



# **Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2018-2019**

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## **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 Dylan James.
- 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 made available to all North Wales Housing staff via the intranet.
- 1.7. This Monitoring Report covers the 2018/19 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's response was completed in August 2015 and the compliance notice was expected in 2017/18. The compliance notice was delayed due to the elections in 2016.
- 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.
- 1.10. A Welsh Language Bill was proposed to replace the Standards. However, following a period of consultation, the Government announced that they will not be proceeding with the Bill. The programme of introducing standards will continue instead. Housing Associations are awaiting these standards; no timetable has been given as to when we should expect receipt.
- 1.11. A new Welsh Language Commissioner, Aled Roberts, was announced in November 2018. Aled took up his post in April 2019, following previous Commissioner, Meri Huws' seven-year term in the role.

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

- 2.1. Staff have continued to follow the standard bilingual guidelines for answering telephone calls, e-mails (signatures and out of office) and their voicemail messages.
- 2.2. The number of fluent Welsh speaking staff has increased slightly from 39% in 2017/18 to 41% in 2018/2019.
- 2.3. The Welsh language recruitment assessments for Level 1, 2 and 3 have been reviewed. These revised assessments have been used for recruitment.
- 2.4. A flow chart has been developed to identify the Welsh language requirement for each post to aid with recruitment and individual development.
- 2.5. All corporate external communication is bilingual.
  - 2.5.1. Website, Twitter and Facebook
  - 2.5.2. AGM Paperwork
  - 2.5.3. Rent Statements
  - 2.5.4. Clwb Seren (Tenants Newsletter)
  - 2.5.5. Leaflets produced

- 2.6. The Older Persons Team have been using the Tenant Profiling data to tailor service provision, this includes the use of the Welsh Language.
- 2.7. A STAR Satisfaction Survey (Dec 18) was undertaken and 87% of respondents were satisfied with the arrangements to communicate in their language of choice.
- 2.8. Welsh language and culture was celebrated on St David's Day by staff and Tenants/Service Users.
- 2.9. All complaints are registered centrally and held on our Open Housing system – again there have been no complaints in 18/19 in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme.
- 2.10. We have maintained our position as 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.
- 2.11. North Wales Housing has supported three new staff on an individual basis to attain the Welsh language requirement for their role. The individuals were required to attain the required level within their probationary period. Staff are provided with a selection of written material/workbooks, CD's and details of apps and websites to assist them in their preferred method of learning. A mentor was also allocated and other bilingual staff were encouraged to converse with them in Welsh whenever possible to help to build confidence and practice.
- 2.12. Several staff members have attended week long intensive residential courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn to improve their language ability and confidence. The feedback from these courses has been extremely positive. This style of learning is more intense consisting of a choice of daily or residential attendance including social activities through Welsh.

### 3. Areas for Improvement

- 3.1. Some staff are below the Welsh level for their role and have not yet made a commitment to learn, NWH's existing policies (Conduct/Capability) would be followed to ensure consistency, however clear expectations of requirements will be communicated to staff before any process is invoked.
- 3.2. The Welsh Language Group will be reviewing the monitoring programme for employees.
- 3.3. Tenant profiling is an ongoing process and the information is used in service planning but further work needs to be undertaken to enable tailored communication i.e. identify those tenants who would prefer correspondence and communication in Welsh etc.

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

The Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan was updated by the Welsh Language Group in December 2018 for the year 2019. This can be found in: **Appendix A – Updated Welsh Language Action Plan 2019.**

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		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	Not collected.		

	standard, and compared with records for corresponding English Communication.			
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>	0	0
		<b>Level 1</b>	30	19.4%
		<b>Level 2</b>	24	15.5%
		<b>Level 3</b>	10	6.5%
		<b>Level 4</b>	10	6.5%
		<b>Fluent</b>	65	41.9%
		<b>Not assessed</b>	16	10.3%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

The actions for delivery in 2019/20 are any incomplete relevant actions from 17/18. As in 2018/19 the focus will be on improving delivery of the standards and responding and implementing the expected Compliance Notice when it is known. **Appendix A – Welsh Language Action Plan 2019.**

## 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. Guidance is provided on our website and available by request. The assessment is undertaken by a staff member using a structured process.

Level 1, 2 and 3 assessments have been reviewed and implemented for all posts.

A flow chart to assess the level of Welsh required for advertised posts is being utilised 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.” This is also saved on the intranet.

In 2018/2019, 12 new staff went through the induction process.

### 5.3 Training

Following budgetary restrictions and drop-off of attendance at classes, alternative options for learning have been provided.

A wide variety of learning options are offered to staff including cd's, apps and online training, webinars, face to face training and intensive week long residential courses.

