



# **Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2016-17**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Areas of progress</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Areas for improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme and Performance Analysis</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Service Delivery, Welsh Language Skills and Promoting the Language</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.1 Recruitment</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.2 Induction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.3 Training</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.4 Recognition</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.5 Complaints</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.6 Mystery Shopping</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.7 Celebrating the Welsh Language and Culture</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5.8 Website and Social Media</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Management and Administration of the Scheme</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
<b>Appendix A – Updated Welsh Language Action Plan 2016/17</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2016/17</b>	<b>11</b>

## **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. The Board Welsh Language Champion is Marion Pryor.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. This Monitoring Report covers the 2016/17 financial year and it looks at how well we have performed against our Welsh Language Scheme and in some cases the standards.
- 1.8. NWH was part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of Welsh Language Investigations undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner, NWH response was completed in August 2015 the compliance notice is expected in 2017/18. The compliance notice has been delayed due to the elections in 2016. 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](#).
- 1.9. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 the Welsh Language Commissioner published a new Regulatory Framework that is applicable to the Welsh Language Standards and Schemes. This can be found [here](#).

## **2. Areas of Progress.**

- 2.1. One of the focuses this year was the corporate approach to communication, this has now been implemented and staff are following the standard approach for answering phone calls, e-mails (signatures and out of office) and voice mails.
- 2.2. Two mystery shopping exercises have been undertaken and during the last exercise all 4 frontline service areas: Rents, Repairs, Bangor and Plas Blodwel were fully compliant.
- 2.3. The Welsh Language Level of 85% of staff has been assessed by an independent assessor from Llandrillo College. The number of fluent Welsh Staff is continuing to increase from 35% in 15/16 to 39% in 2016/17.

- 2.4. 10 members of staff regularly attend weekly Welsh classes at Level 1 and 2 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. The Welsh language recruitment assessments for Level 1 and 3 have been reviewed. The Level 1 assessment has been used for recruitment.
- 2.6. A flow chart has been developed to identify the Welsh levels of posts when recruiting, this has been fully implemented.
- 2.7. All external communication is bilingual.
  - 2.7.1. Website, Twitter and Facebook
  - 2.7.2. AGM Paperwork
  - 2.7.3. Rent Statements
  - 2.7.4. Clwb Seren (Tenants Newsletter)
  - 2.7.5. Leaflets produced
- 2.8. The Older Persons Team have been using the Tenant Profiling data to tailor services, this includes the use of the Welsh Language.
- 2.9. A STAR Satisfaction Survey (Dec 15) was undertaken and 88% of respondents were satisfied with the arrangements to communicate in their language of choice.
- 2.10. Welsh language and culture was celebrated on St David's Day by staff and Tenants/Service Users.
- 2.11. All complaints are registered centrally and held on our Open Housing system – again there have been no complaints in 16/17 in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme.
- 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, this service is provided bilingually.
- 2.13. A review of the signage at reception at Plas Blodwel has been undertaken as they were not meeting the standard, the signs were not needed so the signs were removed.
- 2.14. A new equalities and impact assessment has been developed which fully integrates the Welsh language.

### **3. Areas for Improvement**

- 3.1. We have identified that some letters on our Open Housing Systems and other letters are not being sent in the language of choice.
- 3.2. The Welsh language assessment for recruitment for Level 2 has not been developed so the full suite of recruitment assessments are not complete.
- 3.3. We do not know if we have the right Welsh levels on the frontline but we will use the recruitment flow chart to undertake this assessment once the restructure has taken place.
- 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, this was put on hold this year due to the announcement of the restructure in September 2016.
- 3.5. The Level 3 & 4 Welsh courses had to be cancelled due to a high level of drop out due to changes in priorities and an uncertainty about the future. In total there has been a decrease in participation in Welsh language training from 25 in 2015/16 staff members to only 10 in 2016/17.
- 3.6. A mentoring programme was set up in 14/15, this was not re-launched this year due to the high level of drop out rate of the courses.

- 3.7. 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.
- 3.8. Only temporary positions could be recruited for in the latter half of 2016/17, for some posts recruitment was difficult and after advertising for a second time for one post, the job description was reviewed and the Welsh language level requirement had to be reduced.

#### 4. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme and Performance Analysis

The Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan was updated by the Welsh Language Group in February 2017 for the year ending March 2017. This can be found in: **Appendix A – Updated Welsh Language Action Plan 16/17.**

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	6	50%
		Partially Delivered	1	8%
		Not Delivered	2	17%
		On Hold/Ongoing	3	25%
		Total	12	100%
		Delivery is below what is expected as the significant amount of work was to deliver the standards in relation to the Compliance Statement but this has been delayed by the Welsh Language Commissioner.		
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.		<b>No of Staff</b>	<b>%</b>
		<b>Pre level 1</b>	6	4%
		<b>Level 1</b>	27	17%
		<b>Level 2</b>	22	14%
		<b>Level 3</b>	7	4%
		<b>Level 4</b>	9	6%
		<b>Fluent</b>	62	39%
		<b>Not assessed</b>	24	15%

		<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100</b>
--	--	--------------	------------	------------

The actions for delivery in 2017/18 are any incomplete relevant actions from 16/17 as in 17/18 the focus will be on improving delivery of the standards and responding and implementing the expected Compliance Notice. **Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2017/18.**

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

### **5.1 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 is currently being reviewed, Level 1 and 3 assessments have been reviewed and Level 2 will be completed in 2017/18.

