

Conwy County Borough Council

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Monitoring Report

2017 - 2018

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of



**Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner**

April 2018

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Conwy County Borough Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, it will not treat the Welsh language any less favourably than the English language.
- 1.2 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 establishes a legal framework to impose a duty on the Council, amongst other organisations, to comply with Standards of conduct on the Welsh Language. The Council have had 167 Standards to comply with in the following areas:
 - Service Delivery
 - Operational
 - Policy Making
 - Promotion
 - Record Keeping
- 1.3 The duties which derive from the Standards mean that organizations should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, together with promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language (making it easier for people to use their Welsh language skills in everyday life).
- 1.4 Standards will:
 - provide greater clarity to organizations on their duties on the Welsh language
 - provide greater clarity to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh
 - ensure more consistency of Welsh language services and improve their quality.
- 1.5 The Welsh Standards supersedes the Council's Welsh Language Scheme first approved by the Welsh Language Board on 23rd July, 1997, which was revised on 14th May, 2004 and then on 23rd April 2009.
- 1.6 Although the Council already complied with most of the Welsh Language Standards as part of our previous Welsh Language Scheme, the Standards have provided an opportunity to reinforce the requirements to ensure conformance.
- 1.7 This report is available to the public at the Council's public offices and on its website. The report is also circulated to all the individual services by way of the Welsh Language Scheme Link Officers and in addition, information about the general monitoring report, along with the recommendations, is published on the intranet, and disseminated via the internal postmaster messaging system, the Team Brief and the Staff Newsletter. A link to this document will be shared with reception staff and we will also inform Conwy residents about the report.
- 1.8 This monitoring report reflects progress against actions and targets from the Welsh Language Standards. The information included in this report was collated on a continuous basis as the Council undertook the monitoring of its Services.

2.0 SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

- 2.1 Several initiatives have meant an increase in the amount of opportunities for staff to use their Welsh language skills in the workplace and to make it easier for people to use their Welsh language skills in everyday life. Please find a summary below:
- 2.1.1 **Translation** – The Translation Service is going from strength to strength. As well as translating around 4.5 million words a year for Conwy Council, by now, we also provide a translation service for Denbighshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council, Cartrefi Conwy and the Welsh Local Government Association. This means that we receive around 200 translation requests a day. Due to the new agreement providing a translation service for the Welsh Local Government Association this year, the service has now expanded to employ 28 members of staff.
 - 2.1.2 **Collecting information about staff's Welsh Language Skills** – by now, all members of staff (total of 1,813) have given details about their Welsh language skills by using the tool on the intranet. This is mainly due to the Language Services Assistant working tirelessly to ensure that Council staff fill in their information, especially those who don't have access to Conwy's intranet. The information collected is also available when searching for a member of staff on the intranet in order to identify Welsh speakers when contacting other staff in the Council. By now, the information can be sorted into service and sub-section within a service too, and that information has been sent to all Heads of Services. By now, it is possible to use the system to track new employees with the Council to receive information about their Welsh Language skills sooner than before.
 - 2.1.3 **New intranet site** – The Council published a new intranet site at the beginning of September 2017. The Welsh Language and Translation Service worked closely with the Web Team to develop the new intranet site and therefore we can be sure that all the intranet pages and facilities are available in Welsh and in English. By now, all pages have to be approved by the Welsh Language and Translation Service before being published, so this is an useful development.
 - 2.1.4 **Welsh Lessons** - 202 members of staff and 4 Councillors have shown an interest in attending Welsh lessons through a scheme called Work Welsh by the National Learning Welsh Centre. The lessons will start in September. This is a free scheme which provides Welsh lessons on-line, intensive lesson and weekly lessons, depending on the needs of the organisation. It's very encouraging that so many members of staff have shown an interest in the lessons, and we hope it will be a success.
 - 2.1.5 **New Employee Induction Programme Form** – A new version of this form was launched which includes more up-to-date information about the Welsh Language Standards. Through this form, we can ensure that every new employee receives relevant information about working bilingually as the form includes information about the Welsh Language Policies, how to answer the phone bilingually, process for sending correspondence, bilingual e-mail signature, include a sentence about correspondence on e-mail, completed the Welsh Language skills survey on the intranet, provided a fluent Welsh speaker/learner lanyard where necessary, and information about a Welsh spellchecker/Cysgliad on the PC. The form is available on the intranet for all managers to use during the first few weeks of the employee working with the Council to introduce them to the work.
 - 2.1.6 **Complaints** – No complaints were received in relation to the Welsh language.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT / FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

