



**Fire and Rescue Service Monitoring
Report for the
Welsh Language Board
relating to the period
1st April 2008 – 1st April 2009**

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1. Introduction

The amended North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Scheme received the recommendation of the Welsh Language Board under Section 16 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 on 11 September 2006.

The monitoring report relates to the period from 1 April 2008 to 1 April 2009.

This period has been very exciting for the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to the Welsh Language, and much progress and development were seen in the promotion of the Welsh Language.

This is an outline of activities during the period of the report.

The Service's SAPPO relating to the Linguistic Skills Strategy was issued for staff during the monitoring year after being passed by the Executive Group. The policy outlines the Linguistic Skills Strategy as part of the Fire and Rescue Service's Welsh Language Policy (See Appendix 1)

In April 2008, the Fire and Rescue Service's bilingual intranet was launched. This was an important step forward in the Service's aim of improving the bilingual image internally and offering language choice to staff. The intranet aims to be fully bilingual, and a section on Welsh Language resources has been included.

The Service's first award for 'Contribution to the Welsh Language' was presented during the Urdd Eisteddfod in Conwy in May. This was a new award to recognize a member of staff who has made a valuable contribution to the Welsh Language. Staff were asked to nominate members of staff, and the winner chosen by the Gweithgor Iaith. The winner received a trophy as a sign of appreciation as well as a family ticket to the Eisteddfod. (See Appendix 2)

In June 2008, 5 members of staff received Media Training through the medium of Welsh. This is the first time such training was introduced through the medium of Welsh, and the session, lasting a day, prepared current members of staff for television and radio interviews etc.

In September, to coincide with our Linguistic Skills Strategy, CDs were produced to assist staff members with learning Welsh. Following collaboration with Coleg Llysfasi, Ruthin, two CDs were recorded, namely Introduction to the Welsh Language 1 and 2, and both were recorded at Sain recording studios.

In July, an operational member of staff was appointed as Welsh Language Awareness Facilitator. He has begun his work of introducing Welsh Language Awareness Sessions through PowerPoint presentations and discussions with every member of staff. By April 2009, he had presented 63 sessions to 475 members of staff, of which 6 sessions were conducted through the medium of Welsh. The sessions were very popular, and positive feedback was received with much support amongst staff towards the Welsh Language. (See Appendix 3)

A cartoon character was designed to coincide with the strategy and language awareness sessions, and a competition was held internally to come up with the name for the character Tanwen. Tanwen is used to promote the Welsh Language internally and is seen at the sessions and on scribble pads to promote the Welsh Language.

Dylan Bryn Roberts visited the Service in November on behalf of the Welsh Language Board to undertake a Complaints Review. We received a very positive report with a judgement of 'full compliance' with the Welsh Language Scheme in dealing with complaints regarding services through the medium of Welsh. It was concluded that we are able to offer a service of high standard to members of the public wishing to complain about our lack of services in Welsh, and that our organisation deals appropriately with such complaints. (See Appendix 4)

Also in November, the process of establishing Language Champions in every county began, to support members of staff who are learning Welsh and to coincide with our Linguistic Skills Strategy.

The Service's Linguistic Skills Strategy was officially launched on 23rd January 2009. The Chair of the Welsh Language Board was present at the launch, as well as representatives from Coleg Llysfasi, some of the Language Champions and members of the Senior Management Team. (See Appendix 5)

The Service wishes to increase the Welsh Language capacity of the organisation in providing public services, and the next step is to ensure that new staff who cannot already speak Welsh can show basic linguistic courtesy. From January 2009, new members of staff joining the Service must show Level 1 competency when joining the Service.

Welsh tests are being introduced during the recruitment period of new staff, whereby everybody who comes for an interview must pass a Welsh test as a condition of accepting a post.

The tests are also offered to current members of staff who wish to gain a qualification or improve their Welsh language skills. On the day of

the launch, some of the Senior Officers sat the test, with very encouraging results. Coleg Llysfasi, Ruthin is responsible for marking the tests.

At the start of the year, the Service was recruiting Wholetime Firefighters and offered outreach sessions to encourage every section of the community to consider a career as a firefighter. Part of the session included a presentation on the Welsh Language, the new language strategy and what is expected of staff joining the Service.

In April, members of staff receive their annual Individual Development Review by their Managers, and this year, a question regarding staff skills in Welsh Language was included in the Review form. This will be an effective way of recording staff skills in the Welsh Language and of measuring progress of staff and identifying any necessary training.

The Service aims to promote the Welsh Language internally and continues to inform staff members of the recent activities in regular articles, as well as in Y Golofn Gymraeg (the Welsh column) which appears in every issue of Y Fflam, the internal magazine for staff (See Appendix 6). We have 'Ymadrodd Welsh yr Wythnos' (Welsh phrase of the week) which is included in a weekly newsletter sent to staff regarding the week's events.

We have also set up successful partnerships during the year with other organisations including Coleg Llysfasi, and we have strengthened other partnerships such as with North Wales Police.

2. Managing and Administering the Scheme

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Mr Colin Hanks, is responsible for the Welsh Language portfolio within the Fire and Rescue Service. He is chair of the Chief Fire Officers' Association Welsh Language Group which meets quarterly. The Welsh Language Board is represented in these meetings and representatives of South Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services are on the committee. The main aim of the Group is to monitor what is happening in terms of the Welsh Language within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The Corporate Communications Manager is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Welsh Language Scheme. The Service also has a Translator to assist with this work.

Decisions such as the Linguistic Skills Strategy go before the Executive Group and then before the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Fire and Rescue Service continues to attend committees and working groups involved in promoting bilingualism.

The Gweithgor Iaith, which includes members of staff from various departments such as Human Resources, Corporate Communications, SLDC and IT, are involved in decisions made regarding the Welsh Language Scheme, and the Gweithgor Iaith met on the following dates during the monitoring year:

- 22nd May 2008
- 30th September 2009
- 27th November 2009
- 30th January 2009
- 31st March 2009

The CFOA – Cymru Welsh Language Group includes staff who deal with matters relating to the Welsh Language from South Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services. The meeting is chaired by Colin Hanks, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Gareth Smith from the Welsh Language Board is also a representative in the meeting.

Meetings were held on the following dates during the monitoring year:

- 8th May 2008
- 29th May 2008
- 1st October 2009
- 2nd April 2009

Also, a new Executive Group was set up recently with SLDC and Human Resources managers to discuss relating to the implementation of the Linguistic Skills Strategy.

