

# **Denbighshire County Council Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2023-24**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

# Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction .....	4
Executive Summary .....	6
Background to the report .....	7
Matters arising during the reporting period .....	8
Welsh Language Training completed .....	8
A bilingual workforce .....	10
The Welsh Language Standards .....	17
Compliance with the Service Delivery standards .....	18
Compliance with the Operational Standards .....	18
Compliance with the Policymaking Standards.....	20
Complaints.....	21
Employees' Welsh Language Skills .....	24
Welsh Lessons .....	29
Recruitment – vacant and new posts.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Progress with the 'More Than Just Words' framework.....	30
Welsh in Education Strategic Group Update.....	31

## Foreword

It is my pleasure to present to you this Annual Monitoring Report. As Denbighshire County Council operates a flexible working policy whereby staff are entitled to work in various different ways such as working from home, the use of information technology has been carefully refined in order to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. An example of this is the procedure for ensuring that webcasts of meetings include the option to receive simultaneous translation into English when participants contribute in Welsh. The Council creates opportunities for staff to use the Welsh language socially, face-to-face, and virtually.

The Council's new five-year strategy allows staff and customers to communicate in their language of choice, whether virtually, online, or face-to-face. It is hoped that the Strategy will encourage more staff and customers to make use of their knowledge of Welsh, whether they learned the language in childhood or are learning it anew.

Implementing the Welsh Language Standards is important, and it is fair to say that any failure on the part of the Council to implement one or more of the Standards would give strong cause for ensuring that such a failure was not repeated. In this report you will see examples of the positive action taken by the Council in dealing with **two of those three** cases brought to the Council's attention during 2023-24.



**Councillor Emrys Wynne**

**Lead Member for the Welsh Language, Heritage and Culture**

## Introduction

The Welsh Language Standards introduced under the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 require the Council to publish an annual report no later than 30 June outlining the work accomplished to comply with the requirements of the Standards between April 1st and March 31st. The report focusses on our eighth year of implementing the Welsh Language Standards. Denbighshire County Council is fully committed to responding positively to the Welsh Language Standards and this is reflected in our Welsh Language Strategy for 2017-22 and our revised Language Strategy for the next five years, which shall be published in the months ahead. We are fully committed to playing our part in the national efforts to increase the number of Welsh speakers to one million by 2050. [View the full list of Standards with which we are required to comply.](#)

We now operate a flexible working policy whereby staff are entitled to work in various different ways, including:

- **Desktop:** for those who mainly work in the office and sit at the same desk each day;
- **Mobile/Flexible:** for those who must spend some time out of the office;
- **Co-location:** a flexible or desktop worker who must work in the office of another organisation;
- **Home:** for those most likely to be working from home.

The transition from working in offices to working from home in the past four years has been made considerably easier by making use of information technology, and we continue to do so in implementing the flexible working scheme in order to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Most of activities have reverted to being face-to-face and great efforts have also been made to create opportunities for staff to use Welsh socially, face-to-face and virtually.

The duties which derive from the Standards mean that organisations should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English and should promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, thereby making it easier for people to use their Welsh language skills in their everyday lives.

The purposes of the Standards are to:

- provide greater clarity to organisations on their duties in relation to the Welsh language
- provide greater clarity to Welsh speakers about the services they can expect to receive in Welsh
- ensure greater consistency of Welsh language services and improve their quality.

under the headings:

- Service Planning
- Policymaking
- Promotion
- Record-keeping.

We are supporting the workforce more than ever in implementing the Welsh Language Standards and our target is to double the daily usage of the Welsh language. This shall be accomplished by promoting Welsh courses to set them on their language journey, or confidence-building courses and in-house activities for them to develop and foster their skills.

The main focus for the Council in 2023/24 was to review our current Strategy and prepare a new five-year Strategy for Denbighshire in collaboration with Council services and the Denbighshire Welsh Language Forum. The Strategy has been developed around the vision of ensuring that the Welsh Language is a thriving language that evolves within Denbighshire's communities, as well as within our organisation. Its purpose is to explain how we intend to create more opportunities to use the Welsh language, encourage greater use of the language and ultimately to see an increased number of Welsh speakers by 2028.

We have formed our vision for the Welsh language in Denbighshire.

- The Corporate Plan 2022-27 includes a firm commitment to ensuring that the Welsh language is a thriving and evolving language.
- Denbighshire is a predominantly bilingual county with a rich heritage and culture. We are proud of this and want that pride to be reflected in our daily work with communities, residents and our staff.

- We are committed to ensuring that the principles of the Welsh Language Standards are the basis for the method in which we provide services to the public; we want people to be able to access services through their natural language of choice, at every stage of their lives.
- We wish to build on the bilingual culture and ethos of the organisation, providing training and social opportunities for our staff to work in Welsh and to increase their confidence to use the language in the workplace.
- We shall work with partners and the wider community to ensure that Welsh is a thriving language in Denbighshire.

In addition to the above, the Council has continued to respond positively to the 'More Than Just Words' Framework and the Welsh in Education Strategic Group (an update on this work is provided further on in this document).

## **Executive Summary**

The Council is an active partner in the Welsh Language Forum led by the Denbighshire Welsh Language Initiative. A number of local and national organisations participate in the Forum, working towards promoting and developing the Welsh language strategically in Denbighshire.

Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan until 2032 includes information about merging the current Welsh in Education Strategic Group with the County's Welsh Language Forum. During the last year, the Welsh Language Forum officers have focussed their efforts on combining the Forum and the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan, emulating other successful models.

