



Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2015-16

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Areas of progress	3
3. Areas for improvement	4
4. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme and Performance Analysis	5
5. Service Delivery, Welsh Language Skills and Promoting the Language	6
i. Recruitment	6
ii. Induction	6
iii. Training	6
iv. Recognition	7
v. Complaints	7
vi. Mystery Shopping	7
vii. Celebrating the Welsh Language and Culture	8
viii. Website and Social Media	8
ix. Staff Newsletter – Tŷ Ni	8
6. Management and Administration of the Scheme	8
APPENDICES	
Appendix A – Updated Welsh Language Action Plan 2015/16	9
Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2016/17	11

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Welsh Language Scheme is a statutory scheme that treats the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.
- 1.2. North Wales Housing has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business it will treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.
- 1.3. The revised Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the North Wales Housing Board in June 2010.
- 1.4. The officer responsible for the North Wales Housing Welsh Language Scheme is the Chief Executive.
- 1.5. This report will be available to the public at North Wales Housing's main offices at Bangor and Llandudno Junction and will be published on the North Wales Housing Website. It will be circulated to all North Wales Housing staff via the intranet.
- 1.6. This Monitoring Report covers the 2015/16 financial year and it looks at how well we have performed against our Welsh Language Scheme and in some cases the standards.
- 1.7. NWH was part of the 3rd round of Welsh Language Investigations undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner, NWH response was completed in August 2015 and a significant amount of staff time went into the response but unfortunately due to the timing of the election the Ministers have not made the Standards for Housing into regulation to date. The Welsh Language Commissioner has made her intent clear on the future though and further information about the investigation and recommendations can be found [here](#).
- 1.8. The delay in the standards being made into regulation has resulted in some actions for 15/16 not being delivered.

2. Areas of Progress

- 2.1. We completed the Welsh Language Commissioners investigation response and identified that we are reasonably good at the Service Delivery Standards.
- 2.2. A corporate approach to communication is in the process of being implemented for phone calls, e-mail, voice mails and e-mail signatures. Mystery shopping has been undertaken to assess compliance.
- 2.3. The number of staff who speak Welsh as their first language has increased from 24% in 2013/14 to 25% in 2014/15 and 25.8% in 2015/16. 35% of staff consider themselves fluent.(Includes first language figure)
- 2.4. 25 members of staff regularly attend weekly Welsh classes from Level 1 to 4 provided by Llandrillo College at NWH Offices; ongoing lessons are proving to be a better approach for ongoing learning. Staff now have the option of undertaking recognised qualifications (WJEC/CBAC).
- 2.5. All staff are made aware of the Welsh Language Scheme and training at the Corporate Induction. A quiz has been developed for the induction to ensure that staff are clear what their responsibilities are and feedback on this session is positive.

- 2.6. All external communication is bilingual.
 - Website, Twitter and Facebook
 - AGM Paperwork
 - Rent Statements
 - Clwb Seren (Tenants Newsletter)
 - Leaflets produced
- 2.7. 56% of our tenants are now profiled, 8% of all the tenants surveyed have stated that Welsh is their spoken language preference (19% for older people surveyed) and 5% of all our tenants surveyed have stated that Welsh is their written language preference. The tenant portal has been developed further so tenants can update their own profiling data. This is a bilingual service.
- 2.8. A STAR Satisfaction Survey has been undertaken and 88% of respondents were satisfied with the arrangements to communicate in their language of choice.
- 2.9. Welsh language and culture was celebrated on St David's Day by staff and Tenants/Service Users. This year we introduced a "Nominate a Saint" competition, we asked tenants and staff to nominate who they think are worthy of the title i.e. who in their community has helped them or made a significant difference in their community.
- 2.10. All complaints are registered centrally and held on our Open Housing system – again there have been no complaints in 15/16 in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme.
- 2.11. 100% of positions are recruited to the advertised Welsh level.
- 2.12. We are part of the Energy Warden Scheme working in partnership with Grŵp Cynefin which offers impartial help and advice to save tenants money.
- 2.13. The Welsh Learner of the Year Award is now an established staff award presented at the annual Staff Conference. The 2015/16 Learner of the Year is nominated by staff and this year was selected by the Senior Management Team and Llandrillo College.
- 2.14. 4 Staff have been nominated for the Llandrillo College Learner of the Year.
- 2.15. The Welsh Language Group have recruited 2 new members an Employee Forum Representative and the Communication and Marketing Manager.
- 2.16. The Places Director is committed to learning Welsh and an article was published in Tŷ Ni about Phil as a learner to encourage staff to learn.

3. Areas for Improvement

- 3.1. All staff have been provided with guidance on how to answer the phone/voicemail/out of office and have been reminded. Mystery shopping has highlighted that we are not 100% compliant.
- 3.2. Welsh Language assessments are undertaken during the recruitment for all staff but the same assessments have been used for a few years and need refreshing so they link directly to the levels used within the training courses provided by Llandrillo College.
- 3.3. We do not know if we have the right Welsh levels on the frontline – every role has a Welsh language level assigned to it but there is no clear agreed process for identifying what Welsh level each staff role should be and no recording method for what is required and level appointed.
- 3.4. Some staff are below the Welsh level for their role and have not made a commitment to learn, we do not have an agreed consistent approach on how to manage this.