Staff also represent the Service at other meetings, including:

- Rhwydiaith
- North Wales Bilingualism Forum
- Gwynedd Welsh Language Charter

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3. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

Task	Responsibility	Progress to date	Evidence
Promoting the Scheme internally			
Find ways of raising the profile of the Scheme by: awareness training; and access to advice and guidance.	Corporate Comms. Manager	<p>Significant progress made during the monitoring period. A new post, Welsh Language Awareness Facilitator, created to introduce Welsh Language Awareness Sessions.</p> <p>Language Awareness Sessions began by PowerPoint presentations in October 2008.</p> <p>Bilingual intranet set up in April 2008, available to all members of the Fire and Rescue Service.</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Scheme is referred to in the Language Awareness Sessions. (Appendix 4). After the sessions have ended, new members of staff will receive the session during their induction.</p> <p>Intranet.</p>
Promoting the Scheme externally			
Continue to seek ways of improving the effectiveness of our website in promoting our image as a bilingual organisation.	Corporate Comms. Officer	The website is fully bilingual and includes information on the Welsh Language Scheme. Information regarding the Linguistic Skills Strategy has been added to our website.	<p>See website http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/page.asp?page=114</p>
<p>Guidance was prepared for external agencies and contractors to bring their attention to the requirements of the Scheme.</p> <p>This to include strong encouragement for third parties who work on fire and rescue premises to erect bilingual signage.</p>	Support Services Managers	The Services's Facilities Department is shared with the Police, and this is operated between both organisations.	<p>The paragraph below is added to any documents/paperwork sent to contractors:</p> <p><i>The Fire and Rescue Service has approved its Welsh Language Scheme which notes that all temporary or permanent signage on its premises must be in Welsh and English. Contractors are advised to comply with this policy and to contact the FRS Corporate Communications Manager on 01745 535285 for advice and proofreading services for any signs before they are finally produced.</i></p>
Update information given to contractors	Estates	A bilingual leaflet has been produced to give to	See above

and others to reiterate the importance of our bilingual public image.	Manager	contractors.	
Develop a system whereby written guidance regarding our Welsh Language Scheme is given as a matter of course to external agencies and contractors.	Support Services Manager		See above
Providing the internal infrastructure			
Clarify the responsibility in relation to providing advice and guidance for matters relation to the Welsh language.	Translator	Information leaflet has been produced and distributed to staff outlining the Welsh Language Scheme.	Information leaflet
Determine which groups would oversee the various tasks relating to the Linguistic Skills Strategy most effectively in future, including maintaining a sufficient proportion of staff that have bilingual skills.	Gweithgor Iaith	A paper on the Linguistic Skills Strategy was accepted by the Executive Group, and it was agreed to adopt a generic Welsh Language Scheme for the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services. A SAPPO regarding the Linguistic Skills Strategy was produced.	Attend a course. Linguistic Skills Strategy SAPPO (See Appendix 1)
Making it happen			
Increase the use of appropriate advice and guidance in developing policies and work plans. This to include identifying ways of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh Language.	Translator	Work in progress. Advice was sought from other organisations. North Wales Police came to share their experiences with CFOA Cymru Welsh Language Group, as well as the Fire and Rescue Service Executive Group.	Seek other advice – invite North to a CFOA Welsh Language Group meeting
Strengthened the guidance issued to staff regarding the promotion of our bilingual public image, in order to reinforce what the service expects of them.	Translator	The Welsh Language Awareness sessions will be introduced in October. The sessions will emphasise the need to show courtesy towards the Welsh Language.	Language Awareness Sessions (See Appendix 4)
Introduce linguistic skills targets into the annual target-setting process. Develop a Linguistic Skills Strategy, linked in with the IPDS strategy in order to ensure that the necessary linguistic skills are available within the workforce to deliver services in the preferred language of the public.	Corporate Planning Manager	A report by an external company was commissioned to investigate the linguistic needs of the types of posts within the Fire and Rescue Service, paying attention to: consideration to providing a bilingual service within local communities and the current ability to provide a bilingual service within current team structures. The objectives were to identify which functions/posts should be designated as Welsh essential. To offer	Cwmni Iaith Report (See Appendix 7)

		recommendations regarding which measures need to be implemented in relation to designating the linguistic requirements of posts, considering the requirements of the amended Welsh Language Scheme. Incorporating any recommendations agreed upon within a new recruitment and appointing policy. The Linguistic Skills Strategy agreed with the Executive Group.	
<p>This strategy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how desirable bilingual skills would be to fulfil individual roles effectively • Seek ways to increase the proportion of the workforce who can speak Welsh (including by suitable targets) • Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge of Welsh to provide at least some of our services through the medium of Welsh • Implement a suitable system which is consistent and objective to assess linguistic ability 	Development Manager and HR Managers	This is part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy.	Work with HR Dept. to close the gap and to monitor in future.
Look at the possibility of introducing new requirements for at least some posts whereby non-Welsh speaking candidates for posts where Welsh skills are designated as 'desirable' would be required to commit to attaining a prescribed competency level in Welsh within an agreed period agreed.	HR Manager	Part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy.	Linguistic Skills Strategy SAPPO (See Appendix 1)
Achieve ways of ensuring that job descriptions are developed which reflect the bilingual skills requirements of specific posts (rather than generic roles)	HR Manager(s)	Part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy.	Work with HR Dept.
Ensure that learning Welsh is included in the Services's development programme	Development Manager	Part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy. Every new member of staff must pass the level 1 test. A question on Welsh Language ability is now included in the Individual Development Review.	Linguistic Skills Strategy SAPPO(See Appendix 1)

Introduce regular assessments of Welsh language skills of staff in priority posts	Translator	Linguistic Skills Strategy SAPPO (See Appendix 1)	
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Develop and adopt suitable Performance Indicators measuring the progress of the Service in achieving a workforce that has the necessary Welsh Language skills	Gweithgor Iaith	Meeting with Corporate Planning Manager November 07	Use HR databases following staff linguistic abilities questionnaire
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Continuous self-awareness			
Introduce systems to identify serious shortages in bilingual capability within employee groups, and to clarify the procedure for resolving any shortages through training or re-distribution of staff	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Linguistic Skills Strategy SAPPO (See Appendix 1)	Work with HR Dept. to close the gap.
Increase the use of appropriate qualitative assessments in order to establish how effective we are performing regarding public relations	Corporate Comms. Manager	Bilingual intranet. Establish a system of noting press calls dealt with in Welsh.	
Integrate the work of monitoring the profile of the service into the annual processes associated with the Wales Programme for Improvement	Corporate Planning Manager	Meeting with the Corporate Planning Manager	Agreed to proceed with the skills programme and to begin monitoring.
Ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Authority, including statistical and descriptive information on the linguistic profile of the service and its performance. This is in addition to the regular updates to the Welsh Language Board	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)	The Corporate Planning Manager issues a completed report	

4. Welsh Language Board Complaints Review

The Welsh Language Board Complaints Review was conducted by Dylan Bryn Roberts at the Service Headquarters in St. Asaph on 10th November 2008, based on the following context:

Context

“As part of the organisation’s arrangements for monitoring the scheme, an appropriate complaints procedure should be adopted to deal with grievances regarding the scheme. Such a procedure should be easy to use and publicised, to ensure that the public have easy access to someone in the organisation able to deal with their problems. Another option is to use the organisation’s normal complaints procedure within which grievances regarding the scheme can be specifically monitored.” (Welsh Language Schemes: Their preparation and approval in accordance with Welsh Language Act – Welsh Language Board statutory guidance, 1996)

“Dylai pob awdurdod sicrhau fod trefniadau ffurfiol yn eu lle er mwyn cofnodi a delio â chwynion mewn perthynas â’r Iaith Gymraeg neu’r cynllun iaith.” (Gorolwg o Adroddiadau Monitro 2006/07: Argraffiadau ac Arfer Da, Welsh Language Board February 2008)

- a) sut mae’r corff yn cofnodi gwybodaeth am y cyflenwad o swyddogion mae’n cyflogi sydd â sgiliau Cymraeg?
- b) sut mae’r corff yn gwybod bod eu staff dwyieithog yn y manau cywir i’w alluogi i ddarparu service Cymraeg boddhaol a chyflawn yn unol â’i gynllun iaith Gymraeg?