This means that each meeting is divided into two parts with one part dedicated specifically to Education and the other dedicated specifically to the Welsh Language Forum. A minimum of 3 meetings shall be held each year and the intention is to have an independent Chairman. The main advantages of this structure are ensuring a clear strategic direction, reduced duplication of activities and increased opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate with each other.

We have established a service level agreement with the Denbighshire Welsh Language Initiative as they receive an annual grant from us. In exchange, the Initiative assists the

Council in its efforts to promote and enhance the Welsh language in Denbighshire by providing good will support during the year. This includes:

- Conducting a secret shopper exercise and reporting results annually, in addition to providing an useful source of primary data for the Council.
- Undertaking specific projects that have been identified and agreed upon to promote the use of Welsh in Denbighshire schools and communities.
- Attending sub-group meetings of the Welsh in Education Strategic Partnership and making a contribution to achieving the priorities of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the Welsh Language Strategy.

Within each Council Service there is a Welsh Language Champion and meetings are held regularly to monitor progress against the Standards, to share good practice and to act as a critical friend. We have two Welsh Language Champions for each service. Members have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the Standards and the associated strategy, and also conduct secret shopper exercises. Ensuring full compliance with the Welsh Language Standards is very challenging due to the majority of staff continuing to work from home, and so it was essential to secure two members of staff for each service to monitor the situation.

A great deal of internal communication work for the Council has been done again in 2022-23, continuing to reinforce the Welsh Language Standards by sharing checklists for correspondence, arranging meetings and answering the telephone. We have also been sharing vocabulary lists with staff along with phonetics to assist Welsh learners. These vocabulary lists have been provided in the form of documents and videos to allow staff to become familiar with the sound of words and how to pronounce them. We have been using national days as a focus point such as Dydd Santes Dwynwen, St David's Day, Shrove Tuesday, Welsh Language Music Day, Mother's Day, Shwmae Su'mae etc.

## **Background to the report**

The preparation of an annual report forms part of an organisation's self-regulatory work.

[View the documents we hold which detail the organisation's arrangements for compliance with the standards, the Welsh Language Statement and the Welsh Language Strategy for 2017-2022.](#)

Strategic responsibility for the Welsh Language in Denbighshire rests with the Council's Corporate Operations Team. The Lead Director is Gary Williams and the political Lead Member is Councillor Emrys Wynne, whom was responsible for the Welsh Language, Heritage and Culture during the period to which this report relates. Manon Celyn, the Council's Welsh Language Officer, was responsible for actively dealing with Welsh language issues over the last year, and if you wish to discuss the report please contact the officer directly by e-mailing [manon.celyn@sirddinbych.gov.uk](mailto:manon.celyn@sirddinbych.gov.uk).

## Matters arising during the reporting period

### Welsh Language Training completed

Please find information below about the number of staff that have received training in Welsh to a specific qualification level and the number of staff who have had Welsh language awareness training in 2022-2023.

#### Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Awareness (including schools)

Status	%
completed	74
not completed	26

#### Appendix 2 - Various courses held/completed in Welsh

Details	Number who attended/completed the course
Data Protection	5



<b>Details</b>	<b>Number who attended/completed the course</b>
Hate Crime	3
Carer Awareness	2
1 to 1 Meetings	3
Introduction to Climate Change	3
Shortlisting	1
Attendance at work	1
Equality	1
Attendance at work	1
Induction of new staff member	1
Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence	2
Cysgliad	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

## **Supervision/Proof-reading arrangements**

The success in securing two Welsh Language Champions in each service has given those services the opportunity to receive support with proof-reading documents while promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, and similar support is also provided by the Welsh Language Officers and fluent Welsh speakers within teams.

## **A bilingual workforce**

We have been doing a great deal of essential work to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language internally and externally over the last year in order to ensure that the Welsh Language Standards are implemented. These are some of projects undertaken:

### **Paned a Sgwrs**

The Paned a Sgwrs sessions have now been running for over five years. These were conducted face-to-face before Covid and moved online during the pandemic, and continue to be held virtually as many staff are still working from home in accordance with the flexible working scheme. A total of 22 staff members attend the sessions but numbers vary from one to the next. Having a quick chat over a cup of coffee helps people to improve their social skills, form relationships and improve their mental and physical wellbeing. We meet once a week at 9am to discuss various subjects and encourage staff to use and foster their Welsh language skills in an informal setting.

### **Owain Glyndŵr Day**

We shared a video we made to highlight Glyndŵr's connections with Denbighshire and significant places in the county relating to his history. These places include Glyndyfrdwy, where one of Glyndŵr's two main courts was held and the estates around which Glyndŵr took his name; Mwnt in Llidiart-y-Parc near Glyndyfrdwy where he was proclaimed Prince of Wales; Bryn Saith Marchog where he had an altercation with Sir Reginald Grey (Lord of the Vale of Clwyd in Ruthin) relating to common land that developed to be a revolt for independence for Wales; Ruthin where the town was burnt to the ground apart from the castle; Denbigh and Ruthin were also attacked, and there is a plaque on the old NatWest building in Ruthin that was unveiled by Dafydd Iwan in 2000 to commemorate 600 years since the instigation of Glyndŵr's revolt. We received very positive feedback from staff and many stated that they had not been aware of Denbighshire's significance in the history

of Glyndŵr. This video has been viewed nearly 2,000 times. [Watch the Owain Glyndŵr video on YouTube here.](#)

## **‘Mae gen i hawl’ campaign**

This is a national campaign to celebrate the Welsh language services that Local Authorities offer, and the rights that people have to use Welsh when dealing with them. It was an opportunity to promote Welsh language services in Denbighshire and seek to increase the number of people who choose to use them. The marketing campaign highlighted some of the rights that the public have, as well as Council staff.

