



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Welsh Language Scheme – Response of the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Annual Monitoring Report 2013-2014



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1 Baseline Information

Baseline Information		Further comment
Approval date of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Welsh Language Scheme	27/07/2007	
Senior Officer responsible for implementing the Welsh Language Scheme	Corporate Strategies Co-ordinator	
Date Annual Monitoring Report due to be Received	30.06.14	The report was received on 04.08.14, following correspondence that explained that there would be some delay.

2 Standard Statement

- 2.1 The main aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner (the Commissioner) is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. This is done by highlighting the fact that the Welsh language has official status in Wales and by imposing standards on organisations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.
- 2.1.1 Two principles underpin the work of the Commissioner:
- The Welsh language shall not be treated less favourably than English in Wales
 - Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they wish to do so.
- 2.1.2 Over time, new powers to impose and enforce standards on organisations will come into force through subordinate legislation. Until that time, the Commissioner will continue to monitor statutory language schemes by virtue of powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 2.1.3 The Welsh Language Commissioner may investigate failure to implement a language scheme, allegations of interference with an individual's freedom to use the Welsh language in Wales, and, in future, complaints regarding the failure of
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organisations to comply with standards.

- 2.1.4 The Welsh Language Commissioner will be able to regulate organisations robustly and consistently by means of standards, and may decide to impose a civil penalty on an organisation if it does not comply with a relevant requirement.

2.2 Annual Monitoring Reports

- 2.2.1 Language Schemes contain a commitment to prepare and submit a monitoring report on an annual basis. To all intents and purposes, an Annual Monitoring Report is a self-assessment exercise. In responding to them, the Welsh Language Commissioner will expect organisations to provide evidence of compliance with their language schemes.
- 2.2.2 With regard to Language Schemes, the Commissioner's practice will be to highlight risks and influence performance with a view to avoiding failure.
- 2.2.3 All responses to annual monitoring reports are published with a view to ensuring transparency and easy access to performance information.

3 Comments on performance

Service Planning and Delivery

Comments on performance		Action required
	You report that new aspects have been included within the equality impact assessments' criteria since March 2014 that will further the consideration given to the Welsh language.	Please provide a copy of the new equality impact assessment.
Website	The Council is in the process of updating the content of its corporate website. Part of the work is ensuring the availability of Welsh content, targeting, in the first place, the most popular pages with visitors to the website. It is also explained that self-service features will be added to the website.	Please provide a copy of any new scheme driving this work, as well as targets for progress. Are all of these self-service features available bilingually?

Dealing with Other Organisations and Procurement

Comments on performance		Action required
Procurement	You note that the procurement service is working to ensure a consistent attitude towards procurement across the Council, and that this includes consideration of the Welsh language in	Can the Council provide an example of the Welsh language being included in a specific way in a contract awarded during the year?

all cases.

Care

The Council continues to conduct a survey of residential care providers. The results still vary with obvious areas to target for improvement, but there is also progress to be seen with a few aspects of provision. Reference is also made to the draft action plan in place to implement the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words' scheme.

Please provide a copy of the action plan, for our records.

Welsh Language Frontline Services and Linguistic Skills

Comments on performance	Action required
<p>WLI 2</p> <p><i>Number and percentage of posts in the main reception area, contact centre or one-stop-shop designated as being Welsh essential and the percentage of those filled by bilingual speakers.</i></p> <p>This indicator was reported. The same number of Welsh speakers work in the Council's contact centre as the One-Stop-Shops. It was explained that the Welsh language provision has improved in Pontardawe, since opening the one-stop-shop.</p>	
<p>WLI 4 (a)</p> <p><i>Number and percentage of staff (Welsh speakers and learners) who have received training in the Welsh language to a specific level of competence. And, Number and percentage of staff who have received language awareness training.</i></p> <p>A partial report was given on this indicator. Two members of staff are currently receiving training.</p>	<p>We wish to discuss training and further Council plans at the feedback meeting. Please provide any relevant plans beforehand.</p>
<p>Language Awareness</p> <p>17 members of staff attended the customer care and telephone skills course, which includes an element of language awareness and awareness of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.</p>	

Practice and Consolidation Programme	The Welsh language has been considered throughout the qualifying process by following the practice consolidation programme. The consolidation programme is available to follow through the medium of Welsh.	
WLI 5	<p><i>Number and percentage of staff within the organization who are able to speak Welsh by i) department; ii) grade; iii) workplace.</i></p> <p>This indicator was reported, and detailed tables of information were provided. Information was recorded when officers were appointed, but a data updating exercise is in the pipeline at present to improve the information held.</p>	Please provide more information about the forthcoming work to update data.
Youth Services and the Children and Young People's Partnership	Detailed information was provided on the activities of the Youth Service and the Children and Young People's Partnership.	

Standard of Welsh Language Services

Comments on performance		Action required
WLI 6	<p><i>Number of complaints received regarding implementation of the Scheme and the percentage of complaints dealt with in accordance with the organisation's corporate standards.</i></p> <p>Information was provided about the complaints received and dealt with during 2013-14. Each complaint was dealt with within corporate standards. Information on the exact nature of the complaints was provided as well as the Council's improvement actions, including the matter of penalty notices that has been now been resolved.</p>	

Analysing Performance and Publishing Information

Comments on performance	Action required
<p>The Council provided an analysis of last year's successes and a summary of the areas needing improvement. We would tend to agree with the Council's analysis of the areas needing attention. We knew that these matters had been included in the Council's amended Action Plan, but we would like to take advantage of the opportunity to get a further update at our feedback meeting.</p>	

Appendix 1

Comments on performance	Action required
<p>3a</p> <p>The Welsh Language Scheme Corporate Action Plan for 2013-2016 was reported.</p> <p>You explain that current limitations on recruitment mean that implementing this action plan has been delayed. However, a quiet recruitment period offers the chance to consider the advice and guidance given, so that the advice is in place for the next recruitment campaign.</p>	

4 Summary

Further information required		Within 30 working days of receiving the response
Service Planning and Delivery Website	Please provide a copy of the new equality impact assessment.	
	Please provide a copy of any new scheme driving this work, as well as targets for progress.	
	Are all of these self-service features available bilingually?	
Procurement	Can the Council provide an example of the Welsh being included in a specific way in a contract awarded during the year?	
Care	Please provide a copy of the action plan, for our records.	
WLI 5	Please provide more information about the work in the pipeline to update data.	
Questions that must be answered		You should respond to these questions during our follow-up meeting to be held shortly.
WLI 4 (a)	We wish to discuss training and further Council plans at the feedback meeting. Please provide any relevant plans beforehand.	