



WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER 2019 - 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the progress we have made in delivering public services in accordance with our Welsh Language Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

Current position: Welsh Language Scheme

- 2.1 On 30 March 2011, we adopted the principle that in the conduct of our business with the public, we will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.
- 2.2 Our Welsh Language Scheme sets out how we will continue to develop this principle when providing services to the public and explains how we will plan and provide our Welsh medium services.
- 2.3 We are fully supportive of the principle of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language in a proportionate and reasonable way, and of treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
- 2.4 We are aware there will be a period of change when our Welsh Language Scheme is replaced by Welsh Language Standards. The Standards explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations and their purpose is to clarify which services people can expect to receive in Welsh and for those services to be consistent.

3. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME

3.1 Reporting on progress

In preparing our annual reports, we refer to 'The Welsh Language Commissioner's Regulatory Framework' which explains how Welsh Language Standards and Welsh Language Schemes are regulated.

Our Director of Transformation and Equality & Diversity Partner report to the Board every year prior to sending a copy of the report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

3.2 Monitoring & reviewing

Monitoring our Welsh Language Scheme is an ongoing process for us. We made a commitment in our Scheme to keep it under review "to reflect changes in community language profiles..." This year, we have continued to capture insight data about our customers - this includes the Welsh language. Eight of our 7,942 tenants have told us that Welsh is their preferred language.

We have a dedicated resource in our Equality & Diversity Partner who is responsible for promoting, monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Scheme.

Our complaints process records and deals with complaints in relation to our Scheme. This ensures any specific complaints associated with the Scheme can be addressed and complaints monitored, lessons will be learnt and shared within the business. During this period, no complaints with regards to the Welsh language were received.

Any new signage (including on-site health and safety signage) fitted or replaced as part of any development programmes, capital programme works or repairs continues to comply with the requirements of our Scheme.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME 2019-2020

4.1 Our progress is outlined in the [appendices](#) to this annual monitoring report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 We continue to make progress with the measures outlined in our Welsh Language Scheme.

5.2 When the time comes, we will need to monitor the position regarding the Standards, to ensure those we are required to comply with are reasonable and proportionate.

6. NEXT STEPS 2020-2021

During 2020/2021, we will continue to:

- a) Raise awareness of our commitments in line with the Scheme and through our corporate induction for new staff.
- b) Deliver our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023, which incorporates our commitment to the Welsh language - which includes celebrating Shwmae Day in October 2020.
- c) Ensure the Welsh language needs of our customers are considered when planning services. Our equality impact assessment process ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion issues (including the Welsh language) are mainstreamed in all that we do; and that the impact on our communities is considered before decisions are made.
- d) Our work to ensure our customer channels are accessible to all as part of our ongoing customer experience service design (outlined in last year's report). We will also be creating a suite of customer personas to ensure that our services are tailored to meet need and preferred languages.
- e) Capture the Welsh language skills of new staff (none have been identified this year). This will enable us to access and utilise the skills of our Welsh speaking staff where appropriate. We have 2 members of staff on our internal directory of Welsh speaking staff. We continue to send a monitoring form with all new starter packs to ensure our records are kept up to date.
- f) Offer learning and development opportunities to staff who wish to learn Welsh or continue their learning.

APPENDIX 1: PROGRESS WITH SCHEME 2019-2020	
Service provision commitments	Progress
All key documents will contain the following statement in Welsh: “If you would like any of our information in Welsh please ask. You can do so by visiting us or writing to us at the address below or by telephoning 01633 620 111. If you would find it easier to talk to us in Welsh we can arrange for a Welsh speaker to be present at an appointment.” This statement will also be displayed in our reception area.	This statement appears on our key documents. We will ensure that Welsh Language requirements are built into any office redesigns as part of our agile working project.
Correspondence commitments	Progress
Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.	<p>We continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with Torfaen County Borough Council’s in-house Welsh Language Translation unit to ensure consistency of the language. Our service level agreement means requests for translations are dealt with without any unnecessary delays. • Promote awareness of translation/interpretation arrangements in place to staff. With changes to our ways of working due to COV-19, this has continued through online meetings.
Establish efficient and effective translation process to ensure there is no delay when a response to correspondence is required in Welsh.	
Keep a record of those persons who wish to deal with us in Welsh.	
Communication over the telephone commitments	Progress
Our customer services team will answer telephone calls with a bilingual greeting.	This forms part of our corporate telephone greeting. Customer services staff are aware of our corporate greeting.
We will publish names of staff that have Welsh language skills on the intranet.	This includes an internal directory of staff who can speak Welsh, their contact details and guidelines for dealing with telephone calls.
We will publish internal guidelines and ensure that front line staff know how to respond to telephone calls from Welsh speakers.	Guidance on this continues to be available to all staff on our intranet site.
Public meetings & face to face meetings commitments	Progress
We welcome meetings with the public in Welsh or English and will provide translation facilities.	Our translation arrangements in place with the Wales Interpretation & Translation Service continue. To date, we have received no requests for any public or face to face meetings through the medium of Welsh.