3.1 These are some of the areas which we feel need to be focused on next year:

- 3.1.1 **Welsh Promotion Strategy** – We now hope to introduce a new version of the Strategy over the next few months. We wish to see the Welsh language thriving even more in Conwy, focussing our efforts on the county and the Welsh Government's aim of ensuring 1 million of Welsh speakers by 2050 and making Conwy a county where Welsh culture is alive and viable and where the Welsh language thrives and develops. Due to this, a new, draft version of the Strategy will be much more ambitious, with more focussed areas, which are, in our opinion, fundamental to the success of the Strategy. Those areas will be The Workplace, The School, The Home, The Community, External Factors and The Growth of The Lifelong Learning Welsh Area. In order to realise these aspirations, there will be a need to appoint and finance the post of an additional Welsh Language Officer as the Welsh Language and Translation Manager can't undertake the extra work on top of her current work. The draft version of the new Strategy will be presented to Members during the next few months where there will be an opportunity for them to discuss, consider and come to a decision on whether they wish to support it or not.
- 3.1.2 **Welsh Language Skills** – We hope that it will be possible for the Welsh language skills to be monitored every six months in the Service Performance Review meetings for individual services. It is hoped that this will be another way of ensuring that Heads of Service and Managers know exactly what the Welsh language skills of employees in their services are.
- 3.1.3 **Welsh Language Lessons and Improving Welsh sessions** – We will be monitoring the Welsh Language lessons delivered through Work Welsh during 2018-19 very carefully to ensure that everyone benefits from the scheme. We also intend to arrange Improving Welsh courses for staff and Councillors.
- 3.1.4 **Mystery Shoppers** – We intend on continuing with the Mystery Shopper exercises (visits, phone calls and e-mail messages) during 2018-19 as well, however, from now on, we hope that the results will be monitored every six months during the Service Performance Review meetings for individual meetings as well. It is hoped that this will be another way of ensuring that Heads of Service and Managers know exactly what the results of the Mystery Shopper exercises are and any action arising from them to improve the service.
- 3.1.5 **Flexi System in Welsh** – Unfortunately, this has taken a lot longer than expected due to a delay by the company responsible for VisionTime. However, it is hoped that the company will be able to publish the live Welsh version of it during the next few months.
- 3.1.6 **Welsh speakers appointed** - This year, saw a dramatic fall in the number of Welsh speakers appointed to Welsh essential and Welsh desirable posts. It is felt that this is partly due the Standards not including the Welsh Advantageous category that bridged the gap between Welsh Essential and Welsh Desirable in the past. The percentage of Welsh speakers appointed has fallen from 84% two years ago to 48% this year. It is our intention to reintroduce the Welsh Advantageous category with posts that are advertised in future, as well as other measures.
- 3.1.7 **Staff's Welsh Language Skills** – As we can now confidently report on individual services, we intend to work closely with Heads of Services to ensure that they have an adequate number of fluent Welsh speakers in their teams so that they can strengthen their provision.
- 3.1.8 **Encourage Welsh speakers to use the language in meetings** – during the next year, we hope to encourage Councillors and officers who are Welsh speakers to speak Welsh in meetings, which will be through several initiatives.

4.0. RECORD KEEPING

- 4.1 **Complaints** – No complaints were received in relation to the Welsh language during 2017-18, in comparison with 4 complaints received last year.
- 4.2 **Investigations by the Welsh Language Commissioner** – No investigations were held about Failing to Comply by the Welsh Language Commissioner this year, in comparison with 3 investigations last year.