- 3.5. A mentoring programme was set up in 14/15. This is now very informal and we need to undertake further work to promote it. 65% of staff who completed a questionnaire were aware that the mentoring scheme existed.
- 3.6. Tenant profiling is an ongoing process and Services use the information in their service planning but further work needs to be undertaken to tailor communication i.e. those who want Welsh letters only, telephone calls in Welsh, etc.
- 3.7. Leaflets and forms that we have already printed do not state that the leaflet/application form is also available in Welsh.
- 3.8. The reception at Plas Blodwel does not meet the Scheme signage requirements for Welcome and Self Serve.
- 3.9. Further work is required on the Equalities Impact Assessment and to ensure that the Welsh Language is embedded within the Assessments.

4. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme and Performance Analysis

The Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan was updated by the Welsh Language Group in April 2016 for the year ending March 2016. This can be found in: **Appendix A – Updated Welsh Language Action Plan 15/16.**

Three performance indicators were set in the Welsh Language Scheme which were:

1.	Development of implementation will be measured against target dates provided in the Action Plan.	Delivered	2	22%
		Partially Delivered	3	33%
		Not Delivered	1	11%
		On Hold	3	33%
		Total	9	100%
		Delivery is below what is expected as the significant work expected was to deliver the Strategy and the implementation of the standards.		
2.	Processing of Welsh Language communication will be assessed against the organisation's existing commitment to standard, and compared with records for corresponding English Communication.	Not collected.		
3.	The availability of Welsh speaking staff to support the Scheme in all operational areas will be monitored.	25.8% First language 35% Fluent (Includes first language and fluent) 15% Fairly good 43% A little 7% None		
		Further work is required to be undertaken to see if we have the Welsh levels on the front line.		

The actions for delivery in 2016/17 are any incomplete relevant actions from 15/16 as in 16/17 the focus will be on improving delivery of the standards. **Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2016/17.**

5. Service Delivery, Welsh Language Skills and Promoting the Language

i. Recruitment

Application documentation is available bilingually and candidates have the option to undertake their interview in their language of choice.

We continue to use a Welsh Language Assessment for each applicant who successfully progresses to the interview stage. The assessment is undertaken by a staff member using a structured process.

This process has been used for over 3 years and assessors have found that returning applicants know some of the questions and that it doesn't give a good overall assessment of the candidate due to its rigidity so it needs reviewing in line with the Welsh levels being taught in the training.

ii. Induction

All new staff receive an induction. Part of this induction is a session about the Welsh Language Scheme at NWH, the move towards standards, what is expected of them, especially in relation to communication. Each new member of staff is provided with the guide "How to communicate in Welsh – answering the phone, voicemail and e-mail"

In 2015/16, 19 new staff were inducted:

Induction Date	No of Staff
9 th June 2015	8
12 th November 2015	7
26 th February 2016	4
Total	19

iii. Training

Llandrillo College provides the weekly training courses from level 1 to level 4, supporting 25 staff; this relationship is continuing to develop well.

Training is provided during work time and is open to any member of staff.

Staff now have the opportunity to undertake qualifications at each level and all learners continue to be assessed on an ongoing basis, ensuring improvement and the identification of learning needs.

All learners have completed a "Commitment to Learning" form which is an agreement that they will commit to the training on an ongoing basis.

The breakdown of training by level is:

Level	No of Staff
1	5

2/3	7
3	5
4	8
Total	25

There are some staff that are not meeting the Welsh Level requirement of their role and are not undertaking any training; the approach to change this needs to be developed.

iv. Recognition

Annually, as part of the Staff Awards that are presented at the Staff Conference there is a Welsh Learner Award, this year it was won by Karen Johnson, Business Systems Analyst.

Staff are nominated by other staff and the Senior Management Team select the winners. For the Welsh Language Award we also asked Llandrillo College for their recommendations and views.

Llandrillo College also have a “Learner of the Year” award and 4 staff have been nominated.

v. Complaints

Frontline staff have all received complaints training this year, this wasn’t specific to the Welsh Language but it covered all complaints.

We manage formal complaints well and have an established process.

Again, there were no complaints relating to the Welsh Language in 2015/16.

vi. Mystery Shopping

This year we piloted mystery shopping to assess the compliance of the way staff answer the phone and their ability to deliver the service in the Welsh language.

Two types of calls were made:

a. Through the automated service – requesting to be spoken in Welsh

Out of Rents, Repairs, Bangor Reception and Plas Blodwel Reception only the Bangor Reception answered the phone correctly and was able to deal with the request.

Further work has since been undertaken by all service areas to ensure that they are complying.

b. Direct to staff across the organisation – initial answering check

36 staff were contacted and the following were the results:

- 18 staff answered the phone correctly (64%)

- 10 staff did not answer the phone correctly (36%)

Further work is required to ensure that all staff answer the phone bilingually.