A very complimentary report was received with level 1 compliance for every question in all sections.

We received 2 recommendations, namely in terms of mainstreaming the Welsh Language Scheme, the Complaints SAPPO should include the following references:

- Reference to the Welsh Language Act under Section 6

5. Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Performance Indicators

The Service's Welsh Language Scheme is committed to achieving 12 Local Performance Indicators.

PI1	Number and % of emergency calls that were successfully dealt with in Welsh.
Comment	<p>During the 2008/2009 financial year, the Control Room received 10,237 emergency calls from the public.</p> <p>Of 10,237 calls: Bilingual greeting, the call continued in English, 5161 i.e. 50.4% English greeting, the call continued in English, 1456 i.e. 14.2% Bilingual greeting, the call continued in Welsh, 272 i.e. 2.7%</p> <p>Other statistics recorded: Bilingual greeting, caller responded in Welsh, the call continued in English, 7 i.e. 0.07% English greeting, caller responded in Welsh, transferred to bilingual operator, 3 i.e. 0.03% English greeting, caller responded in Welsh, call continued in English, 1 i.e. 0.01% Welsh greeting, call continued in English, 1 i.e. 0.01% Bilingual greeting, caller responded in Welsh, call continued in English, no bilingual operator available, 1 i.e. 0.01% English greeting, the call continued in Welsh, 2 i.e. 0.02%</p>
PI2	Percentage and number of staff that have bilingual skills
Comment	<p>Of the 864 staff questionnaires returned in 2006/07, 361 employees have bilingual skills, i.e. 41.8% . From March 2009, Welsh language skills are recorded during the Individual Development Review for all members of staff, therefore we will be able to better measure this from now on.</p>
PI3	Number and % of main reception roles that were designated Welsh 'essential' and were filled by bilingual staff.
Comment	<p>All main reception posts are designated as Welsh essential. Unfortunately it wasn't possible to fill 1 post because of a lack of bilingual candidates.</p>
PI4	Number and % of staff who have received Welsh language training to a specific competency level.
Comment	<p>Since the Linguistic Skills Strategy is still in its early days, the figures are low for the monitoring year. 6 (0.56%) members of staff have passed Level 1 Welsh and 2 have passed Level 2 (0.19%). Another 3 (0.28%) members of staff are following Bangor University courses.</p>
PI5	Number and % of staff within the service that can speak Welsh – by department, by job grade, by workplace.

Comment	From March 2009, Welsh language skills are recorded during the Individual Development Review for each member of staff, therefore we will be better able to measure this from now on and for the next monitoring year.
PI6	Number and % of staff who have received Language Awareness training.
Comment	By 1st April 2009, 63 language awareness session had been conducted (of which 6 were conducted through the medium of Welsh) to 475 members of staff, i.e. 44.56%
PI7	Percentage and number of posts designated as Welsh 'essential' filled by staff that have bilingual skills.
Comment	We intend to establish a monitoring system through HR as part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy.
PI8	Percentage and number of posts designated as Welsh 'desirable' filled by staff that have bilingual skills;
Comment	We intend to establish a monitoring system through HR as part of the Linguistic Skills Strategy. We are looking again at designating the linguistic requirements of posts following a report compiled by Cwmni Iaith.
PI9	Number of complaints from sources apart from staff or their representatives regarding the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and % of complaints dealt with, in accordance with the standards set by the Authority.
Comment	No complaints were received during the monitoring period.
PI10	Number of complaints from staff or their representatives regarding language issues
Comment	No complaints were received during the monitoring period.
PI11	Performance against any specific targets adopted as part of the performance management framework.
Comment	We intend to look at meaningful targets.
PI12	Number of agencies and contractors who have received guidance to comply with the Welsh Language Scheme.
Comment	Every agency and contractor receives information that they must comply with the Welsh Language Scheme

Appendix 1



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE ORDERS

Section 1 Order No. 8

Subject: Linguistic Skills Strategy

1. Contents

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2. Definitions and Abbreviations

- NWF&RS - North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- SAPPO - Service Administrative Policy & Procedure Order. A mandatory internal document, which must be complied with, detailing an Administrative Order in the form of a Service Policy or Procedure(s), which is controlled from within NWF&RS's Documentation System.
- HR - Human Resources
- SLDC - Service Learning and Development Centre
- ALTE - Association of Language Testers in Europe
- Cwmni Iaith - An independent company specialising in promoting the Welsh language and supporting organisations in developing bilingual practices.
- IDR - Individual Development Review

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the Linguistic Skills Strategy as part of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service Welsh Language Policy.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy extends to all areas of the Service and is directed at all persons employed by the Service.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Corporate Communications Manager for the content, issue and any further amendment of this Order.
- 5.2 To ensure the continuous effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures, it is the responsibility of all personnel to indicate any weakness, omission or amendment that may be considered in order to improve the policy's effective use.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of all relevant personnel to make themselves familiar with this Order to ensure that all areas are adhered to.

6. Internal/External Related and Other Relevant Documents

- 6.1 SAPPO Section 1 Order No. 5 - Welsh Language Policy

6.2 SAPPO Section 6 Order No. 23 – Individual Development Reviews (see page 6)

7. Introduction

7.1 The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Welsh Language Scheme 2006-2009 sets out how the Authority will abide by the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality. It's aim is to deliver a service that is of the same high standard and quality in both languages. It serves to;

7.1.1 Offer the public a real language choice

7.1.2 Recognise that Service users are able to express their views and needs better in their preferred language

7.1.3 Recognise that offering a language choice is a matter of good practice.

7.2 The Scheme is approved by the Welsh Language Board under section 16 of the Welsh Languages Act 1993 and is reviewed regularly (every three years).

7.3 The Linguistic Skills Strategy is a statutory requirement to provide a means of responding appropriately to the Service's commitments contained in the Welsh Language Scheme. The purpose of this Strategy is to take the Welsh Language Scheme further by providing a planned and strategic infrastructure for future implementation. It also satisfies the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for Wales 2008-2011.

7.4 This means providing staff with linguistic skills in accordance with the Welsh Language Scheme in order to enable the provision of Services of equal quality, facility and breadth in both English and Welsh. It means satisfying service needs where there is a shortage of Welsh speakers within the workforce by adopting and implementing this strategy.

7.5 The Linguistic Skills Strategy therefore ;

7.5.1 Facilitates the proper implementation of the statutory Welsh Language Scheme in relation to staffing services to the public

7.5.2 Mainstreams the Strategy in the context of key aspects of corporate management.

8. Aim of Strategy

8.1 The strategy aims to reduce risks such as failure to achieve equality and customer care standards, failure to empathise and identify with customer needs, complaints and dissatisfaction.