5.0 BILINGUAL WORKPLACE

- 5.1 **New Employee Induction Programme Form** – A new version of this form was launched which includes more up-to-date information about the Welsh Language Standards. Through this form, we can ensure that every new employee receives relevant information about working bilingually as the form includes information about the Welsh Language Policies, how to answer the phone bilingually, process for sending correspondence, bilingual e-mail signature, include a sentence about correspondence on e-mail, completed the Welsh Language skills survey on the intranet, provided a fluent Welsh speaker/learner lanyard where necessary, and information about a Welsh spellchecker/Cysgliad on the PC. The form is available on the intranet for all managers to use during the first few weeks of the employee working with the Council to introduce them to the work.
- 5.2 **Flexi System in Welsh** – During the year the Welsh Language and Translation Service have been working with officers from Human Resources to develop a flexi system in Welsh. This has taken longer than expected, but hopefully it will be available in the next few months.
- 5.3 **New intranet site** – The Council published a new intranet site at the beginning of September 2017. The Welsh Language and Translation Service worked closely with the Web Team to develop the new intranet site and therefore we can be sure that all the intranet pages and facilities are available in Welsh and in English. By now, all pages have to be approved by the Welsh Language and Translation Service before being published, so this is an useful development. During the work, we also updated the Welsh Language and Translation Service's pages which provide services and material to promote the Welsh language and assist our staff to use Welsh.
- 5.4 **Working Welsh Lanyards** – The demand for Working Welsh lanyards has increased again this year, with more and more staff and the public requesting about them. All members of fluent Welsh speaking staff now wear Working Welsh lanyards or badge. A large number of staff have been in contact during the year to say that they have started many more conversations in Welsh as all Welsh speakers wear the lanyard by now and also mentioned that they hadn't realised that some members of staff spoke Welsh before they started wearing the lanyards, therefore this has been very useful internally as well as with members of the public. Information about the lanyards have been placed on the New Employee Induction Form as well.
- 5.5 **Lanyards for Welsh Learners** – The Lanyards for Welsh Learners continue to be very popular and the demand for the lanyards have increased this year as well. Feedback was received from Welsh learners over the last few years, saying they didn't feel comfortable wearing the Working Welsh lanyards as they felt that they were for fluent Welsh speakers, therefore we purchased lanyards for Welsh Learners which has the word 'Dysgwr' (Welsh for Learner) on them. A vast number of staff wear them daily. We had additional feedback this year noting that the public and staff are a lot more patient with staff who learn Welsh and who wish to practise their skills and some have started offering services in Welsh when dealing with the public for the first time due to this.

5.6 **Language Skills Tool and E-mail Messages** – This tool has now been in place for over a year and it is very successful. With Information Technology’s assistance, the Language Skills Tool is connected to the staff list who have an e-mail account. So, if a member of staff writes an e-mail to another staff member, and he/she speaks Welsh, then a message appears above his/her name saying:

“Rydw i’n siarad Cymraeg / I can speak Welsh”.

We had very positive feedback about this as it has been a great help to staff when communicating with others as it makes it much easier to know what staff’s language skills are and makes it easier to start e-mail conversations in Welsh. Over the last year, many members of staff have contacted us to say how useful this tool has been to help them and noted that they’ve started many more e-mail conversations in Welsh since the tool was first introduced. We also had feedback during a Corporate Induction session from new staff who noted they were delighted with the tool and that it was very useful especially as they hardly knew anyone yet.

5.7 **Working Welsh Logo at the bottom of e-mails** – Staff who can speak Welsh include a logo at the bottom of their e-mail signature to let customers and colleagues know that they can speak Welsh. We have also developed a logo for Welsh learners noting ‘Dw i’n dysgu Cymraeg’ (I’m learning Welsh). A large number of Welsh learners include this logo at the bottom of their e-mail signatures.