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

The aim is to provide staff with the opportunity to undertake training at each level and all learners continue to be assessed on an ongoing basis, ensuring improvement and the identification of learning needs.

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

#### **5.4 Complaints**

We manage formal complaints well and have an established process. Again, there were **no** complaints received that relate to the Welsh Language in 2018/19.

#### **5.5 Front Line Service Delivery**

Staff have been fully supported to ensure call answering and email communications are compliant with our commitment to our Welsh Language Policy.

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

St David's Day was celebrated by staff in offices by wearing something Welsh or red, green or white in aid of the annual charity. This also included having soup and Welsh cakes for purchase during lunch and the opportunity to play games to aid learning Welsh. £100.00 was raised.

#### **5.8 Website and Social Media**

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

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

Bilingual staff are able to respond to comments received in Welsh.

#### **5.9 Promoting the Welsh Language**

We attended a jobs fair in Bangor University to promote the benefits of speaking Welsh in the workplace to the university and local school students.

### **6. Management and Administration of the Scheme**

6.1. On a day to day basis the Scheme is managed by the Chief Executive.

6.2. There is a Welsh Language Group ("Group") that meets approximately every 2 months, with representatives from senior management and various service areas from across the organisation. As far as possible the representation consists of a 50:50 split between fluent Welsh speakers and learners.

6.3. The Welsh Language Monitoring Report is approved by the Group Board prior to publishing.

**Appendix A – Welsh Language Action Plan 2019**

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
<b>MEETING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS</b>					
<b>1.</b>	To implement the Welsh Language Standards as per the compliance notice.	<b>HK</b>	<b>TBC</b>	This will start once the compliance notice is received.	<b>On hold</b>
<b>2.</b>	Measure performance against the Welsh Language standards, once known.	<b>SP</b>	<b>TBC</b>	This will start once the compliance notice is received.	<b>On hold</b>
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>					
<b>3.</b>	Review the Welsh recruitment assessments and then fully implement, including training to the assessors.	<b>EM</b>	<b>Feb 19 and ongoing</b>	All assessments have now been updated and communicated. There are a number of staff who do the assessments. Formal training to standardise is to be arranged by 30 June 2019.	<b>In progress</b>
<b>4.</b>	To initially assess compliance of the letters and other communication sent out to tenants.  Produce a document bank for letters and other documents.	<b>SP</b>	<b>Mar 19 and ongoing</b>	This is being co-ordinated. To be completed by 30 September 2019.	<b>In progress</b>

5.	Provide a guide of word/sentences often used to assist people with basic translation /understanding of correspondence received in conjunction with confident Welsh speaker.	SP	Apr 19 and ongoing	To be completed by 30 September 2019	In progress
6.	Confirm clear guidelines of which internal staff are authorised to provide written translation work and when this is acceptable – with the individual's agreement and when external translation services should be appointed (in line with budget provision)	BH	Apr 19	To be completed by 31 July 2019.	
7.	Promote the benefits of learning Welsh generally and setting a positive cultural approach – one of support rather than punishment.	All	Ongoing	Line managers to be encouraged to ensure their team's development through one to one discussions.  Attending the Eisteddfod to promote NWH to Welsh speakers	In progress
8.	Obtain updated tenant profiling information – assess what is required to improve Welsh language skills by staff in a more targeted way if necessary.	HK	July 19		
9.	Provide support to learners for setting up messages, emails etc. and 'practice telephone calls'	SP/GR/BH/RH/EW (Welsh Speakers)	Ongoing		In Progress
10.	Introduce Welsh Thursday across NWH – introduced by Customer Services recently.	SP	Jun 19		

11.	Arrange Welsh assessments for all non-fluent Welsh language speakers – to compare against requirement for role to provide support to improve.	EM	Mar 19	This is being completed in stages. All pre level 1 have been tested and now achieve level 1. To be fully completed by 30 September 2019.	In Progress
12.	To launch Siop Siarad – opportunity for staff to informally meet once a month and talk Welsh during work time.  Consider options along the lines of ‘speed dating’ style to find out about colleagues.	SP/GR	Feb 19	To be implemented by 30 September 2019.	
13.	Analysis of website access. Research the benefit of having the landing page in Welsh rather than English.	SP	Jun 19		
14.	Computer screensavers to feature Welsh words on a rolling basis. E.g. seasonal	EW	Ongoing	Screensavers have been updated and will be rotated periodically.	In progress
15.	Set up Eisteddfod Organising Committee.	EW	Aug 19		In progress
<b>RECORD KEEPING</b>					
1.	Find out about the current position re Welsh Language Commission service.	SP	Jan 19	Email with links distributed to group on 04.02.19.  Awaiting further update from Welsh Language Commissioner.	
2.	Submit statutory reporting within timetable	HK	Ongoing		