## **Dydd Santes Dwynwen**

A quiz about the history of Santes Dwynwen was produced as part of the celebrations. It was shared internally and externally on our social media channels. We also produced a document containing [relevant Welsh vocabulary](#) with phonetics to help Welsh learners.

## **Shwmae Sumae! Day**

We took part in celebrating Shwmae Su'mae Day again this year on 15 October. The aim of the day is to promote the idea of starting every conversation with 'Shwmae' or 'Su'mae' with the aim of showing that the Welsh language belongs to us all – fluent speakers, learners or those shy about their Welsh. We shared some messages on our social accounts along with the video we created last year of the red dragon mascot (Dewi Draig) being filmed while using the Council's Welsh language services. The dragon passed a rugby ball to other members of staff after saying "shwmae" or "su'mae", then those staff members followed suit. The concept was that the rugby ball was the Welsh language, and that we all pass it along. [Watch the Shwmae Su'mae Day 2020 video on YouTube here.](#)

## **Welsh Language Music Day**

A special playlist of Welsh songs was created to share with staff and encourage them to play them at home, at work, or when driving.

## **St David's Day**

We shared information on our social media channels about the history of Saint David, [relevant Welsh vocabulary](#) and phonetics to assist Welsh learners and to produce a St. David's Day quiz with a prize of Welsh cakes and a daffodil flowerpot for the winner.

## **Welsh Language Steering Group**

The committee has continued to meet online and has invited some of our partners to give presentations on their work in the county. We have also been inviting staff members who are learning Welsh to talk about their language journeys and the advantages that speaking Welsh brings them in their work and everyday lives.

Other subjects discussed have included the Welsh Language Strategy, the Welsh Language Policy, the Grant Awarding Policy, the Welsh Language Standards and Welsh language activities on a county and national level. The membership has changed following the election.

## **Working Welsh Logo / E-mail signature**

Staff who can speak Welsh include a logo at the bottom of their e-mail signature to let customers and colleagues know that they can speak Welsh. In the same vein, we have developed a logo for learners which says 'Dw i'n dysgu Cymraeg' (I'm learning Welsh). A large number of Welsh learners have included this logo below their e-mail signatures.

## **Promoting the Welsh Language Standards**

We continue to share those documents produced to promote the Welsh Language Standards to share on the Council staff Facebook page, our daily newsletter, our intranet and our VisionTime system. It is a checklist for staff to ensure that they comply with the Standards and follow the guidelines issued. There are templates for answering the phone bilingually, arranging meetings and correspondence.

## **Videos to promote the Welsh language**

We have promoted several videos we have produced in the last year, such as a film with spoken vocabulary and [sentences in Welsh that are useful in meetings](#) and a guide to [pronouncing the names of some of Denbighshire's towns and villages](#). All these videos are distributed internally and externally on our corporate Facebook page and have been shared several times by members of the public.

## **Welsh Language Policy**

We have prepared a new [Welsh Language Policy](#) (standard 98) which explains how we will operate in accordance with the requirements of the Standards. It is based on the

principle that the Welsh and English languages are of equal status in our work and administrative processes. It also acknowledges our responsibility to protect and promote the Welsh language and to develop use of the language both externally and within the Council, and explains to staff how to comply fully with each standard.

## **Grant Awarding Policy**

We have developed a [policy on awarding grants](#) in accordance with Standard 94 in order to assist officers to comply with the standards when awarding grants on behalf of Denbighshire County Council. The aim of this policy is to help officers to ensure that the considerations above form an integral part of the grants process in Denbighshire County Council, as well as to ensure that those who make decisions (including the Full Council / Executive (Cabinet) and Senior Officers under delegated powers) are aware of their duties when making decisions.

## **Daily newsletter and e-mail messages**

Following the publication of our new policy on the Welsh language in internal processes, our daily newsletter to staff, 'Heddiw yn Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Today', is now published bilingually, along with any e-mails/system messages sent to all members of staff, such as messages about fire drills, ICT updates etc. This is all part of our efforts to try to become a Council which administers its business bilingually in the future.

## **Service Compliance Reviews**

We have produced a Service Performance Measurement form which was sent to senior managers to complete on behalf of their departments. The purpose of the form is to ascertain whether we continue to be in full compliance with the Standards or if certain services need support in order to fulfil the requirements.

## **Website usage statistics**

<b>Website</b>	<b>Number of visits</b>	<b>Number of visitors</b>
<a href="http://www.sirddinbych.gov.uk">www.sirddinbych.gov.uk</a>	15,836	6,196

<a href="http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk">www.denbighshire.gov.uk</a>	889,757	329,020
<b>Total</b>	<b>905,593</b>	<b>335,216</b>

## The Welsh Language Strategy

In the last two years we have been working on reviewing our current Welsh Language Strategy for the next five years (2023-28). Five years have passed since the current version was approved, and during this time a large number of improvements have been introduced to promote and facilitate the Welsh language internally and within the wider community.

We are playing our part in achieving one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050 by implementing the Welsh Language Strategy alongside our partners and communities. This includes:

- Ensuring that everyone can access services through the medium of Welsh naturally, and at every stage of their lives
- Supporting children and families in the early years to develop confidence in using the Welsh language
- Supporting the wider use of the Welsh language and celebrating Welsh culture in the community, including workplaces
- Developing a culture and ethos that encourages daily use of the Welsh language by elected members and council staff, and providing training and social opportunities to develop their confidence in using the Welsh language
- Developing the services available at the Welsh Language Centre in St Asaph for the benefit of the wider community.

