current financial projections. A mandatory requirement for the application of small funding through the WG Strategy Grant, which is held by the Youth Service, is that any open access service receiving a small part of the fund must be available in the medium of Welsh. Specific amounts of funding have been allocated to services via Families First to deliver employment and training opportunities for young people in Welsh both within and outside of the school setting.

2b) Reception areas and contact centres

Section	Welsh essential posts	Welsh speakers in Welsh essential posts	Total number of posts
Telephone Contact Centre	2	2 – One advisor and the Telephone Contact Centre team coach.	17
Customer Service Centre (Civic Offices and Sunnyside Offices)	2	2 - One advisor and the Customer Services Centre Team Coach.	18

Processes have been put in place to ensure that when vacancies arise, all Welsh-essential posts are advertised in the Welsh language media e.g. via *Safle Swyddi* and via *Menter Bro Ogwr*.

A Welsh speaking apprenticeship was recruited in March 2015 and will be in post for one year.

The Telephone Contact Centre has both a Welsh and English queue providing the opportunity for Welsh speaking callers to speak to a Welsh speaking advisor.

The Customer Service Centre displays signs advertising the availability of Welsh speaking advisors, with those advisors wearing 'iath gwaith' badges. Whilst the take up of the Welsh language service in the Customer Service Centre is low, the demand on the telephone system is greater.

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015:

- 421 callers selected the option to continue their call in Welsh;
- 48 callers terminated their call after a wait in the queue of less than two minutes;
- 147 customers spoke to a Welsh speaking advisor directly from the queue

If, after two minutes, a Welsh speaking advisor is not available, callers are asked to give their details to an English speaking advisor so that a Welsh call back can be arranged. Alternatively, callers can continue their call in English.

- 65 callers chose to terminate the call without leaving a message or talking to an English speaking advisor;
- 90 callers gave their details to an English speaking advisor and a Welsh speaker returned their calls.

Between April 2014 and March 2015, 14 customers were recorded as requesting to conduct their business with a Welsh speaking advisor. A total of 31 customers are recorded on the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) as requesting to conduct their business with a Welsh speaking advisor.

It is not possible to refine the CRM system report to differentiate between customers who visited and those who telephoned. The disparity between the number of callers and those who were recorded on CRM is because calls were, in the main, "catch and pass" switchboard type calls and these are not recorded on the CRM system.

The customer records management system (CRM) is currently in use by the Waste Management team as well as by the Customer Service team. The Customer Services team use this system on behalf of a number of service areas including Council Tax, Benefits and Public Protection, to record the customer's language preference helping us monitor and respond to demand for Welsh language services in the future.

3. Management and administration of the scheme

3a) Procurement

Adult Social Care

Over recent years, we have engaged with providers through an annual exercise to ask how well they feel they meet Welsh Language requirements. This exercise has been useful as it requires providers to reflect on how they deliver support through the medium of Welsh and, additionally, it is an easy way of identifying progress against key aspects of service delivery.

Care Planning

At the assessment stage, Social Workers ask service users whether they wish their assessment undertaken through the medium of Welsh and would they want their final service delivered in Welsh. Care providers are becoming increasingly aware that employing staff who are bilingual can be an advantage, especially in relation to giving a competitive edge in securing new packages. There is currently a general shortage of care staff who can speak Welsh and consequently the recruiting of Welsh speaking care staff can be an issue for providers.

Allocation of Provider

When matching the provider to the service user, the Social Work teams or brokerage service will match the request to the provider they feel would best meet the needs of the service user. Recruiting Welsh speaking care staff can be challenging, we need to be clear on what the provider can or cannot do on a day to day basis with the service user as realistically allocating Welsh speaking staff to deliver support may prove difficult at times.

Evaluating Services

We have further integrated evaluation into our contract monitoring and reviewing of services. The benchmarking exercise provides some information and we plan to supersede the desktop exercise with Monitoring Officers benchmarking providers as part of wider contract monitoring. Our contract monitoring team actively examines how well the provider feels it delivers support in Welsh and will follow through any requests to have support delivered through the medium of Welsh with a review of how this happens in practice and draw this together through a summary document,

Monitoring Officers are promoting the fact that even though many service users have expressed a wish to engage in English, many may still have Welsh as their first language and may feel more comfortable engaging in Welsh rather than English. The 'Active Offer' is something that providers should continue to challenge and promote even though their preferred language of support may be clear. Monitoring Officers are also mindful that those with dementia often revert to their native language, and are promoting this fact as a good example of why providers need to additionally strengthen service delivery to include the 'Active Offer' request.

The new Regional Quality Framework for residential and nursing care has now been completed to include the Welsh language in the delivery of commissioned services. Monitoring Officers use tools that contain elements which benchmark providers against Welsh Language compliance. Our local quality framework for domiciliary care will be updated to be consistent with the Regional Quality Framework and will include aspects of Welsh Language compliance in a similar fashion to the previous residential and nursing care model.

Procurement and Contracting

The Council's Corporate Procurement Rules continue to require tenders to agree to deliver in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme and the requirement features through a pass/fail element in the PQQ stage of tender exercises.

Adult Social Care continues to use the contract as the base for monitoring compliance, and is continuing to roll out additional clauses in amended or updated contracts.

Other

During 2015/16 the council will issue pin badges to providers for reissue to staff who are either learning Welsh or who speak Welsh. It is hoped that this may encourage those in receipt of services to engage with staff through the language even though it may not be their language of choice.