5.8 **Main reception** - The Council’s main reception/switchboard is located at the Council’s main offices in Bodlondeb. Each one of the main reception/switchboard posts has been designated Welsh essential and each one of the 7 members of staff (100%) who works there is bilingual and has Welsh language skills at or above level 4.

5.9 **Staff’s Welsh Language Skills**

5.9.1 Since developing the tool with the Information Technology Service, which appears on everyone’s PCs to collect information about the Welsh language skills of staff, there has been a massive progress in the accuracy of staff’s Welsh language skills. By now, all members of staff can use this tool, and we have, with the Information Technology Service’s assistance, been able to collect information about all members of staff by now, including those who don’t have access to the intranet. With the exception of schools, the authority employs 1,813 members of permanent staff. Below are the details for the 1,813 members of staff who have provided information about their Welsh Language skills:

Staff’s Welsh Language Skills:

Listening / Speaking		
Lefel	No. of staff	%
Level 0	477	26
Level 1	429	23
Level 2	181	10
Level 3	191	11
Level 4	181	10
Level 5	354	20
TOTAL	1,813	

Reading / Understanding		
Lefel	No. of staff	%
Level 0	452	24
Level 1	403	22
Level 2	175	10
Level 3	229	13
Level 4	200	11
Level 5	354	20
TOTAL	1,813	

Writing		
Lefel	No. of staff	%
Level 0	556	31
Level 1	334	18
Level 2	208	11
Level 3	235	13
Level 4	175	10
Level 5	305	17
TOTAL	1,813	

5.9.2. Council staff have used the tool on the intranet to note their Welsh Language Skills by using the table found in the Language Skills Strategy. Above are the language skills of all members of staff who have answered the questions on the intranet.

5.9.3 From the above, it can be seen that 30% have classed themselves as fluent Welsh speakers (Levels 4 and 5). This is consistent with 31.5% of staff who noted they were fluent Welsh speakers in 2016-17 and 27.4% that noted they were fluent Welsh speakers during 2015-16.

5.9.4 We have sent details per service to all Heads of Service and that breakdown can be seen below. We will be working closely with them to strengthen the current provision.

Service	Total no. of staff	No. of staff who speak Welsh fluently (Levels 4 a 5)	No. of staff who are learning Welsh (Levels 1, 2 and 3)	No. of staff who have no knowledge of Welsh (Level 0)
Human Resources	22	4 (18%)	11 (50%)	7 (32%)
Chief Executive's Department	6	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)
Education	94	51 (54%)	33 (35%)	10 (11%)
Environment, Roads and Facilities	222	54 (24%)	96 (43%)	72 (33%)
Internal Audit	14	2 (14%)	7 (50%)	5 (36%)
Corporate Finance Service	38	7 (18%)	22 (58%)	9 (24%)
Community Development Service	297	86 (29%)	144 (48%)	67 (23%)
Corporate Events, Communication, Customers and Marketing	23	13 (56%)	5 (22%)	5 (22%)
Social Services – Adults	496	146 (29%)	213 (43%)	137 (28%)
Social Services – Children	113	37 (33%)	70 (62%)	6 (5%)
Revenue and Benefits	90	26 (29%)	36 (40%)	28 (31%)
Regulatory and Housing	141	23 (16%)	49 (35%)	69 (49%)
Estates and Asset Management	10	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)
Information Technology and Digital Transformation	80	18 (23%)	42 (52%)	20 (25%)
Theatres and Conference Centre	81	11 (13%)	42 (52%)	28 (35%)
Corporate Improvement and Development Team	13	1 (8%)	7 (53%)	5 (39%)
Law and Governance	73	53 (73%)	15 (21%)	5 (6%)
TOTAL	1,813	535 (30%)	802 (44%)	477 (26%)

5.10 **Recruiting - Jobs advertised during the year** – Please find below the number/percentage of jobs advertised during the year where Welsh was essential or desirable, and the number and percentage of posts where Welsh speakers were appointed. It is felt that there is a gap now that the Standards don't include the Welsh Advantageous category that bridged the gap between Welsh Essential and Welsh Desirable. This is a step back from our Welsh Language Scheme because in the previous years we saw an increase in the number of staff who spoke Welsh who were appointed in the Welsh Advantageous and Welsh Desirable categories. Two years ago, 84% of Welsh speakers were appointed to Welsh essential, advantageous and desirable posts, this fell to 68.5% of Welsh speaking staff were appointed in Welsh essential and desirable posts in 2016-17. This year, the percentage has fallen again to 48% of staff. We intend on reintroducing the Welsh Advantageous category for future posts.