The Welsh Language Planning Centre (laith.cyf) was commissioned to write a report on the success of our current Strategy in accordance with Standard 146, and produced a comprehensive report which included useful recommendations for the next Strategy.

We have been collaborating closely with different departments within the Council and the County Welsh Language Forum in order to ensure that the Strategy is ambitious and

follows the recommendations made by the Welsh Language Planning Centre. We shall publish the report alongside our Welsh Language Strategy in the coming months.

## **Denbighshire Libraries Service Welsh Language Activities**

### **Bookstart Denbighshire**

The Bookstart provision was extended this year to include more sessions in libraries. 12,185 attended Rhymetime during the year – all sessions are naturally bilingual and introduce Welsh songs and nursery rhymes to families.

This provision is central to the pre-school strategy within the County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, and is often the first encounter with the Welsh language for families with young babies. In a survey, 49% of the parents stated that they felt more confident with the Welsh language due to attending the Bookstart Rhymetime with their toddlers.

### **Welsh Reading Groups**

The groups Sgwrs a Sangria (Denbigh Library), Llyfr a Llymed (Ruthin Library), Cylch Darllen Rhuthun (Ruthin Library) and Cylch Darllen Glyndŵr (Corwen Library) have returned to meeting face-to-face in the libraries, and a new Welsh language reading group has been established in Llangollen Library.

### **Conversation Group**

The informal conversation group in Rhyl Library encourages people to use their Welsh and have a chat over a cup of tea or coffee.

### **Summer Reading Challenge 2022: Gadgeteers**

An increase was seen in the number of children participating in the bilingual reading challenge, with a total of 2,077 children taking part. Almost 5,000 Welsh books were borrowed in the course of the Challenge. A Welsh website was available to support the challenge again this year (funded by the Welsh Government) in order for children to take part virtually too. A programme of events was held in conjunction with the Challenge based on the theme of creative technology, using Summer of Fun funding from Welsh Government, which included bilingual workshops with Xplore and Eleni.

### **Ti a Fi / Clwb Cwtsh / Welsh for Children**

This year saw the establishment of two new Ti a Fi groups (Mudiad Meithrin) in Rhyl Library and Rhuddlan Library. Clwb Cwtsh sessions were also provided in Rhuddlan Library and Welsh for Children sessions in St. Asaph to support parents and carers to begin their Welsh language journeys.

### **Author events**

A Fiction Festival was held in November with a programme of talks which included Elen Wyn in Denbigh Library and John Alwyn Griffiths in Ruthin Library, to provide an opportunity for readers to meet the authors and ask questions about their books. As part of the Ruthin Festival programme of events we organised an audience with author Rebecca Roberts in Ruthin Library.

### **Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2022**

Several libraries staged exhibitions of books, pictures and archive material to promote the arrival of the Urdd Eisteddfod in Denbighshire in May 2022. The ceremony to present the Eisteddfod Chair and Crown was held in Denbigh Library at the beginning of May. Several members of staff from the service also worked in the Council's marquee on the Maes and a morning Rhyme Time provided by our Flying Start Team proved to be especially popular, attracting dozens of families to the Eisteddfod who might not have thought of attending otherwise.

### **Welsh book loans**

19,521 Welsh items (books, audiobooks and DVDs) were borrowed in 2022-23, an increase of 29% compared to the previous year, as borrowers returned following the lockdown periods. Over 71% of these were children's books which demonstrates the substantial contribution made by local libraries to the Council's aim to increase the number of children who use the language and receive their education through the medium of Welsh. With only two Welsh bookshops in the county, the local library is a significant source of Welsh books in the community for children and adults.

### **Welsh Digital Libraries**

In partnership with all other library services in Wales, the National Library of Wales, the Welsh Books Council and Welsh Government, library users have access to a range of digital reading resources (e-books, e-audiobooks, magazines) which may be downloaded free of charge.



## **PORI**

The bilingual app PORI provides members with access to their borrowing accounts to manage their titles and requests, which can be made from the library catalogue. It also enables readers to scan the barcode of any book to see if a copy is available to borrow from their local library.

## **Public computers and printers**

A new control system was installed for public computers in libraries, which for the first time included a bilingual website for placing orders and sending documents for printing over the internet.

## **Welsh Language Service**

65% of staff within the service can speak Welsh and a Welsh language service is provided in every library. Staff are supported to learn the language and develop their skills.

## **Workforce Planning**

All services are expected to create a Workforce Planning document and to consider whether or not they have a sufficient number of Welsh speakers in order to provide a fully bilingual service. The service is also subject to challenge from the Senior Management Team and councillors in relation to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

## **The Welsh Language Standards**

The Welsh Language Standards require the Council, in its annual monitoring report, to report upon a number of key performance indicators. A summary of this information is provided below.

