

MEETING:	LANUGAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	22 OCTOBER 2015
TITLE:	LANGUAGE COMMISSIONERS RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE LANGUAGE SCHEME
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Williams Language Development Officer
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the response of the Language Commissioner to the Annual Report, along with the Council's response to further queries • Seek the members response to the matters raised by the report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Annual Report on the Council's Language Scheme was sent to the Commissioner on 30 June 2015
- 1.2 A response was received from the Commissioner on 17 July 2015. This report contained a number of queries that we needed to answer within 20 days.
- 1.3 The Council's response to the queries were sent 14 September 2015 (Appendix 1)
- 1.4 A feedback meeting will be held with one of the Language Commissioner's officers on 27 October 2015.

2. OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANNUAL REPORT

- 2.1 Attention was drawn to two weaknesses while preparing the information for the annual report and the response to the further queries.
- 2.2 Both matters are addressed in the new Language Standards, and so we will need to consider how we will change current practices.

i) Reporting language complaints

The weakness:

The complaints recorded on in the annual report were recorded exactly as they were presented in the complaint reports to the Language Committee. When a query was made about some of the complaints in the response from the Commissioner, it became clear that not all of the cases had been closed satisfactorily. As this is an official record of complaints, there needs to be a set procedure in the future to ensure that complaints are not reported to the Language Committee until any enquiries are completed and a response sent to the complainant if appropriate.

What the Language Standards ask us to do:

Standard 147: You must keep a record, in relation to each financial year, of the number of complaints you receive that pertain to your compliance with the standards.

Standard 148: You must keep a record of any written complaint you receive that pertain to your compliance with the standards that you are obliged to comply with.

Standard 149: You must keep a copy of any written complaints that you receive that pertains to the Welsh language (if the complaint is in relation to your compliance with the standards or not)

ii) Keeping a record of staff language skills

The weakness:

There seemed to be an inconsistency in the information and response received from different departments while collating the data for the annual report. At the moment, we only note if staff speak Welsh or not, and that depends to an extent on the Managers definition, especially when recording the skills of Welsh learners. We will need to consider to what extent and in what way we record the Language ability of staff in the future. Do we continue to report in the same way, or do we need to look at recording skills and fluency?

What the Language Standards ask us to do:

Standard 127: You must assess the Language skills of your staff.

Standard 151: You must keep a record (following an assessment of the Welsh language skills of your workforce that was done in accordance with Standard 127) of the number of staff that have Welsh Language skills at the end of each financial year, and when it is known to you, you must keep a record of the skill levels of your staff,

3. RECOMENDATION

The members are asked to:

3.1 Accept the Language Commissioners response to our Annual Report. And the Council's response to the further queries.

3.2 Accept the recommendation that complaints will not be reported to the Language Committee until cases are closed.

3.3 Consider to what extent the Council should be recording language skills and ability.