APPENDIX 1: PROGRESS WITH SCHEME 2019-2020	
Corporate identity and signs commitments	Progress
We have a bilingual corporate identity.	Our bilingual identity promotes the business, our premises and services and our Brand Guidelines are still in operation. Our office in Mamhilad is an example of this, as seen in Appendix A .
When renewing or erecting new signs these will be bilingual.	Our development programme to build new homes in Torfaen area has provided an opportunity to remind our development & regeneration team about our commitment to providing bilingual signage including on site health and safety signage.
Accessing our services	Progress
We will produce documents that are needed to access our services for the first time in both languages e.g. leaflets, application forms and a summary of our Welsh Language Scheme.	Examples can be found in Appendix B .
We will produce these documents separately giving people the choice of which language version they require.	
Our Annual Report for public consumption will be published bilingually.	We continue to work with the Welsh Language Unit at Torfaen County Borough Council to ensure our website is bilingual.
Include a statement in our bilingual Annual Report for public consumption, noting where members of the public can obtain a copy of our annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Commissioner.	
Website commitments	Progress
Access information referred to above is available in Welsh through our website. This includes a webpage explaining in Welsh how people can deal with us using the Welsh Language.	As our previous report explained, we've moved away from this commitment to a bilingual website.
Our Welsh Language Scheme will be posted to the website.	This can be found on our website .
Publicity - Press releases, notices	Progress
Notices will be bilingual if considered appropriate	This continues to be the case.
Staffing and recruitment	Progress
Analyse Welsh language skills of new starters to identify Welsh speakers	Monitoring forms continue to be sent with new starter packs to identify Welsh Language Skills, which in turn helps us build on our internal directory of Welsh speaking staff – to date none have been identified.

APPENDIX 1: PROGRESS WITH SCHEME 2019-2020	
Evaluate vacant customer facing posts to identify if Welsh language is desirable.	Customer facing roles, job descriptions and person specifications continue to state where Welsh language is essential/or desirable.
Provide awareness training for staff with regards to the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme. Our standard practice will be to include such training in the induction of new staff.	<p>Awareness of the scheme continues to be part of our corporate induction programme for new staff. Contact with our customer services team (first point of contact for those visiting our offices or telephoning us) continues, to ensure staff are familiar with the process in place for dealing with Welsh language speaking customers.</p> <p>We celebrate Shwmae Day every October. Appendix C provides an insight into happened on 15 October 2019.</p>
Training/Support commitments	Progress
Undertake to support staff to learn Welsh wherever it is able to do so. E.g. general introduction to the language for learners, confidence building sessions for staff with some knowledge of the language, Welsh for front line staff, advanced courses, Welsh language awareness.	<p>Five members of staff have completed Mynediad 1 and three are continuing their learning when Mynediad 2 begins in September. A number of these staff have continued their learning joining online events such as Sadwrn Seiber, revision classes and Welsh Summer School.</p> <p>As a result of promoting Welsh learning opportunities (Appendix D), nine members of staff will be starting Mynediad 1 in September.</p>
Identify in discussions with Welsh speaking colleagues, what support would benefit them in the workplace.	We have used feedback from staff to identify what additional opportunities were available through with Coleg Gwent and we're hoping to start a catch up over lunch later in the year for our Mynediad 1 and 2 learners.

APPENDIX A: BILINGUAL IDENTITY



On arrival at our Mamhilad office you will see a bilingual greeting and our values.

APPENDIX B: ACCESSING OUR SERVICES



APPENDIX C: SHWMAE/SU'MAE DAY 2019

We supported Shwmae Day in the following ways:

- Our public wifi code for that day was changed to 'Shwmae 2019'.



- Our café, Bron Appetit supported the day – the menu and cafe had a Welsh theme and there was a welsh cake for anyone who greeted café staff with 'Shwmae',
- Information about day and learning Welsh was available to anyone visiting us.



APPENDIX D: LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Mynediad 1 classes starting in September (provided by Coleg Gwent) were advertised to staff through our intranet site and our staff Facebook page – this included a video with some of those staff who completed Mynediad 1 this year and are continuing with Mynediad 2.

Helo bawb/Hello all,

Did you know our Welsh Language Scheme makes a commitment to support staff to learn Welsh wherever we are able to?

A number of us have been learning Welsh over the last 30 weeks and are excited to be continuing our learning in September!

The next course (Mynediad 1 which runs over 30 weeks) starts week commencing 14 Sept... See more

Seen by 99



Promoting this learning opportunity has resulted in nine staff registering for Mynediad 1.