A flow chart to assess the level of Welsh required for advertised posts is being used to ensure that the right level of Welsh language is recruited for.

### **5.2 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 2016/17, 17 new staff went through the induction process.

### **5.3 Training**

At the start of 2016/17 Llandrillo College provided weekly training courses from level 1 to level 4, but levels 3 and 4 had to be cancelled due to a large number of staff dropping out of the sessions; 10 people have attended Level 1 & 2 training throughout the year.

To replace the time not undertaken on the Level 3 & 4 courses due to their cancellation Llandrillo College undertook the Welsh language one to one assessments with 85% of the staff

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:

<b>Level</b>	<b>No of Staff</b>
1	5
2/3	5
3	0
4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

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 still needs to be developed.

#### **5.4 Recognition**

The Staff Conference in 2016/17 did not take place due to the implementation of the 2016/17 savings plan, so this year there has been no staff award for the Welsh Learner of the year.

#### **5.5 Complaints**

Frontline staff have all received further 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 2016/17.

#### **5.6 Mystery Shopping**

Progressing from the pilot last year, mystery shopping was undertaken twice in the year to assess the compliance of the way staff answer the phone and their ability to deliver the service in the Welsh language.

This year the compliance of the frontline services were assessed again and it was done through the automated service with the mystery shopper speaking in Welsh as a response to our bilingual greeting. All service areas: Rents, Repairs, Bangor Reception and Plas Blodwel Reception undertook the call in Welsh. This is a significant improvement on last year when only one service area was able to do this.

Mystery shopping will continue to be used to assess compliance in 2017/18.

#### **5.7 Celebrating the Welsh Language and Culture**

St David's Day was celebrated by staff in offices by wearing something Welsh or red for charity and having soup and Welsh cakes during lunch. £133.65 was raised for St David's Hospice.

### **5.8 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.

## **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 but Marion is retiring from the Board at the September 2017 AGM so a new Champion will need to be identified.
- 6.4. The Welsh Language Monitoring Report is approved by the Group Board prior publishing.

## Appendix A – Welsh Language Action Plan Update 2016/17

Action No.	Action Required	Lead Officer	Deadline	Update	RAG Status
<b>MEETING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS</b>					
1.	To implement the Welsh Language Standards	AW	TBC	Compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner has not been received.	On hold
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>					
2.	To undertake further mystery shopping to assess telephone answering compliance and welcome at reception	AW	Nov 16	2 mystery shopping activities have been undertaken in 2016/17	
3.	Review the Welsh recruitment assessments (In line with current training.)	WLG	Sep 16	Level 1 and 3 have been reviewed. Level 2 to be completed.	
4.	To deliver training to the Welsh recruitment assessors	MH	Sep 16	Level 1 and 3 are in the process of being implemented part of this will involve the training of the assessors.	
5.	To assess Welsh levels of all staff	MH	Nov 16	All staff apart from those who could not attend i.e. maternity leave have been assessed for their Welsh Level.	

6.	Develop and agree a process for identifying Welsh levels for all roles	WLG	Aug 16	A flow chart has been developed for new posts piloted and fully implemented	
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	Plans of a re-structure were announced in September 2016 so this action was put on hold, it will be reviewed after the re-structure.	On hold
8.	Develop the systems to enable communication in the tenants language of choice (Older Persons)	SP	Mar 17	Older persons Team are actively using the tenant profiling data and communicating with language of choice.	
9.	To review existing leaflets and forms and when due for printing to add in “also available in Welsh”	SP	Mar 17	Ongoing no forms have been re-printed this year	Ongoing
10.	To change the signage at Plas Blodwel to ensure it meets the Welsh Scheme requirements. (Welcome and Self Serve)	SP	Sep 16	This was reviewed and all signage has been removed as it was felt to be unnecessary on reception where a Member of staff personal greets customers.	
11.	To review the Equalities Impact Assessment and ensure that the Welsh Language is embedded	BS	Mar 17	Welsh Language is fully integrated into the new Equality Impact Assessment.	

12.	To re-launch the mentoring scheme	AWF	Jan 17	Due to the low level of staff attending the Welsh Language Courses this has not been re-launched. The viability of this will be assessed once the 17/18 courses start.	
<b>RECORD KEEPING</b>					
	NONE				

#### Appendix B – Welsh Language Action Plan 2017/18

Action No.	Action Required	Lead Officer	Deadline	Update	RAG Status
<b>MEETING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS</b>					
1.	To implement the Welsh Language Standards as per compliance notice	AWF	This will start once the compliance notice is provided		
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>					
2.	To undertake further mystery shopping to assess telephone answering compliance and welcome at reception	AWF	Nov 17		

<b>3.</b>	Review the Welsh recruitment assessment - level 2	<b>WLG</b>	<b>Sep 17</b>		
<b>4.</b>	To fully implement all the Welsh recruitment assessments, including training to the assessors.	<b>HR</b>	<b>Dec 17</b>		
<b>5.</b>	To review the Welsh levels of staff per service area	<b>WLG</b>	<b>Nov 17</b>		
<b>6.</b>	To implement a consistent approach to deal with staff who are not meeting the Welsh level for their role and who are not committed to learning	<b>Execs/SMT</b>	<b>Dec 17</b>		
<b>7.</b>	To assess compliance of the letters and other communication sent out to tenants.	<b>WLG</b>	<b>Dec 17</b>		
<b>8.</b>	To re-launch the Mentoring Scheme	<b>AWF</b>	<b>Oct 17</b>		
<b>RECORD KEEPING</b>					
	NONE				