## **Compliance with the Service Delivery standards**

- We have communicated with staff in regard to responding to correspondence, arranging meetings, social media, e-mails and answering the telephone.
- We have reminded all staff regularly to give people the option to be transferred to a Welsh speaker when contacting the Council.
- We have provided wording for staff to include in letter templates, giving residents the chance to ask for all future correspondence in Welsh.
- We have included a message within the Contact Centre's automated response to state that a Welsh language line is available.
- We make a record if a person wishes to receive correspondence from us in Welsh, and correspond with that person in Welsh only in future.
- We have notified staff who arrange public meetings that all invites / publicity must be bilingual, that simultaneous translators should be arranged for all public meetings and that organisers of public meetings should remind people at the start of meetings that they can contribute in Welsh.
- All documents produced for public use are bilingual, including promotional materials and exhibition documentation.
- We have included a statement on our templates for Welsh/English forms and documents to state that they are also available in English/Welsh.
- The interface and menus on every page of our website are bilingual.
- We respond in Welsh to every grant application form received in Welsh.
- We have conducted a promotional campaign to promote the Council's Welsh-language social media accounts.
- Signs have been placed in main reception areas to state that people are welcome to communicate through the medium of Welsh.
- All our signs are in Welsh and are checked for accuracy.
- We have added further guidance to provide greater clarity on how to submit a complaint in relation to the Welsh language.

## **Compliance with the Operational Standards**

- We have introduced a Human Resources process whereby all are asked whether they wish to receive their contract of employment in Welsh.

- The Senior Management Team has been sending regular messages to Services regarding opportunities to learn Welsh and the requirement to complete the mandatory Awareness of Welsh e-learning module.
- We have included a table within our application forms to gauge the Welsh language skills of each applicant.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence in relation to their employment, addressed to them personally, in Welsh.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive paper correspondence in relation to their training needs or requirements in Welsh.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive documents describing their performance objectives in Welsh, and we provide documents in Welsh if they wish.
- We have asked all staff whether they wish to receive documents describing their career plan in Welsh, and we provide documents in Welsh if they wish.
- We ask all staff whether they wish to receive forms that record and authorise annual leave, absences from work and flexible working hours in Welsh.
- Staff may submit complaints in Welsh through the corporate complaints procedure and all staff have been notified of this.
- The Council's existing Corporate Complaints Procedure enables staff to submit complaints in Welsh and to respond to complaints about them in Welsh. Staff have been notified of these rights.
- All staff are given the opportunity to ask that any meetings involving complaints against them are conducted in Welsh (with or without a translator).
- A record of every decision regarding a complaint made against a member of staff is published in Welsh (and any subsequent meeting is held in Welsh).
- Our HR policies state that staff can respond in Welsh to any allegations made against them.
- Computer software to check spelling and grammar has been provided to all staff who speak or are learning Welsh along with Welsh language interfaces for software such as Microsoft Word and Outlook.
- We have translated the text of our intranet homepage to Welsh.
- All pages on the intranet which have a corresponding Welsh version include a link to that Welsh page.
- Pages have been created on the intranet to provide services and support resources in order to promote the Welsh language and assist staff to use Welsh.
- The interface and menus on the intranet are in Welsh.

- The Council has conducted an assessment of its staff's Welsh language skills by way of self-assessment under the new Framework.
- The Council promotes all opportunities for staff to attend basic Welsh language courses during working hours.
- The Council provides the opportunity for staff who wish to continue beyond the basic Welsh language training to receive further training.
- The Council has developed an e-learning module to raise staff's awareness of the Welsh language.
- Information to raise awareness of the Welsh language is provided to all new members of staff.
- We have provided wording for staff to use on their e-mail signature, to inform people if they are fluent Welsh speakers or learners.
- We have created a new self-assessment document to measure services' performance in relation to the Welsh Language Standards. All Council departments have completed the questionnaire which asked about their level of compliance with the Standards, which gives us a comprehensive picture of compliance throughout the Council and an awareness of where strengths/weaknesses lie and where the standards need to be reinforced.

## **Compliance with the Policymaking Standards**

- We have advised managers to consider the impact, if any (whether positive or negative), the policy decision would have on opportunities for staff to use the Welsh language, and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English.
- When a new policy is formulated or revised, we ensure that all managers are aware of the need to consider the effects of policy decisions on the Welsh Language.
- We have produced a policy on using Welsh internally for the purpose of promoting and facilitating the use of the language and this document has been published on our intranet.
- We have produced a policy on awarding grants in order to assist officers in ensuring that the above considerations form an integral part of the Denbighshire County Council grants process.

## Complaints

Area of Standards	Complaints received directly
Service delivery	1
Policymaking	0
Operational	0

Date	Complaint	Details	Action taken
April 2022	1. The complainant had received e-mails and telephone calls in English from a Council planning officer.	The complainant had received e-mails and telephone calls in English from a Council planning officer, in spite of the original planning officer being a Welsh speaker and having corresponded with the complainant in Welsh.	<p>The Planning Department (and in particular the Development Control Team which deals with Planning Applications and Planning Compliance cases) has conducted a full review of its processes for dealing with correspondence submitted in Welsh.</p> <p>This includes all planning applications, comments thereon and the submission of "Notification of a breach of planning regulations" forms.</p> <p>The review involved:</p> <p>14/9/22 - a meeting between the Head of Planning, Public Protection and the Countryside Service, the Development Manager, the Welsh Language Officer and the Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer to review the Welsh Language Commissioner's letter and to</p>

Date	Complaint	Details	Action taken
			<p>discuss all the relevant Welsh Language Standards and proposed actions.</p> <p>Following the meeting, the Commissioner's letter and further actions were cascaded to the Service Leadership Team and the Development Control Team (Managers) and reminders were provided in each one-to-one meeting with staff in the Development Control Team.</p> <p>24/10/22 - the complaint in question to the Welsh Language Commissioner was used as a case study in the Development Control Conference as an example of an issue where the correspondence was partly in English but mainly in Welsh.</p> <p>24/10/22 – the aforementioned Development Control Case Conference also discussed the manner in which staff in the planning team need to establish the language of choice during telephone calls and within any written correspondence. Notes should be placed on any electronic planning records kept for that particular case in order that other members of staff are aware while dealing with it. The relevant tab in the EDRM system may be used for recording and staff were reminded of this.</p> <p>The Council has created a checklist for staff to use when answering the telephone and has shared messages to</p>