9. Achieving the Strategy

9.1 The Five Objectives

- 9.1.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy has the following five objectives, which are based on the methodology recommended by the Welsh Language Board;
- 9.1.2 Conduct and continually update an audit of the bilingual requirements of workplaces and posts.
- 9.1.3 Conduct and continually update an audit of the linguistic skills of existing staff.
- 9.1.4 Establish appropriate arrangements for comparing the above – ie the skill needs with existing skill resources.
- 9.1.5 Establish an implementation programme for closing the skills gap.
- 9.1.6 Establish appropriate arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of the strategy's implementation.

9.2 Objective 1 – Bilingual Requirements of Workplaces and Posts

- 9.2.1 An Audit of the Bilingual Requirements of Workplaces and Posts, was carried out in 2007 and a Role Evaluation Project report produced by Cwmni Iaith.
- 9.2.2 This project involved carrying out research into the linguistic requirements of each type of role within the Service, taking into account bilingual service delivery considerations within local communities and the present capacity to deliver a bilingual service within present team structures.
- 9.2.3 This project identified which roles within the Service should be designated Welsh essential and how much flexibility should be given to designating a linguistic skill within the requirement stage. The Service has since assigned ALTE framework Level 1-5 competences (see Appendix for ALTE framework) to each type of role within the Service, providing a greater understanding of the standard of Welsh required for the different posts.

9.3 Objective 2 – Linguistic skills of Existing Staff

- 9.3.1 An Audit of the Linguistic Skills of Existing Staff, has been carried out and around 80% of Service staff have indicated the level of Welsh which they believe they possess, based on guidelines similar to the ALTE framework. In order to increase the information on the bilingual skills of existing staff to nearer 100%, this information will become a requirement of the Individual Development Review process for **all** staff. In this way, the information will be assessed and recorded for all staff and will be updated annually. Information regarding linguistic skills will also be required on job application forms.
- 9.3.2 To ensure that this information is collected consistently a self assessment of linguistic skills will be part of the IDR process for all staff.

9.4 Objective 3 – Gap Analysis of objectives 1 & 2

- 9.4.1 This objective involves establishing appropriate arrangements for comparing the first two objectives – ie the skill needs of each role within the Service with existing skill resources.
- 9.4.2 A list of all types of roles within the Service matched to the required level of Welsh assigned by Cwmni Iaith and the level of Welsh assigned by the person in the role at the time (currently completed by around 80% of staff) has been compiled and this will be analysed to obtain a snapshot of how much work is required to bridge the gap.
- 9.4.3 This comparison is being achieved through a HR computerised gap analysis method that is updated regularly in order to be able to compare and monitor the linguistic skills of staff as part of the Individual Development Reviews conducted by managers and as part of any new recruitment or staff restructuring carried out by managers. HR internal proceedings and procedures will fully acknowledge and consider ability in Welsh to be a skill, side by side with other necessary skills.

9.5 Objective 4 – Linguistic Skills Development

- 9.5.1 The Service will close the identified gap gradually, taking a long term perspective through establishing well defined practices in staff training and support, recruitment, and reorganisation and redeployment of staff.
- 9.5.2 This involves;
 - 9.5.2.1 Increasing the number of staff who can confidently speak or write Welsh and encourage them to use their skills more often to contribute to ensuring a choice of languages for the public - achieved by raising awareness of the Service's commitment to offer a bilingual service by providing Welsh Language Awareness sessions which are compulsory for all staff. This course is being delivered by Welsh Language Awareness Facilitator through the Corporate Communications Department.
 - 9.5.2.2 From January 2009, all new members of staff will be required to have the ability to show basic (Level 1) Welsh language courtesy skills before joining the Service. The emphasis is on speaking Welsh and the test is an oral one, recorded on tape (involves help provided before interview and use of a training CD). From January 2010, all new staff will be allowed a specified period of time after formal appointment to achieve Level 2 (involving 5 days of training and a second CD) – this will be within 12-18 months for wholetime and support staff and from 18 months for retained staff.
 - 9.5.2.3 Existing staff will be encouraged to achieve Level 1 on a voluntary basis as part of the awareness sessions.

- 9.5.2.4 Existing staff who have direct contact with the public will be encouraged to achieve Level 4/5, through intensive Welsh language training.
- 9.5.2.5 From January 2010, staff seeking promotion within the Service will be required to pass Level 2 to be successful.
- 9.5.2.6 Training courses will be established through SLDC to enable staff to learn or improve Welsh. Coleg Llysfasi will provide Level 1 and 2 training courses which are supplemented by Welsh Language CDs – a minimum score of 70% will be required to pass (tests will be assessed independently by Coleg Llysfasi). The tests are linked to a nationally recognised accreditation.
- 9.5.2.7 Through the Gweithgor Iaith working group, staff already fluent in Welsh will be identified in each county of North Wales who are willing to act as champions of the Strategy to offer assistance and advice to non-Welsh speakers prior to sitting Level 1 and 2 tests as and when required.
- 9.5.2.8 The Linguistic Skills Strategy will be incorporated into the Service's policy on Equality and Diversity – with reference to the Seven Strands of Diversity in Wales which include the Welsh language.
- 9.5.2.9 The Service's recruitment policy will also reflect the aims of the Linguistic Skills Strategy by reviewing the wording of recruitment material to refer to the required competences in a 'friendly' manner, to stress the need of oral Welsh and to refer to the opportunities to improve/learn Welsh as well as target recruitment material effectively.

9.6 Objective 5 – Review and Report

- 9.6.1 The Review and Report Implementation of the Strategy, will be addressed once the gap has been successfully narrowed. The Service will review the Welsh Language Strategy on a regular basis, working according to the Welsh Language Board's indicators. This work will involve;
 - 9.6.1.1 Reviewing front line services: ie the number and percentage age of all staff who have a direct contact with the public, as well as staff in main reception areas, contact centres or one stop shop roles denoted 'Welsh essential' and filled by bilingual staff.
 - 9.6.1.2 Aiming to achieve the desired number and percentage age of the staff who have received training in Welsh to a specific competency level.
 - 9.6.1.3 Aiming for a desired number and percentage age of staff who have received language awareness training.
 - 9.6.1.4 Being able to identify the number and percentage age of staff within the Service who can speak Welsh – by department, by job grade, by workplace.