DESIGNATION	NO. AND % BY LANGUAGE CATEGORY	NO. AND % OF POSTS WHERE WELSH SPEAKERS WERE APPOINTED
ESSENTIAL	28% - 105 posts	Of the 92 posts recruited to, Welsh speakers (level 4 and above) were appointed to 92 (100%) of them. To date, no one has been appointed to 13 of these posts as the recruiting process is ongoing.
DESIRABLE	72% - 264 posts	Of the 243 posts recruited to, 68 of the officers spoke Welsh fluently (28%). To date, no one has been appointed to 16 of these posts as the recruiting process is ongoing.
TOTAL IN ALL CATEGORIES	369 posts	Therefore, from the 335 posts recruited to, a total of 160 were fluent Welsh speakers, a percentage of 48%.

5.11 **Welsh Language training completed** – Please find below the information about the number of staff that have received training in Welsh to a specific qualification level and the number of staff who have had language awareness training during 2017-18.

5.11.1 COURSES IN THE COMMUNITY

Date/Length of Course	Suitable for	Details	Application	Total who attended
Beginners 2017/18	Those wishing to learn Welsh	One year course for people who wish to learn Welsh	Staff's personal choice	2
Middle WLPLAN 2017/18				4
Pellach (Further) 2017/18				2
Pellach Drwy'r Post (Further by post) 2016/18				2
Uwch (Higher) 2017/18				4
TOTAL NUMBER THAT ATTENDED THE COURSE				14

5.11.2 VARIOUS COURSES OFFERED / HELD IN WELSH

Course offered?	How many offered in Welsh?	Total attendees
Safe Recruitment For Managers (Standard 128, (a) recruitment and interviewing)	1	The course wasn't held due to insufficient numbers.
PDR – Managing the PDR Process (Standard 128, (b) performance management)	1	The course wasn't held due to insufficient numbers.
Managing the disciplinary process (Standard 128, (c) complaints and disciplinary procedures)	1	The course wasn't held due to insufficient numbers.
Corporate Health & Safety (Standard 128, (dd) health and safety)	1	The course wasn't held due to insufficient numbers.

5.11.3 CORPORATE INDUCTION SESSION / WELSH LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Date/Length of Course	Suitable for	Details	Application	Total who attended
12/5/2017	New members of staff – (Every new member of staff should attend a corporate induction session within 6 months of starting to work for the Council).	During the day, officers are given an introduction to Conwy, are addressed in Welsh by the Leader via a video clip and are addressed by the Chief Executive, with part of the address in Welsh. Presentations during the day are presented in Welsh, including a presentation from the Welsh Language and Translation Service about implementing the Welsh Language Standards, the help and advice on offer, using Welsh internally and Welsh language awareness. (Staff from various services of Conwy County Borough Council)	Compulsory for every new member of staff who starts working for the Council	27
14/7/2017				29
29/9/2017				17
24/11/2017				22
2/2/2019				27
22/3/2019				19
TOTAL NUMBER THAT ATTENDED THE COURSE				141

5.11.3.1 From this year's statistics, it can be seen that 141 members of staff have had Welsh awareness information this year.

5.11.4 202 members of staff and 4 Councillors have shown an interest in attending Welsh lessons through a scheme called Work Welsh by the National Learning Welsh Centre. The lessons will start in September. This is a free scheme which provides Welsh lessons on-line, intensive lesson and weekly lessons, depending on the needs of the organisation.