Date	Complaint	Details	Action taken
		<p>An allegation that a Council officer had told the complainant that the delay in responding to his Freedom of Information request was due to the fact that the request had been submitted in Welsh.</p>	<p>explain the need to proactively establish the language choice of any customer who calls the direct numbers of Council departments and staff members.</p>
	<p>2. A delay in responding to a Freedom of Information request</p>	<p>The complainant had received English-only e-mails from the Council in response to an e-mail in Welsh.</p>	<p>The Commissioner ruled that the Council had not failed to comply with the standard and the allegation was therefore not investigated further.</p> <p>Over the next twelve to eighteen months, the Council shall review the manner in which its public-facing systems generate automatic e-mails/responses. The Council currently manages and operates a number of systems that provide the ability to generate automatic correspondence with the public. We acknowledge that some of these systems do not send automatic e-mails/responses bilingually by design, but rather send automatic e-mail responses in the language chosen by the customer for accessing our services.</p> <p>For instance, customers who currently choose to complete online transactions in Welsh on our website will receive automatic acknowledgment in Welsh.</p>

Date	Complaint	Details	Action taken
			Similarly, customers who currently choose to complete online transactions in English will receive automatic acknowledgment in English. The Council operates two corporate web domains to support this: www.sirddinbych.gov.uk and www.denbighshire.gov.uk.

## Employees' Welsh Language Skills

The information that the Council currently holds is presented below. This information is fed back to services so that Heads of Service can plan their workforces.

### Corporate Outcomes only (excluding schools)

Level	Listening and speaking		Reading and comprehension		Writing	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Level 0</b>	288	12.09	353	14.82	556	23.34
<b>Level 1</b>	758	31.82	737	30.94	594	24.94
<b>Level 2</b>	243	10.20	193	8.10	199	8.36
<b>Level 3</b>	121	5.08	121	5.08	117	4.91
<b>Level 4</b>	132	5.54	147	6.17	87	3.65
<b>Level 5</b>	134	5.63	124	5.21	106	4.45



<b>Level</b>	<b>Listening and speaking</b>		<b>Reading and comprehension</b>		<b>Writing</b>	
<b>No information</b>	706	29.64	707	29.68	723	30.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,382</b>	<b>100</b>

## Listening and speaking skills by Service (excluding schools)

Service	Level 0		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		No information	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Adult Social Care and Homelessness</b>	73	3.06	169	7.09	46	1.93	28	1.18	26	1.09	21	0.88	183	7.68
<b>Corporate Support - People</b>	9	0.38	40	1.68	12	0.50	6	0.25	12	0.50	13	0.55	27	1.13
<b>Corporate Support - Performance, Digital and Assets</b>	16	0.67	47	1.97	23	0.96	11	0.46	8	0.34	9	0.38	22	0.92
<b>Education and Children</b>	31	1.30	92	3.86	35	1.47	17	0.71	18	0.76	27	1.13	126	5.29
<b>Finance and Audit</b>	3	0.13	28	1.18	6	0.25	5	0.21	5	0.21	6	0.25	45	1.89
<b>Highways, Facilities and Environmental</b>	103	4.32	226	9.49	54	2.27	29	1.22	23	0.97	20	0.84	192	8.06
<b>Housing and Communities</b>	22	0.92	78	3.27	33	1.39	14	0.59	24	1.01	20	0.84	38	1.60
<b>Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services</b>	31	1.30	78	3.27	34	1.43	11	0.46	16	0.67	18	0.76	73	3.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>12.09</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>31.82</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>10.20</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>5.08</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>5.54</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>29.64</b>

## Reading and Comprehension Skills

Service	Level 0		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		No information	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Adult Social Care and Homelessness</b>	99	4.16	156	6.55	35	1.47	24	1.01	27	1.13	22	0.92	183	7.68
<b>Corporate Support - People</b>	11	0.46	37	1.55	13	0.55	6	0.25	11	0.46	14	0.59	27	1.13
<b>Corporate Support - Performance, Digital and Assets</b>	15	0.63	54	2.27	16	0.67	9	0.38	10	0.42	9	0.38	23	0.97
<b>Education and Children</b>	36	1.51	93	3.90	26	1.09	18	0.76	25	1.05	22	0.92	126	5.29
<b>Finance and Audit</b>	5	0.21	25	1.05	7	0.29	3	0.13	8	0.34	5	0.21	45	1.89
<b>Highways, Facilities and Environmental</b>	121	5.08	215	9.03	49	2.06	26	1.09	24	1.01	18	0.76	192	8.06
<b>Housing and Communities</b>	26	1.09	83	3.48	21	0.88	22	0.92	23	0.97	19	0.80	38	1.60
<b>Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services</b>	40	1.68	74	3.11	26	1.09	13	0.55	19	0.80	15	0.63	73	3.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>14.82</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>30.94</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>5.08</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>6.17</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>5.21</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>29.68</b>

