

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	28 January 2021
TITLE:	Praise and Complaints Report
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Mair Williams Language Advisor
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To present the latest information to the Committee on complaints and examples of success when promoting the use of Welsh in the Council's services.

Successes to promote the Welsh language and ensure Welsh language services for residents:

Despite the difficult circumstances over the past year, it is a sign of sure success that the Council and its staff have been able to continue to promote the use of the Welsh language and ensure Welsh language services for all residents. Due to the commitment of our staff, we succeeded to communicate changes and to adapt activities without any disruption to the medium of the services. We also managed to offer new services such as the work of the Community Resilience Teams and the Tracing service through the medium of Welsh.

- Simultaneous translation in virtual meetings

Gwynedd Council has been at the forefront in ensuring that the virtual committee provision offered includes a simultaneous translation service. Council officers have worked hard to assist our partners with the developments, so as to encourage others to ensure that committees and meetings are available in the user's language of choice. In addition, Council officers are involved in the national work being done in trying to persuade Microsoft to offer a simultaneous translation provision in Teams.

- Increase in the number of staff who are learning Welsh

Many on-line lessons were offered as a result of the pandemic. These have allowed many more front-line staff, who would have been unable to commit to community/face-to-face lessons under usual circumstances, to take advantage of Welsh lessons, in a way that works around their work pattern. The following examples show the staff's commitment to develop their Welsh in order to be able to offer a Welsh service for the people of Gwynedd, and retain a Welsh ethos in the workplace.

- 11 members of Byw'n Iach staff have followed a programme of Welsh lessons from the summer of 2020 onwards. A story about one of the learners can be seen here: https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Newyddion/Datganiadau-ir-wasg/Tachwedd-2020/Llwyddiant-Gwersi-Cymraeg-Ar-lein-i-staff-Cyngor-Gwynedd.aspx?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialSignIn

- This contributes towards ensuring that the people of Gwynedd can receive their service through the medium of Welsh.
- The Occupational Therapy Lead is showing a particular commitment towards the Welsh language by attending lessons over the past year, thus retaining the Welsh ethos of the service. This was evidenced by his first ever Welsh-medium presentation at a meeting of the Care Scrutiny Committee recently.
 - The Youth Justice Service Manager (Children and Supporting Families department) is receiving 1:1 support to develop his Welsh language skills. As a result, he has already received acknowledgement within the Department by the Head of Department for his commitment and progress, and is making increasing use of his Welsh when communicating with staff and at the Management Team.

COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES FROM THE WELSH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER - RELATING TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE STANDARDS

An enquiry was received in March 2020 about the Library service's on-line catalogue. This is an external catalogue that is used nationally (LMS system), and therefore is not under the direct control of the Council. This matter is still in progress, as a national discussion has been held among library managers. It will not be possible to make changes to the system at present as changing catalogue records is a long, laborious process, however, the problems will be considered when re-tendering in the future.

An enquiry was received on 12.03.20 about an English only sign that had appeared near Caernarfon Castle. After making enquiries with the service, they were aware of the problem and had reported that the incorrect sign had been ordered in error, but that they were awaiting a new sign. The new sign had already been erected by the date the enquiry was received.

An enquiry was received about a sign on the road in Pwllheli. The Town Council was eager to erect a welcome sign, and had made a complaint to the Commissioner as the Environment service had refused their application to erect the sign. This was done as the relevant legislation noted that "road signs" had to be bilingual. The application from the Town Council was for an official sign that would include tourism symbols, etc., therefore it was considered as a road sign - and therefore had to be bilingual.

No further actions were taken by the Commissioner on any of the above enquiries.

COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES REGARDING A SERVICE OR RELATING TO THE COUNCIL'S LANGUAGE POLICY

Department	The number of complaints	The matter relating to the complaint	Explanation and actions taken
Environment		Complaint about the Pay by Phone parking app, as it was not available in the medium of Welsh on all phones.	<p>Discussions held with the department and with the company responsible for the app. The app has been developed in a way that uses the default language of the phone, so it is possible to obtain the app in Welsh by changing the language of the phone.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it is not possible to change the language on all android phones, which means that this app is not available to all.</p> <p>We have been able to ensure that all automatically-generated messages are sent through the medium of Welsh; however, it was not possible to get the app to work for all in Welsh as this would involve re-commissioning the app. A reminder has been sent to staff about the need when commissioning and purchasing apps and advising them to consult with the IT and Welsh Language services.</p>
Finance		Quality of the language in a letter regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme	<p>An apology had been sent. The manager had discussed the matter with the officer. New template letters were in the process of being drawn up, and the manager has also been reminded of the proof reading service being offered by the translation team and who are also available for anyone who is uncertain with their writing skills.</p>