10. Specific Benefits to NWF&RS

- 10.1 The main benefits of adopting the Linguistic Skills Strategy are;
 - 10.1.1 Working together towards one innovative Welsh Language Scheme which encourages all new staff to demonstrate basic linguistic courtesy in Welsh
 - 10.1.2 Providing language choice in the recruitment and appointment processes
 - 10.1.3 Encouraging and supporting staff to learn Welsh or improve their skills through established awareness and training regimes
 - 10.1.4 Identifying posts with a need for a specific level of ability in Welsh
 - 10.1.5 Working towards a guaranteed language choice at primary public interfaces
 - 10.1.6 Raising awareness of all staff – both current and new - regarding the commitment to offer a bilingual service
 - 10.1.7 Working towards attracting more applications from Welsh speakers and learners
 - 10.1.8 Ensuring HR internal proceedings and procedures fully acknowledge and consider ability in Welsh to be a skill, side by side with other necessary skills
 - 10.1.9 Making the most of every opportunity to define the commitment to the Welsh language as part of the effort to acknowledge Race and Diversity matters in Wales

11. Linking to Key Corporate Contexts

- 11.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy is linked to the following;
 - 11.1.1 Recruitment and appointment procedures
 - 11.1.2 'Investors in People' and Staff Development Plans
 - 11.1.3 Training Strategy
 - 11.1.4 The Service's corporate plan
 - 11.1.5 The Equalities and Diversity programme
 - 11.1.6 The Customer Care regime

12. Benefits to Staff

- 12.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy brings the following benefits to staff;
 - 12.1.1 The Strategy treats language skills in exactly the same way as any other skills which may be essential or desirable for certain posts – this is a principle generally accepted by the trade union movement
 - 12.1.2 By providing an objective means of determining skill requirements, the Strategy provides protection from over-subjective assessments
 - 12.1.3 The Strategy is part of ensuring consistency of approach in determining the language requirements of posts
 - 12.1.4 The emphasis placed on staff training, development and support will be advantageous to staff in enhancing their skills and competitiveness in the wider labour market
 - 12.1.5 The emphasis is on forward planning for the acquisition of the necessary skills gradually – not sweeping change.

13. Policy Review

- 13.1 All policies and procedures which form the basis of a SAPPO, will be reviewed on a pre-determined basis. This will be the responsibility of the Head of the Department responsible for the Order, and conducted after every 1, 2 or 3 years, depending on the importance of the document, from the date of issue or amendment.
- 13.2 This Order will be reviewed annually.

Simon A Smith
Chief Fire Officer

ALTE Language Skills Framework

	ALTE Work Typical Abilities			ALTE Overall General Ability		
LEVELS	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
A1 ALTE Breakthrough level	CAN take and pass on simple messages of a routine kind, such as 'Friday meeting 10 am'.	CAN understand short reports or product descriptions on familiar matters, if these are expressed in simple language and the contents are predictable.	CAN write a simple routine request to a colleague, such as 'Can I have 20X please?'	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices, instructions or information.	CAN complete basic forms, and write notes including times, dates and places.
A2 Level 1	CAN state simple requirements within own job area, such as 'I want to order 25 of...'	CAN understand most short reports or manuals of a predictable nature within his/her own area of expertise, provided enough time is given.	CAN write a short, comprehensive note of request to a colleague or a known contact in another company.	CAN express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.	CAN understand straightforward information within a known area, such as on products and signs and simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters.	CAN complete forms and write short simple letters or postcards related to personal information.
B1 Level 2	CAN offer advice to clients within own job area on simple matters.	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and theoretical articles within own work area.	CAN make reasonably accurate notes at a meeting or seminar where the subject matter is familiar and predictable.	CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.	CAN understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within a familiar area.	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.
B2 Level 3	CAN take and pass on most messages that are likely to require attention during a normal working day.	CAN understand most correspondence, reports and factual product literature he/she is likely to come across.	CAN deal with all routine requests for goods or services.	CAN follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	CAN scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.	CAN make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests.

C1 Level 4	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work and argue for or against a case.	CAN understand correspondence expressed in non-standard language.	CAN handle a wide range of routine and non-routine situations in which professional services are requested from colleague or external contacts.	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, to read the media for information or to understand non-standard correspondence.	CAN prepare/draft professional correspondence, take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write an essay which shows an ability to communicate.
C2 Level 5	CAN advise on/handle complex delicate or contentious issues, such as legal or financial matters, to the extent that he/she has the necessary specialist knowledge.	CAN understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language.	CAN make full and accurate notes and continue to participate in a meeting or seminar.	CAN advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	CAN understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts.	CAN write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.

Mark wins contribution to Welsh language award

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service presented Mark Jones with an award for his contribution to the Welsh language at the Urdd Eisteddfod maes in May.



Colin Hanks, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (left) with Mark Jones

Mark, who is currently working on a project to procure and implement a Fire Safety and Operational Records Management System, has been learning Welsh for 6 years.

He has attended a number of courses since joining the Fire and Rescue Service as a Firefighter at Deeside fire station in 1978. Mark lives in Wrexham with his wife and two children.

Mark says: "I am very proud to have won this award, as I feel very passionately that the Welsh language should be promoted and encouraged to

grow. I would like to thank all my work colleagues for their support and encouragement over the years and the Service for giving me the opportunity to learn Welsh in various classes and courses. Although I would never say that the Welsh language is an easy one to learn, it has given me great enjoyment and enabled me to spread our fire safety messages to all the communities in North Wales."

Colin Hanks, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, said: "We in North Wales live in a bilingual community, and we as a Service believe that it is extremely important that as many of our staff as possible can converse with residents in their chosen language.

"We thoroughly agreed with Mark's nominator that he showed real commitment to learning the language and determination in using his new skills in the workplace – congratulations and well done to him. This is the first year the award has been presented, and we look forward to continuing with this new tradition by making this an annual competition."

Article from Y Fflam, July 2008

ATAL AMDDIFFYD YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
 Fire and Rescue Service

Alun Guest-Rowlands

Here to explain

The Linguistic Skills Strategy of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

www.gwastan-gogcymru.org.uk www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

ATAL AMDDIFFYD YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
 Fire and Rescue Service


Multilingualism

- There are 7000 different spoken languages in the world
- 65% of the world population speak at least two language
- 50 million people speak more than two languages
- There are 45 lesser languages still spoken in Europe
- As you can see multilingualism is the norm

www.gwastan-gogcymru.org.uk www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk



ATAL AMDDIFFYD YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING




Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
 Fire and Rescue Service

The origins of the Welsh Language

- An Indo-European language, with it's roots in Sanskrit which is still in use parts of Asia.
- Welsh is a Celtic language, related to Breton, Cornish, Cumbric. With Manx and Gaelic being a branch of the same language group.

www.gwastan-gogcymru.org.uk www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

ATAL AMDDIFFYD YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
 Fire and Rescue Service

A Brief History of the Language

- The 6th Century. Welsh was spoken in much of Britain, from Strathclyde(Ystrad Clud) to Cornwall (Kerniw)
- After Greek and Latin, Welsh was the earliest written languages in Europe.
- Traces of Welsh can still be found in places throughout mainland Britain. In the twentieth century shepherds in Cumbria could still be heard counting their sheep in Welsh using such words as "yan"(un), "pimp"(pump), "dic"(deg) and "bumfit"(pymtheg)
- Welsh is believed to be the oldest surviving language in Europe

www.gwastan-gogcymru.org.uk www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

ATAL AMDDIFFYD YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
 Fire and Rescue Service

Historical threats to the Welsh Language

- 1536 Act of Union (prohibition of Welsh in public administration and in the courts)
- 18th Century Industrial Revolution (influx of migrant workers)
- Schools introduced the "Welsh Not" to stop children speaking Welsh in the playground



www.gwastan-gogcymru.org.uk www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk



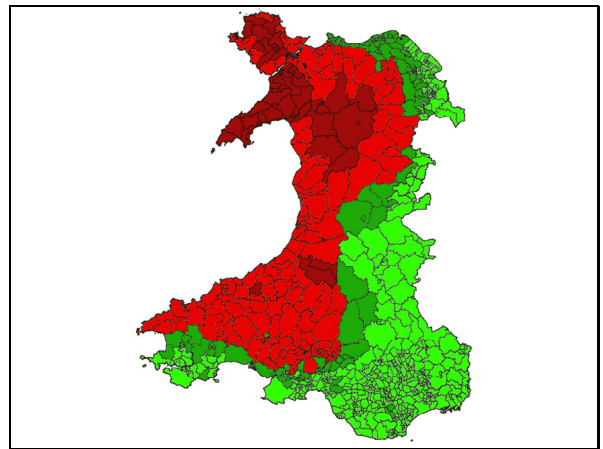
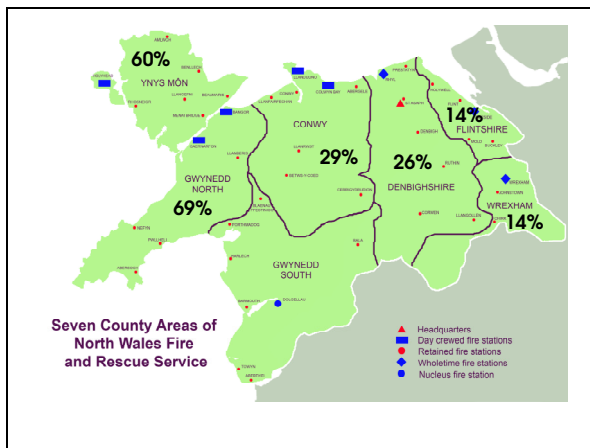
What has helped the Welsh Language?

- 6th Century Barddoniaeth
- 1563-88 the Bible was translated into Welsh
- Sunday Schools in the chapels
- Elisteddfodau
- 1922- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- 1939-First Welsh Medium school at Aberystwyth
- 1942- Welsh Courts Act
- 1967-1993 Welsh Language Act
- 1982 Radio Cymru, Sianel Pedwar Cymru S4C
- 2003-Iaith Pawb (National Action Plan)



Quiz

1. Which county has the greater number of Welsh speakers?
a) Denbighshire
b) The City and County of Swansea
2. Are there more Welsh speakers today than in 1991?
a) More 611,000 spoke Welsh in 2004 compared to 508,098 in 1991
b) Fewer
c) The same number



The Linguistic Skills Strategy of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

The way forward



Welsh Language Act

The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a statutory duty on all public bodies in Wales to produce a Welsh Language policy to show how they conduct public business in Wales on the basis of **equality between Welsh and English**.

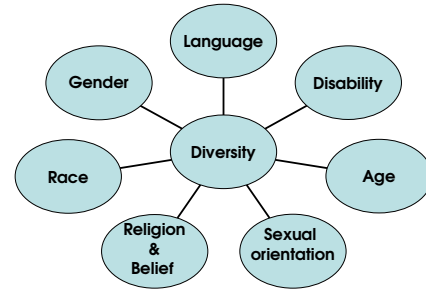
As a law abiding organisation we have to follow the law of the land



Why is important to have a bilingual workplace

The Welsh Language Boards standpoint is:

- That increasing the use of Welsh in the workplace, equals a better standard of customer care as well as skilled, confident and productive workforce that reflects the community that they serve.



The Welsh Language and the Fire & Rescue Service

It's not about just learning Welsh-
It's all about being **courteous**
towards the language, its people
and the region in which we live

NWF&RS encourages us, its staff, to learn Welsh and embrace the Welsh Language Scheme which was launched in 2006



Why is it important for me to learn Welsh ?



Health and Safety

- Being able to understand simple verbal and written instructions
- Being able to differentiate place names (Llithfaen, Llysfaen)
- Directions- left and right, up and down



The First Steps

- From January 2009 all new members of staff will be required to have an ability to show basic Welsh Language skills (CD 1) or achieve Level 1 in their probation period
- Existing staff will be encouraged to achieve Level 1 on a voluntary basis. Those seeking promotion will be required to pass level 2 to be successful (CD 2)
- Existing staff who have direct contact with the public will be encouraged to achieve level 4/5, through training



- Every effort will be made to make the process as easy as possible
- Coleg Llysfasi will assist with administering the scheme so that it will be linked to a nationally recognised accreditation
- This system is already being operated by the North Wales Police and is well received.



What are we expected to learn?

- Pronunciations - place names and Fire Service terminology
- Greetings and saying farewell
- Dialogue - answering the telephone, in the office and in the street



Don't Worry. We are here to help!

- There is no hidden agenda
- *If it isn't on the CD you won't be asked about it*
- Fluent Welsh speakers in each county will be asked for their assistance to act as **champions** of the strategy to offer assistance and advice to non-Welsh speakers prior to sitting level 1-2 tests
- Training courses will be established by SLDC to enable staff to learn or improve their Welsh



Translation and Support

The North Wales Fire And Rescue Service has a dedicated translator. Her name is Lois Jones, she is based at Headquarters and is able to offer a translating and proof reading services. Lois is always ready to assist if members of staff wish to improve their Welsh language skills.



Don't be shy.

Have a go.

You might just enjoy it!



Breathe fire into
Welsh

Ar dân dros y
Gymraeg

Arolwg Cwynion Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg 2008/09 *Welsh Language Scheme Complaints Survey*
 Taflen asesu a dyfarnu lefel cydymffurfiaeth ag adran 'Cwynion' Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg statudol
Assessment & judgement compliance level form in accordance with the 'Complaints' section of the Welsh Language Scheme

GWASANAETH TAN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Adran 1: DATA Cwestiwn 1 - 3 Section 1: DATA Questions 1 - 3 (12%)		Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth Compliance level					
Cwestiynnau Questions	Sylwadau'r Arolygwr Inspector's Comments	1	2	3	4	5	6
C1-Q1		√					
C2-Q2		√					
C3-Q3		√					

Adran 2: PROSES Cwestiwn 4 - 9 Section 2: PROCESS Questions 4 - 9 (24%)		Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth Compliance level					
Cwestiynnau Questions	Sylwadau'r Arolygwr Inspector's Comments	1	2	3	4	5	6
C4-Q4		√					
C5-Q5		√					
C6-Q6		√					

C7-Q7		√					
C8-Q8		√					
C9-Q9		√					

Adran 3: ROLAU A CHYFRIFOLDEBAU Cwestiwn 10 - 14 Section 3: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES		Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth Compliance level					
Questions 10 - 14 (20%)							
Cwestiynnau Questions	Sylwadau'r Arolygwr Inspector's Comments	1	2	3	4	5	6
C10-Q10		√					
C11-Q11		√					
C12-Q12		√					
C13-Q13		√					
C14-Q14		√					

Adran 4: MONITRO A PHERFFORMIAD Cwestiwn 15 - 20 Section 4: MONITORING & PERFORMANCE		Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth Compliance level					
Questions 15 - 20 (24%)							
Cwestiynnau Questions	Sylwadau'r Arolygwr Inspector's Comments	1	2	3	4	5	6
C15-Q15		√					
C16-Q16		√					
C17-Q17		√					