## Writing Skills

Service	Level 0		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		No information	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Adult Social Care and Homelessness</b>	152	6.38	107	4.49	37	1.55	23	0.97	13	0.55	16	0.67	198	8.31
<b>Corporate Support - People</b>	21	0.88	31	1.30	14	0.59	9	0.38	7	0.29	10	0.42	27	1.13
<b>Corporate Support - Performance, Digital and Assets</b>	38	1.60	35	1.47	19	0.80	8	0.34	5	0.21	9	0.38	22	0.92
<b>Education and Children</b>	61	2.56	80	3.36	27	1.13	17	0.71	10	0.42	24	1.01	127	5.33
<b>Finance and Audit</b>	16	0.67	17	0.71	8	0.34	4	0.17	6	0.25	2	0.08	45	1.89
<b>Highways, Facilities and Environmental</b>	145	6.09	202	8.48	50	3.0	24	1.01	18	0.76	16	0.67	192	8.06
<b>Housing and Communities</b>	54	2.27	62	2.60	21	0.88	21	0.88	15	0.63	18	0.76	38	1.60
<b>Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services</b>	69	2.90	60	2.52	23	0.94	11	0.46	13	0.55	11	0.46	74	3.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>23.34</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>24.94</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>8.36</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>30.35</b>

## Welsh Language Skills Framework

We continue to operate the Framework which is a simple way for staff to self-assess their language skills based on the type of communication tasks (reading, writing, speaking and comprehension) they can perform through the medium of Welsh. This is an effective way of monitoring the skill levels necessary for the post and what courses workers may need in order to progress to the next level. Following this framework enables us to support learners on their language journey and achieve the best possible outcomes.

## Welsh Lessons

The table below shows the number of Council staff members who attended Welsh lessons as part of the 'Working Welsh' scheme provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Taster Course</b>	6
<b>Entry</b>	13
<b>Foundation</b>	2
<b>Intermediate</b>	0
<b>Advanced</b>	1
<b>Self-study</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	24

10-hour Welsh taster courses are available online for those who want to start their language journey. These courses introduce everyday vocabulary and phrases and are available to everyone, free of charge. Some courses are tailored for various sectors such as health, care, public services, teachers, head teachers, tourism, retail, Welsh tourism, the Women's Institute and information about the Welsh language tailored for Childcare Providers.

## **Progress with the ‘More Than Just Words’ framework**

Within Denbighshire Social Services there is a clear commitment to transforming and improving services in order to ensure that the Welsh language is a key element of care, including in services provided by the independent sector. The work is backed up by the ‘More Than Just Words’ Strategic Framework (2022-27).

The actions implemented by the Denbighshire Adult Services team in 2022-23 include the provision of details on how services currently meet the needs of Welsh speakers alongside work to achieve improvement. This has included meeting with Adult Services teams individually to discuss and share best practice in the provision of Welsh language services and how to make the “Active Offer”. Work has also been done on discussing and overcoming challenges departments face in striving to meet the needs of Welsh speakers.

In addition to providing the option to be put through to a Welsh speaker when making a referral or telephoning the Adult and Children’s Services to seek advice, the same choice is offered by the Gateway Service and the Single Point of Access (SPoA). Staff are also reminded regularly of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. All social media posts are bilingual and feedback forms allow people to express their views bilingually.

The current workforce’s Welsh language skills are supported and developed by providing information on the range of language training courses available (Working Welsh) and offering opportunities for Welsh speakers to build their confidence in providing services in Welsh. The following courses were also commissioned specifically for Social Care staff in 2022-23: Welsh language taster course, greeting the public and intermediate Welsh.

Within the Workforce Development Team we continue to publish our monthly newsletter to share information to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the care sector. We also continue to develop our training website, which includes details on how care providers and partners may develop their Welsh language services. The website features information on various resources to encourage, assist and support staff in using their Welsh language skills, including links and resources to promote the Welsh language within social care and information on the active offer and More Than Just Words.

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/health-and-social-care/workforce-development-and-training/workforce-development-welsh-in-social-care-work.aspx>

Our Denbighshire County Council Service Manager, Alaw Pierce, won the 'Caring in Welsh' award in the national award ceremony organised by Social Care Wales. Throughout her career, Alaw has supported the use of the Welsh language in the workplace and has fostered a culture where staff can use the Welsh language comfortably in the workplace

. <https://gofalcymdeithasol.cymru/y-gwobrau/seremoni-y-gwobrau-2022-yr-enillwyr-ar-rhai-a-gyrhaeddodd-y-rownd-derfynol>

## **Welsh in Education Strategic Group Update**

### **Outcome 1**

#### **Action: More nursery children / three year olds educated through the medium of Welsh.**

##### **Increased availability of Welsh-medium places**

Childcare capital schemes.

The Oak Tree Centre – building work has recommenced on the site following a delay due to the contractor, RL Davies, going into administration. The internal works shall all be completed in time for children to be admitted in September. The Centre has appointed a Leader for the new Cylch Meithrin and two electric minibuses are already transporting children to Ysgol Dewi Sant.

Stakeholders in the projects at Ysgol Dewi Sant and Ysgol Twm o'r Nant shall receive updates after half term. Both projects have been held back for different reasons and we shall report back to the stakeholders with the latest information at that stage.

A bid for funding for the Ysgol y Llys and Cylch Rhuthun projects was submitted in January 2023. We are currently working with Welsh Government to progress these schemes.

##### **Promoting bilingualism and Welsh-language education**

Welsh-medium education website/marketing – there is a need to promote Welsh-language education. There is a need to refer parents to websites and events that promote learning Welsh.

A sub-group comprising several stakeholders / agencies / organisations has been meeting to map out the entire provision for parents and pre-school children. This information shall be collated and presented on the Council's website along with information for primary and secondary schools and post-16. Postcards are also being created with QR codes which refer people to specific sites.