6.0 Actions to Comply with the Welsh Language Standards

6.1 List of actions taken to comply with the Service Delivery Standards

- We have provided communication to staff around responding to correspondence, arranging meetings, telephone answering, social media, recruitment, e-mail messages, signs, and internal communication.
- We have ensured that staff offer people the opportunity to be transferred to a Welsh speaker when contacting the Council (if they aren't Welsh speakers themselves).
- We have provided wording for staff to include in letter templates, offering residents an opportunity to receive correspondence in Welsh in future.
- We have notified staff arranging public meetings that all invites to the meeting should be bilingual, that simultaneous translators should be arranged for public meetings and that organisers of public meetings should remind people at the start of meetings that they can contribute in Welsh.
- All documents produced for public use will be bilingual, including promotional materials and exhibition documentation.
- The interface and menus on every page of our website are bilingual.
- All signage is checked for compliance with the Standards.
- Signs have been placed in main reception areas to state that people may communicate through the medium of Welsh.
- All public notices and adverts are bilingual.
- All grant forms received in Welsh will be responded to in Welsh and any interviews needed will be conducted through the medium of Welsh (with the aid of a simultaneous translator if needed).

6.2 List of actions taken to comply with the Operational Standards

- We have produced a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language and this document has been published on our intranet.
- The interface, menus and every page on every page of our intranet are bilingual.
- We have introduced a HR process where all staff will be asked whether they wish to receive their contract of employment in Welsh.
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence relating to his or her employment and which is addressed to him/ her personally (in Welsh).
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence relating to his or her training needs or requirement in Welsh.
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive documents that outline their performance objectives in Welsh and we will provide documents in Welsh if that is their wish.
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive documents that outlines their career plan in Welsh and we will provide documents in Welsh if that is their wish.
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive forms that record and authorise annual leave, absences from work and flexible working hours in Welsh.
- Staff are able to make complaints in Welsh through the corporate complaints procedure and this has been publicised to staff.
- The Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure already states that staff may make a complaint in Welsh and has the right to respond to a complaint made about him or her in Welsh. Staff have been made aware of that right.

- All staff will be offered an opportunity to host any meetings regarding complaints made against them in Welsh (with or without the use of a translator).
- Any record of decision relating to a complaint against a member of staff will be issued in Welsh (and any subsequent meeting will be conducted in Welsh).
- Our HR policies state that staff can respond in Welsh to any allegations made against them.
- Computer software for checking spelling and grammar has been provided to all staff who speak or learn Welsh and Welsh Language interfaces for software (such as Microsoft Word) is provided in Welsh when staff wish to make use of this interface.
- Our intranet homepage is in Welsh.
- Any pages on the intranet that have corresponding pages in Welsh includes a direct link to the Welsh language page.
- Pages have been created on the intranet which provides services and support material to promote the Welsh language and assist staff in using the Welsh language.
- The interface and menus on the intranet are in Welsh.
- The Council has carried out an assessment of the Welsh language skills of employees through a self-assessment.
- The Council actively promotes opportunities during working hours for employees to receive basic Welsh Language courses.
- The Council provides opportunities for staff wanting to further their basic Welsh training through offering further training.
- The Council has developed an e-learning module, to raise staff's awareness of the Welsh Language.
- Information to raise awareness of the Welsh language is provided to all new staff.
- We have provided wording for staff to use on their e-mail signature, to inform people if they are fluent Welsh speakers or are learners.

6.3 List of actions taken to comply with the Policy Making Standards

- We have informed managers to consider the effects of any new policy (or amendments to policy) on opportunities for people to use the Welsh Language and ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.
- When a new policy is formulated, we will ensure that all managers are aware of the need to consider the effects of policy decisions on the Welsh Language. This will be done through introducing a section on formal Council reports which will demonstrate what kinds of consideration has been given to the Welsh Language.
- If research is commissioned that is intended to assist with policy making, we will ensure that the research considers how the policy decision could be made so that it does not have a negative impact on the Welsh Language.
- We will inform managers to ensure that any consultation on policies offers the opportunity for people to comment on the effects of any new policies on the Welsh Language use.