Mystery shopping will continue to be used to assess compliance.

vii. Celebrating the Welsh Language and Culture

St David's Day was celebrated across the organisation the activities included:

- North Wales Housing launched a competition to find our North Wales Housing Saint to celebrate St David's Day this year. We asked tenants and staff to nominate who they think are worthy of the title. Who in their community has helped them or made a significant difference in their community? After careful consideration by the Welsh Language Group we selected three Saints. The winning Saints were presented with a hamper of Welsh produce in return for their amazing contribution to their community.
- Staff in offices celebrated with wearing something Welsh or red for charity and having soup and Welsh cakes during lunch. £160.73 was raised for Air Ambulance Wales.
- Residents at sheltered housing scheme Uxbridge Court and Y Gorlan enjoyed a St David's lunch.

viii. Website and Social Media

We continue to provide our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts bilingually, these are managed by staff.

We have seen an increase in the use of Facebook with our tenants and we want to see further increases.

There has increasingly been comments in Welsh which bilingual staff are able to respond to.

ix. Staff Newsletter – Tŷ Ni

The staff newsletter, Tŷ Ni is a round up of what has happened over the last month or two, and it is available bilingually for all staff on the intranet and it is printed out for staff who have limited access to the intranet.

6. Management and Administration of the Scheme

6.1. On a day to day basis the Scheme is managed by the Assistant Director Transformation on behalf of the Chief Executive.

6.2. There is a Welsh Language Group ("Group") that meets on a quarterly basis, with representatives from senior management and most of the organisational service areas. The Terms of Reference for the group have been approved by the Board.

6.3. The Board Welsh Language Champion continues to be Marion Pryor.

6.4. The Welsh Language Monitoring Report is approved by the Group Board prior to submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Appendix A – Welsh Language Action Plan Update 2015/16

Action No.	Action Required	Lead Officer	Deadline	Update	RAG Status
MEETING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS					
1.	To develop a Welsh Language Strategy and Implementation Plan	AW	March 16	On hold until the new standards are legislation	
SERVICE DELIVERY					
2.	To assess the compliance of the answering calls section of the “How to.....”guide	AW	Dec 15	Compliance has been assessed through a mystery shopping exercise on the frontline services.	
3.	To develop a standard sentence for public places regarding the use of the Welsh language for correspondences, contacting by telephone and meetings.	SP	Sep 15	This has been developed for the existing website and the new website.	
4.	To develop a package of support for established learners	GIC	Sep 15	Level 4 courses are provided for established learners	
5.	Evaluate the extent to which information for service users and external parties is currently being issued bilingually and develop an action plan for improvement.	LE	Dec 15	Due to staffing and potential grant cuts this action has not been prioritised.	

POLICY					
	NONE				
OPERATIONAL					
6.	To develop a Welsh Language – Workforce Planning and Training Plan that includes mentoring	MH	Dec 15	This is now on hold pending the Welsh Language Commissioner Report	
PROMOTION					
7.	To use insight and business intelligence to tailor services	All Managers	Nov 15	Services are using insight but not as much as would be required to Tailor Services.	
8.	Identify and assess opportunities currently available to use Welsh and identify any gaps.	GIC	Nov 15	This is on hold as the promotion standards are not applicable to Housing Associations.	
9.	To have regular updates on a range of staff who are learning welsh in Tŷ Ni.	SP	Ongoing	Phil Danson – Communities Director	
RECORD KEEPING					
	NONE				

Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2016/17

Action No.	Action Required	Lead Officer	Deadline	Update	RAG Status
MEETING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS					
1.	To implement the Welsh Language Standards	AW	TBC Compliance Notice		
SERVICE DELIVERY					
2.	To undertake further mystery shopping to assess telephone answering compliance and welcome at reception	AW	Nov 16		
3.	Review the Welsh recruitment assessments (In line with current training.)	WLG	Sep 16		
4.	To deliver training to the Welsh recruitment assessors	MH	Sep 16		
5.	To assess Welsh levels of all staff	MH	Nov 16		
6.	Develop and agree a process for identifying Welsh levels for all roles	WLG	Aug 16		

7.	To develop and agree with the Executive Team a consistent approach to deal with staff who are not meeting the Welsh level for their role and who are not committed to learning	WLG	Nov 16		
8.	Develop the systems to enable communication in the tenants language of choice	SP	Mar 17		
9.	To review existing leaflets and forms and when due for printing to add in “also available in Welsh”	SP	Mar 17		
10.	To change the signage at Plas Blodwel to ensure it meets the Welsh Scheme requirements. (Welcome and Self Serve)	VP	Sep 16		
11.	To review the Equalities Impact Assessment and ensure that the Welsh Language is embedded	BS	Mar 17		
12.	To re-launch the mentoring scheme	AWF	Jan 17		
RECORD KEEPING					
	NONE				