## **Outcome 2**

**Action: More reception children / five year olds educated through the medium of Welsh.**

### **Increased capacity in Welsh-medium schools**

Ysgol Gymraeg y Gwernant, Llangollen was unsuccessful in its bid under the Sustainable Schools Challenge. The Education Modernisation Programme Board shall meet to discuss the project next month.

Changing schools' language designation

- Challenges remain with T2 schools. The definition is 50% of the teaching. T2 is a 'second language' pathway.
- Two other schools have expressed an interest in becoming T2.
- Ysgol Llanfair, Welsh-only nursery class September 2023

## **Outcome 3**

**Action: More children continuing to improve their Welsh Language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.**

Training to develop children's oracy with teachers from the county's Welsh-medium schools is progressing effectively.

Latecomers - there is a need to develop a model for supporting the centre in St. Asaph. Several models are being considered in the hope that a class of latecomers may be admitted next year.



Council officers are currently formulating action plans to develop oracy among primary and secondary pupils in both Welsh- and English-medium education.

Following a meeting with officers of the governing bodies, neither Ysgol Brynhyfryd nor Ysgol Dinas Brân have changed their language designations. Further discussions will need to be held with both schools, however, in order to set up policies and internal systems to ensure that children do not switch between streams nor choose to study some subjects through the medium of Welsh and others through the medium of English.

There is a need to continue strengthening the Welsh-medium provision available to secondary pupils in south Denbighshire. The same language choice is now offered to all pupils in Brynhyfryd and within 80% of subjects in KS 3 and 4 in Ysgol Dinas Brân.

The possibility of setting up an immersion class in Brynhyfryd will need to be discussed.

#### **Outcome 4**

##### **Action: More learners studying for Welsh qualifications (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.**

Increasing the transfer rate from Welsh-medium primary schools to Welsh-medium secondary education to 95% within 5 years.

Work is ongoing to set up a cross-county transition programme and to raise the question with parents of year 5 pupils regarding their choice of stream / secondary school.

There is a need to reinforce the message and expectation that children receive Welsh-medium education from nursery to 16+.

We are developing the Denbighshire website to pool all the information on the benefits of Welsh-medium education to be shared within schools and on social media.

Increasing the numbers attending the immersion class in Ysgol Glan Clwyd. A pilot project is currently underway involving Ysgol Brynhedydd and Ysgol Bodnant whereby a teacher from the Welsh Language Support Team, the Urdd and the Welsh Language Initiative visit pupils in Years 5 and 6 to offer diverting activities through the medium of Welsh in order to encourage more children to attend the immersion class in Ysgol Glan Clwyd.

#### **Outcome 5**

**Action: More opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language within different contexts in school.**

There is a great deal of excitement and activity in the schools as part of the Language Charter / Cymraeg Campus activities.

Training to develop children's oracy with teachers from the county's Welsh-medium schools is progressing effectively.

All English-medium primary schools have achieved the Bronze Cymraeg Campus award. Ysgol Bodnant and Ysgol Cefn Meiriadog have received the Silver award. It is foreseen that a further four schools shall receive the Silver award before the summer holidays.

All clusters have worked with 'external / third sector services' such as 'Cân Sing', 'Welsh Whisperer', Ed Holden (aka Mr. Phormula), Ameer Rana-Davies (1Miliwn Ltd.) and specialists in Creative Arts in order to raise awareness of their Welshness and to practise speaking Welsh.

The Council works very closely with partners such as the Urdd and the Welsh Language Initiative to collectively plan a programme of work and coordinate activities that will support the priorities within this plan.

Target more support towards fewer schools – English-medium primary schools which may feed into the immersion class in Glan Clwyd – Bodnant and Brynhedydd.

Welsh-medium primary schools that have seen a decrease in pupils recently - Ysgol y Llys and Dewi Sant.

Welsh-medium primary schools with a high percentage of children attending English streams in the south of the county - no projects being implemented as yet.

**Outcome 6**

**Action: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs ("ALN") (in accordance with the duties set out by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)**

The scarcity of Welsh-speaking staff and Welsh-medium resources is a cause for concern. There is a need to reconsider recruitment methods and trial new ways of attracting Welsh speakers to the county.

We are currently reviewing the existing provision and expanding the support available in Welsh for pupils in Denbighshire schools.

Service leaders within ALN in Denbighshire shall meet to arrange an audit of Welsh-medium provision in all departments.

The information gleaned from this audit will enable us to plan for increasing Welsh language provision.

### **Outcome 7**

#### **Action: An increase in the number of teaching staff who can teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh.**

Officers in the Welsh Language Support Team are currently preparing a training programme which will be made available to schools before summer – Pedagogy and teaching Welsh to children, in addition to developing individuals' Welsh speaking skills.

#### **Training in English-medium primary schools in 2022-2023**

77 members of school staff (teachers and assistants) have completed the Welsh INSET courses.

7 schools have received support prior to Estyn inspections.

15 school teachers have received 'on-site' INSET training on introducing the 'English-medium schools/streams/settings' framework.

Training in English-medium secondary schools – a network has been newly established to support Welsh language coordinators in English-medium secondary schools to identify training needs and areas for development and to share good practice.

Training in Welsh-medium primary schools – a robust network has been established whereby coordinators meet regularly and receive training on developing children's oracy.

Training in Welsh-medium secondary schools – a meeting has been arranged to discuss establishing a network to support first language Welsh language coordinators in the Welsh-medium/dual-stream schools.