C18-Q18		✓					
C19-Q19		✓					
C20-Q20		✓					

Adran 5: BARN A BODLONRWYDD Y CYHOEDD Cwestiwn 21 - 25 Section 5: PUBLIC SATISFACTION & OPINION Questions 21 - 25 (20%)		Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth Compliance level					
Cwestiynau Questions	Sylwadau'r Arolygwr Inspector's Comments	1	2	3	4	5	6
C21-Q21		✓					
C22-Q22		✓					
C23-Q23		✓					
C24-Q24		✓					
C25-Q25		✓					

Llofnodwyd a dyddiwyd gan y Swyddogion priodol. Ticiwch fel yn briodol. Signed and dated by the appropriate Officers. Tick as appropriate.	Do Yes	✓	Naddo No	
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DYFARNIAD LEFEL CYDYMFFURFIAETH CYFFREDINOL GENERAL COMPLIANCE LEVEL JUDGEMENT	CYDYMFFURFIO'N LLAWN FULL COMPLIANCE
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MATERION SYDD ANGEN SYLW MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION

SYLW BRYN: URGENT ATTENTION:

Sylwadau

1. Dengys adroddiad blynyddol 'Cwynion a Llythyrau o Werthfawrogiad' i Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru yr adroddir ar gwynion Cymraeg o dan y pennawd 'Materion yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg' wrth ystyried 'Natur y cwynion a ddaeth i law'. Yn Adran 3 cyflwynir 'crynodeb o natur y cwynion a brofwyd'. Dyma arfer da y dylai cyrff eraill ei fabwysiadu er mwyn sicrhau (i) gorolwg gorfforaethol, (ii) canfod lle mae gwendidau neu ddiffyg cydymffurfiaeth yn y ddarpariaeth (iii) a'u datrys/ camau goresgyn.

Argymhellion

Comments

1. The Annual Report 'Complaints and Letters of Appreciation' to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority reports on Welsh complaints under the heading 'Welsh matters' when considering 'The Nature of complaints received'. Section 3 presents 'a summary of the nature of upheld complaints'. This good practice should be adopted by other bodies to ensure (i) a corporate overview, (ii) to identify areas of weaknesses or breaches in the provision (iii) to ensure resolution/ remedial action.

Recommendations

SYLW TYMOR BYR: SHORT TERM ATTENTION:

Sylwadau

Argymhellion ar gyfer cydymffurfio'n llawn a'r Cynllun Iaith

1. Yn nhermau prif-lifo'r Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg dylai'r ddogfen "SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE ORDERS" gynnwys y cyfeiriadau ychwanegol canlynol sef:-
 - Cyfeirio at 'Deddf yr Iaith Gymraeg 1993' o dan Adran 6.
 - Gan fod materion ieithyddol yn rhan o gyd-destun Cydraddoldeb dylai Cynghorydd Cydraddoldeb fod yn derbyn copiau o gwynion am y gwasanaeth Cymraeg fel a nodir yn Adran 11.1.
 - Croesewir y cyfeiriad at y Gymraeg a'r ymrwymiad i ymateb i gwynion yn Gymraeg yn Adran 8.3. ond dylid nodi hefyd y gellir derbyn cwynion am y gwasanaeth (neu ddiffyg gwasanaeth) Cymraeg - a hynny yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.
2. Er mwyn cymhell trethdalwyr Cymraeg i'w defnyddio gyda'r Gwasanaeth Tan dylai taflenni hysbysu'r cyhoedd o gwynion, sylwadau a gwerthfawrogiad nodi yn benodol bod croeso i'r cyhoedd gyflwyno'u sylwadau yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

Argymhellion arfer da

Comments

Recommendations for full compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

1. In terms of mainstreaming the Welsh Language Scheme the document "SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE ORDERS" should include additional references namely:-
 - Refer to 'Welsh Language Act 1993' under Section 6.
 - Because language issues form part of the equalities context the Equalities Adviser should receive copies of complaints about the Welsh service as noted in Section 11.1.
 - The reference to Welsh and responding to complaints received in Welsh in Section 8.3. is welcome but should also state

that complaints can be received about the service (or lack of service) in Welsh - in either Welsh or English.

Good practice recommendations

SYLW TYMOR CANOL: MID TERM ATTENTION:

Amherthnasol - Irrelevant

Allwedd Lefel Cydymffurfiaeth a'r Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg statudol Compliance Level with the statutory Welsh Language Scheme Key

Sgôr Score	Dyfarniad Judgement	Diffiniad o'r dyfarniad Judgement definition	Cyfanswm sgôr Total score
1	Da Iawn Very good	Cydymffurfio'n llawn Full compliance	(75%- 100%)
2	Da Good	Cydymffurfio i raddau helaeth Complying to a large degree	(51% - 74%)
3	Gweddol Fair	Rhannol gydymffurfio Partial compliance	(50%)
4	Anfoddhaol Unsatisfactory	Cydymffurfio i raddau llai yn unig Complying to a lesser extent only	(25% - 49%)
5	Anfoddhaol iawn Very unsatisfactory	Ddim yn cydymffurfio Not complying	(0% - 24%)
6	Amherthnasol Irrelevant	Amherthnasol Irrelevant	(-)

Appendix 5

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service breathes fire into Welsh



North Wales Fire and Rescue Service demonstrated its commitment to the Welsh language with the launch of a new Linguistic Skills Strategy which requires all new members of staff and those successful in promotion to learn a basic level of Welsh.

Meri Huws, Chair of The Welsh Language Board, visited Headquarters for the launch of the new strategy in January.

The Service, in conjunction with Coleg Llysfasi and with advice from North Wales Police, has designed and recorded two new CDs to guide Welsh learners through the process of learning basic greetings and pronunciations – and everyone being appointed or promoted within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service will now be required to take part in a simple oral test in Welsh to ensure that they are able to pronounce names and greet people correctly.

In addition, all current members of staff have the opportunity to take advantage of the learning power of the CDs and sit the test should they want to do so.

Simon Smith, Chief Fire Officer, said: “The community we serve within North Wales has a high proportion of Welsh speakers, and we as a Service feel it is most important to offer our residents the option of communicating in their mother tongue.

“Therefore, we are acknowledging and considering ability in the Welsh language as a skill, side by side with other necessary skills. This is a very important step for us and we look forward to supporting existing and new staff throughout their learning journey.”

Y Golofn Gymraeg



There was much excitement in Headquarters on 23rd January 2009 with the official launch of our Welsh Language Skills Strategy. The launch of our new strategy is particularly timely considering the Assembly's recent bid for the transfer of powers to pass laws over the Welsh language in Wales. The request will seek jurisdiction to confirm the equal status of Welsh and English, create the language of a Welsh language commissioner, and provide Welsh speakers with rights to services.

At the launch, Meri Huws, Chair of The Welsh Language Board, was given an insight into our recent work and she was very impressed with the ever developing work that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is doing with regards to the Welsh Language. She took a particular liking to Tanwen, our own special cartoon character used to promote the Welsh language, and was made up to receive a framed picture of Tanwen to commemorate the occasion!

