

Welsh Language Commissioner Feedback

Report to	Welsh Language Steering Group
Date of Meeting	9 November, 2021
Lead Member	Nicola Stubbins / Councillor Huw Hilditch Roberts
Report Author	Manon Celyn Roberts, Welsh Language Officer

1. What is the report about

This report is about results of the Welsh Language Commissioner's Monitoring Report.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide an update on compliance checks carried out by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

3. What are the recommendations?

To note the findings and to approve the Action Plan.

4. Report Details

Every year, the Welsh Language Commissioner carries out checks amongst organisations that are implementing the statutory Welsh Language Standards, to ensure those organisations are complying with the legislation.

The Commissioner's team also arrange an annual meeting to discuss the findings and to report on progress with the annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report.

Dylan Jones, on behalf of the Commissioner, explained the Commissioner's new way of working from this year on looking at organizations' compliance with the relevant standards. Recruitment being their priority.

THE FINDINGS

1. SERVICE DELIVERY

Correspondence

During May and June 2021 Dylan Jones had a negative experience when corresponding with the Council by receiving English only responses to correspondence sent via the Council's online form. MC explained the process when the Council receives such correspondence and explained that she had discussed with the managers of the relevant departments. It seems that the mistakes of individual officers were to blame at all times. Managers have sent a message to all their staff and a message has been sent to the Senior Management Team for cascading.

Telephone calls via an automated system

During the 2021-22 surveys, it was noted that portions of the automated message when phoning the main Council number were not clear. It was noted that the words "a ddarperir" (provided) were not pronounced correctly as well as "yn ôl a" (back and) rather than "yn unol â" (in accordance).

Body producing and publishing documents and forms

During the 2021-22 surveys it was discovered that not all documents and forms contained a statement on the English versions that they were also available in Welsh. There was 1 example of a document that did not comply with standard 49, namely: Denbighshire Schools Information Guide 2021-22.

There were 2 examples of a form that did not comply with standard 50A. These were: Denbighshire County Council concern / complaint form.

Receive visitors to the organisation's buildings

During the 2019-2020 surveys 2 visits were made to the reception area of the Council offices in Caledfryn, Denbigh. No Welsh language service was received during any visit.

MC noted that one member of staff (who was a Welsh learner) had left and it was therefore proposed to appoint a Welsh speaker prior to the pandemic. The proposal is still in place and therefore a Welsh speaking receptionist will be appointed once the reception in Caledfryn is open again.

It was noted that 7/9 staff were Welsh speaking and on a rota system to be on the reception at County Hall in Ruthin.

Courses

DJ asked about Welsh swimming lessons and if they were still offered. MC noted that the swimming courses were still offered in Welsh but there needed to be enough children registered on the course to be able to proceed with the lessons and people were not willing to wait for them to fill, therefore chose to take English lessons.

2. POLICY MAKING

Consider the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language

It was noted that the Council's self-assessment evidence when considering the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language was positive. The possibility of exploring this further was discussed with a view to creating an example of effective practice for that particular section on the Commissioner's new website.

3. Promoting the Welsh language

Assess the achievement of a Welsh language promotion strategy

MC noted that work is underway to revise the strategy for a launch at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Denbigh in 2022. MC also noted the frustration that the results of the

census in terms of the Welsh language will not be available by the time the new Strategy is published and therefore very difficult to see if the target set 5 years ago has been met. This also has an impact on setting a target for the next strategy as well as knowing where resources need to be targeted. The ability to revise the strategy was discussed once the results of the census had been announced. MC mentioned the possibility of planning a 10 year strategy with more ambitious long term targets. DJ noted the need to ensure compliance with the relevant standards and the need to assess the extent to which they have followed the strategy and met its targets set 5 years after its publication.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The decision contributes to the development of the Welsh Language and culture, which underpins the Council's Corporate Plan.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no costs associated with this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well Being Impact Assessment?

Whilst no formal Well-being Impact Assessment is needed for this report, it is worth noting some of the key benefits in relation to the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards.

One of the key components of the well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is having: "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation".

The Council also has a role, through its Welsh Language Standards, to promote opportunities for local communities to get involved in Welsh Language activities.

8. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The main risk is to the reputation of the authority, as we have already made a commitment in our Welsh Language Strategy and through the Welsh Language Standards to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace and in communities.

9. Action Plan

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Report issues to relevant departments	Manon Celyn	November 2019
Send effective practice of Policy Making to the WLC so they can include on their new website as effective practice.	Manon Celyn	December 2021
Internal communications to remind staff of their duty to comply with the Welsh Language Standards around telephone answering, responding to	Manon Celyn	November 2021- March 2022

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correspondence and arranging meetings.		
Carry out mid-year internal research to check on compliance	Manon Celyn	April 2022