

GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS ON OUR ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

Complying with the Welsh Language Scheme

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
Provide a copy of the report [review of the Derwen service] when completed	Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner	The matter is about to go before the Derwen Management Board, and a copy of the report will be sent to the Commissioner as soon as it is ready
Please provide a copy of one of the reports [Service Heads' monitoring reports]	Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner	<p>Each Department is contacted as part of the language monitoring process, but there is no template or standard form for response. According to the monitoring requirements, more information is received from some Departments than others.</p> <p>The process of receiving feedback on compliance will be formalised from October 2013, following the Language Committee's decision to receive a formal presentation at meeting from each Department in turn. We will report fully on this as part of our Annual Report for 2013/14.</p>

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
<p>Please explain why the random check [of the Council's compliance with its Welsh Language Scheme]. Has the Council taken steps to arrange this in 2013?</p>	<p>Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner</p>	<p>From evidence gleaned from past random checks, complaints and internal monitoring, we feel that we have sound evidence regarding areas of risk and that our priority is to address these areas.</p> <p>Rather than conduct a general check, the Council has commissioned work on specific areas in order to identify any problems and offer solutions. e.g. During 2013 a Review of Gwynedd Council's requirements and practice in providing care Services (Residential and Nursing) and Home Care was commissioned from the Welsh Centre for Language Planning and the Department is in the process of putting the recommendations of these reports in action.</p> <p>We will re-consider the need for an independent random check as part of the process of drawing up an interim action plan to be implemented before the language Standards come into force.</p>

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
Please provide an update on the e-learning programme in the next monitoring report	As part of our Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14	We will report on this comment as part of our Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14

Frontline Services

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
Please provide the number and percentage of Welsh speakers in the main reception areas	Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner	<p>The main Council reception areas are in the headquarters, Penrallt (Caernarfon), Town Hall (Bangor), Siop Gwynedd, Ffordd y Cob (Pwllheli) and Penarllog (Dolgellau).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total reception staff is 13 • 13 of them speak Welsh (100%) • Welsh is essential for all 13 posts (100%) <p>[This information was not provided fully within our Monitoring Report]</p>

Management and administration of the Scheme

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
<p>Following one complaint, it is noted that the Economy and Community Department will consider how to enhance the linguistic conditions of grants. We would like to discuss this further in our feedback meeting</p>	<p>To be discussed further as part of the feedback meeting between the Equality and Language Officer and the Commissioner's office</p>	<p>The original complaint centred upon our powers as a Council to impose Welsh names on businesses receiving grants. It was noted that this would not be legally possible.</p> <p>It was acknowledged however that there was a need to review our terms in order to strengthen the language element and promote the Welsh language to the limit of our ability.</p> <p>The specific grant under consideration and many other projects are either fully allocated or about to end. The Economy and Community Department await further guidance from the European Commission regarding new projects.</p> <p>In the meantime, preliminary discussions are being held on how to ensure and/or improve Welsh language terms within any future grant schemes.</p>

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
<p>What action is the Council taking in relation to those bodies that are not complying [with the requirements of Social Care contracts]? We would like to discuss this further at our feedback meeting</p>	<p>To be discussed further as part of the feedback meeting between the Equality and Language Officer and the Commissioner's office</p>	<p>Where there is concern about compliance, the contractual quality and compliance process ensures that a work/improvement plan be drawn up. Any company or organisation is expected to work towards what has been agreed in the improvement plan. For example, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending free language training through Gwynedd Workforce Partnership • Encouragement and targets for recruiting bilingual staff within a specific timetable • Ensure that there is adequate Welsh-speaking staff for each shift within home care • Ensure that home care workers can address the language needs of service users- this results from social workers noting users' language needs as part of the care plan • Social Services have raised the language awareness of providers by commissioning work from the Language Planning Centre to look at our practices and suggest improvement • Strengthening clauses within our contracts in relation to users' language needs in response to the Language Planning Centre's recommendations.

Welsh language skills

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
<p>Reference is made to the Framework [Language Framework] in the Council's Annual Improvement Report (April 2013). When will be revised Framework be introduced?</p>	<p>Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner</p>	<p>With the Language Standards imminent and the need to draw up an interim Action Plan to bridge the period between the end of the current Plan and the standards coming into force, we will revisit this area of work. We would appreciate further discussion with the Commissioner's Office as we embark upon this</p>
<p>The Council participated in a pilot to test the language Indicators recently introduced by WJEC in order to facilitate the process of measuring language skills in the workplace. We would like to discuss this at our feedback meeting</p>	<p>To be discussed further as part of the feedback meeting between the Equality and Language Officer and the Commissioner's office</p>	<p>37 members of staff participated in the pilot. The Workforce Development Officer has contacted the Council's Personnel Officers to highlight the advantages of using this tool to determine language levels as part of the appointment process</p>
<p>How many members of staff have received language awareness training during the reporting period?</p>	<p>Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner</p>	<p>A specific language awareness session was provided for 20 staff within the Youth Justice Team in June 2012. Between May 2012 and September 2013 A session on language awareness was provided to 142 Staff as part of the induction process</p> <p>In November 2013, we will be offering a language awareness session for elected Members</p>

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS	MEANS OF RESPONSE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
<p>How does the Council support these members of staff [non-Welsh speakers], for example, by targeting them for Welsh language training?</p>	<p>Provide further information for the Welsh Language Commissioner</p>	<p>Line Managers are asked to identify language needs as part of the Performance Review process, staff are then referred to the Workforce Development Officer to assess their language level and needs. Following this, the Council can offer the following as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lessons at the correct level for the learner • external courses • Language Mentors • Monitor improvement (based upon bi-annual report from the Line Manager) • Support through prize-giving for staff who are starting to learn Welsh, those who are more experienced and for special achievement at the <i>Cyngor ar ei Orau</i> Meeting through the <i>Dafydd Orwig Memorial Prize</i>. This meeting is given a high profile • Note any particular successes e.g. awards from external providers in the staff magazine, <i>Gair o Gyngor</i>