Children's Services

The results of the compliance assessment undertaken with all 4 providers ie

- Tros Gynnal
- Barnardos
- Y Bont and
- Womens Aid

in 2013/14 was reported in the Annual Monitoring Report for 2013/14. All 4 of these providers remain fully compliant with the requirements of the Council's Welsh language Scheme and therefore, there is no updated information to provide. The council will (during 2015/16) continue to work to better align Adult Social Care and Children's and this will feature increasingly more in our approach to monitoring Welsh Language compliance in services.

3b) Complaints

During the financial year 2014-15 the council dealt with two complaints regarding the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme both of which have been ongoing since the Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14.

The first complaint relates to bilingual registration of street names. The council is working with the Welsh Language Commissioner on a "Standardisation of

Bridgend Place Names” project. Good progress is being made on this project with a proposed list of standard place names nearing completion.

The second complaint originates from a member of the public and refers to signage which was incorrectly translated (when translation was unnecessary) from English to Welsh. The council worked closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner with a view to achieving a resolution to the complaint however the complainant remains unsatisfied with the council’s position.

3c) Inspection of Welsh local authority websites and on-line services.

In 2010 the Welsh Language Board identified that the majority of the council’s website pages were not available in Welsh. Detailed reports on the improvements made to the provision of website pages in Welsh since this inspection have since been provided to our Cabinet Equalities Committee on a 6 monthly basis and have been included in Annual Monitoring Reports since.

The number of translated web pages has been estimated using Google Analytics. This approach doesn’t account for files such as Word documents and PDFs or a webpage that hasn’t received at least one hit. The figures quoted in the 2013/14 Annual Monitoring Report included documents stored on a previous server. These figures are no longer obtainable.

Any webpage under the Welsh half of the website will have the suffix ‘/cy/’ immediately after www.bridgend.gov.uk in the page’s URL. Searching for all pages with this suffix highlighted that 867 Welsh pages on the website received at least one hit in 2014-15. To check the validity of this method of measuring the number of translated pages, we measured the number of hits within the 2015 section of the Welsh media centre section of the website, by searching the suffix ‘/cy/canolfan-y-cyfryngau/2015’ in Google analytics. We manually counted 48 pages in the section of the website, however only 15 of these were recorded in the Google Analytics search. Similarly, only 25 of 111 pages from the 2013 section received hits during 2014-15.

4. Welsh Language Skills

Included in this section is:

- **better information on the workforce’s Welsh language skills and a report on the data**
- **evidence of investment in Welsh language training and an explanation of other action taken to improve workforce skills during a period of constraint on external recruitment**
- **evidence of improvement in the provision of language awareness training**

Performance indicator WLI4: Human Resources and Skills

i) The number and percentage of staff (Welsh speakers and learners) who have received training in the Welsh language to a specific level of competence

ii) The number and percentage of staff who have received language awareness training

A previous evaluation of Welsh language training highlighted the need to ensure a business requirement was identified, and that appropriate study programmes were being undertaken. Funding constraints now mean that decisions are made to fund study linked to business requirements. If no business requirements are identified, employees would be signposted to community-based learning. This method of evaluation results in a reduction in the number of learners. However, the council is more confident that key service areas with significant customer interaction are supported to use the Welsh language within their business. It is likely that further nominations for training will follow from service areas where there are business needs. During 2014/15 1 employee attended **Intermediate Welsh for Adults** and 10 employees completed the **Welsh Awareness E: Learning Module**. In preparation for the implementation of the new Welsh Language Standards the council is exploring the opportunities for Welsh language training to be provided across all front line services.

Performance indicator WLI 5: Human Resources - Equality and Diversity The number and % of staff within the council's services able to speak Welsh (excluding school teachers and school based staff)

Records show that on 31 March 2015, the council employed 452 Welsh speaking employees in services other than schools. This figure comprises a range of linguistic ability and compares with 385 Welsh speakers in other services as at 31 March 14.

The service breakdown is:

Adult Community Learning	2
Arts and Community Development	2
Assessment and Case Management	15
Business Strategy and Support	2
Business Strategy and Performance	24
Business Support	8
Legal Childcare	2
Childrens Regulated Services	9
Commissioning and Transformation	3
Customer Services	10
Data Centre	3
Development	6
Disability Transition and Case Management	15
Environmental Health	4
Facilities	4
Financial Support	1
Highways	18
Highways and Community Regeneration	18
Inclusion	52
Infrastructure	1
Integrated Partnership Support Team	2
Integrated Working	48

Joint Supplies Service	3
Learning Disability	32
Libraries and Information	14
Marketing and Engagement	9
Mental Health	9
Older People and People with Sensory Impairment	35
Regeneration	14
Revenues	9
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	3
School Improvement	6
Sport, Play and Active Wellbeing	2
Strategic Planning and Resources	1
Street works	11
Systems Technical	8
Trading Standards	4
Training and Staff Development	3
Western Bay	3
Employee Relations	7
Health and Safety	2
Quantity Surveyors	1
Youth Offending Service	5
Legal and Procurement	2
Built Environment	3
Communities	2
Property Services	1
Democratic Services	2
Arts and Community Living	3
Register Office	3
Scrutiny	1
Finance	3
Legal	1
Public Protection	1

5. Mainstreaming the Welsh language

5a) Impact Assessment

The authority treats English and Welsh languages equally. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for policy and proposals developed by the authority. An EIA should be undertaken at the earliest possible stage of policy making/revision. EIA Training is provided for service managers and staff responsible for policy development. The training includes a focus on assessing impact on the Welsh Language. To help managers undertake the assessment we have provided a toolkit and guidance.

5b) Other approaches to mainstreaming

i. The council's Corporate Plan

The council's corporate plan sets out the most important objectives for the authority across all services. Our commitment to implement the Welsh Language Scheme is part of our theme to make Bridgend County Borough a great place to live, work and visit.