Also present were some of our Welsh Language Champions. These Champions are based in every county and will be available to offer support to staff undertaking the Welsh Level 1 and 2 tests. As you should be aware by now, all new members of staff joining North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and all those seeking promotion, are required to pass the Level 1 Introduction to Welsh test since January 2009. A special CD has been produced to assist with this and the CDs are being distributed by Alun Guest Rowlands during his Welsh Language Awareness sessions. He is also taking names of staff wanting to work towards the Welsh Language tests. The Service is also offering all staff with computer access the option of using 'Cysgliad', a software solution which provides a spelling and mutation check in Welsh – just click on the 'Cysgliad' icon on your desktop.

On the morning of the official launch, many of the Principal Officers took the Welsh Level test. Everyone had studied hard and there were some very nervous members of staff arriving at headquarters that morning! But the hard work had paid off with staff passing with flying colours.

Articles from Y Fflam, February 2009



Fire and Rescue Service Role Evaluation Project

Outline of the main findings and conclusions of the Project

1.0. Objectives

- To identify which roles/posts should be designated as Welsh essential.
- To offer recommendations as to which measures need to be implemented in relation to designating the linguistic requirements of posts, by considering the requirements of the amended Welsh Language Scheme.
- To incorporate any agreed recommendations into the new recruitment and appointments policy.

2.0. The Context of the Welsh Language Scheme

- 2.1. In considering these objectives in light of the commitments in the Authority's amended Welsh Language Scheme, and the relevant SAPPO's on increasing the bilingual skills within the Workforce, e.g.

"Over the next few years we will seek to increase the proportion of our workforce throughout North Wales who can speak Welsh, and to ensure that more individual members of staff have learnt sufficient Welsh to enable them to provide at least some of our services through the medium of Welsh." (Welsh Language Scheme, p.17, para 4)

“...commitment to having a workforce that has the skills to deliver services bilingually.” (Welsh Language Scheme, p.29, para 1).

3.0. Some findings regarding the current procedure for designating the linguistic requirements of posts

- According to the information we received, the usual procedure for creating posts is that Departmental Heads initiate the process, on the basis of service needs. After identifying the need for a post, they notify. Then, officers at Headquarters (Human Resources Department / Principal Officers Group) create the relevant job description and person specification.
- The responsibility for designating linguistic skills of post is mainly centralized at Headquarters – the responsibility isn't distributed across the counties.
- Senior officers outside HQ have only a consultative role – e.g. County Safety Managers
- For many internal appointments, there is some uncertainty regarding to what extent the guidelines (in SAPPO no. 7) are followed in relation to internal appointments. There is a set of 'tests' for such appointments, based on a UK-wide process.
- SAPPO no. 7 includes guidelines, with percentage targets, for appointing bilingual staff. (1 respondent stated *'I think we're moving away from that slightly and concentrating on the roles of officers, and assessments based more on need'*)
- The relevant SAPPO dates from before the approval of the recent Welsh Language Scheme (approved September 2006)
 - SAPPO no. 5 (summarizes the bilingual policy for staff) – dated 22.8.00
 - SAPPO no. 7 + guidelines on recruitment and appointments – dated 12.8.02. (*'To be reviewed 31 May 2003'*)
- The impression amongst some officers in the counties is that there is consistency in dealing with designation, since it is HR that administers the process.
- Some officers at Headquarters stated a different opinion. e.g.

- Some officers felt that the current procedure does not place sufficient importance on linguistic requirements and the need to be able to fulfil the obligations of the Welsh Language Scheme.
- Tendency to 'inherit' job descriptions. *'The criteria are often laid down prior to coming to HR – they're historical. All the ones I've dealt with have been inherited roles. We don't re-write job descriptions except if it's a new role.'*
- *'I would have to be critical. The only consistency is that (the Chief Fire Officer) discusses every post. There's no other consistency.'*
- *'I would welcome more of a formula for judging what skills we need. This would help'*
- Our enquiries and interviews were generally welcomed, with many respondents stating support for the review of the present arrangements.

4.0. 'Challenging' designations exercise

4.1. We received information on the linguistic designations of a wide range of posts in the Service.

4.2. These designations were tested by comparing

- (i) the obligations in the Welsh Language Scheme as well as the recruitment and appointments guidelines (in SAPPO no. 7) with
- (ii) the categorization of the linguistic requirements of posts.

The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain whether there was consistency between (i) and (ii) and to what extent the means of designating the requirements seem to comply with the statutory Scheme.

4.3. Our outline findings on the linguistic designations were recorded on the spreadsheet, 'challenging' or questioning some designations on the basis of the requirements of your Welsh Language Scheme and

/ or the guidelines in SAPPO no. 7. This spreadsheet is presented in a separate document.

5.0. Recommendations (draft) on the way forward

In terms of Policy

- 5.1. To consider the appropriateness of developing a policy regarding internal bilingualism.
- 5.2. To consider the appropriateness of including – now or in future – degrees of internal bilingualism in the Service’s Welsh Language Scheme.
- 5.3. To consider the appropriateness of making a policy decision on stipulating a minimum competency level for all Service posts, e.g. - consideration could be given to make it a requirement that all new recruits attain Level 1 Welsh according to the ALTE framework when joining the Service, advancing to Level 2 within a specified period¹.

In terms of Application

- 5.4. To update and elaborate upon the guidelines in SAPPO no. 7 regarding the designation of the linguistic requirements of posts. The amended guidelines to include:
 - better definition of which skills are required exactly, by referring to the competency levels
 - a procedure to check / challenge initial designations.
- 5.5. To conduct briefing sessions to staff who are responsible for designating requirements.
- 5.6. Review / update current linguistic requirements of posts.

¹ This example is offered on the basis of a procedure adopted by North Wales Police. Many of NWP’s business reasons for adopting such a procedure is just as relevant to NWFRS. For an explanation of those reasons, see North Wales Police’s Welsh Language Scheme and the associated documentation.

- 5.7. To incorporate the new arrangements into a new recruitment and appointments policy.
- 5.8. To prepare a Linguistic Skills Strategy (according to the commitment in paragraph 6, p.27 of the Scheme) in order to designate how it is planned to acquire, develop and manage linguistic skills within the Service.
- 5.9. To consult internally, as appropriate, on the procedure for designating linguistic skills of posts and the Linguistic Skills Strategy. The consultation to include relevant HR officers, Service Heads and other senior officers, and workforce representatives.

**Cwmni Iaith
September 2007**

APPENDIX

Interview List

- Dave Evans, County Safety Manager, Ynys Môn
- Kevin Smith, County Safety Manager, Conwy
- Bill Murphy, Senior Operations Manager, Headquarters
- Gareth Griffiths, County Safety Manager, Caernarfon
- Kevin Hughes, Senior Community Safety Manager
- Chris Ennes, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Llinos Guitierrez Jones, HR Manager
- Sharon Palmer, HR Officer
- Llinos Jones, HR Senior Adviser
- Gary Brandrick, Training and Development Manager
- Gareth Watson, Corporate Communications Manager

- Gareth Smith, Liaison Officer, Welsh Language Board