



**29 April 2021 - LANGUAGE
COMMITTEE**

**The use of the Welsh Language within
YGC**



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Over the past five years, it has been both a challenge and a pleasure for me and the department's managers to take additional steps to promote the Welsh language, and to ensure that we contribute to the implementation of the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023.

Language Specifications Project

- Gwynedd Consultancy participated in the initial Pilot of the Language Specifications Project.
- We collaborated closely with Siôn Elwyn Hughes, Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer, to collect individual self-assessments within the department, and to provide training to support staff who did not meet the language requirements.
- We conducted 112 current staff assessments, which included permanent, fixed term and casual staff.
- This research was a success for the department, with 92% reaching the language specifications of the post.
- By now, the work happens naturally between Siôn Elwyn Hughes, Llio Mai Hughes and YGC's Management Team.
- A number of YGC staff have also completed a self-assessment questionnaire as an integral part of their induction period. This means that the rate of the assessments remains consistently high. We are therefore able to identify staff that need support early, and offer them training immediately.

Buddy Scheme

- The Buddy Scheme has been established to support one of this project's aims, which is to help the Council's staff to reach the language specifications of their posts.
- The purpose of the scheme is to provide staff who are either currently receiving training, or who have recently ended their training, with an

opportunity to use the Welsh language informally, and to ask for assistance in a comfortable situation

- Currently, there are three members of YGC's staff participating in the Scheme.
- The most recent example is Molly, who started working in YGC during the lockdown period in March 2020, and has joined the Buddy Scheme. Molly has been partnered with Owain Griffith. This scheme enables Molly to have conversations in Welsh with colleagues, and to be aware that she has someone who is willing to listen to her. With Owain's support, it appears that this arrangement is working very effectively.

Welsh Lessons

- ❖ Regular meetings are arranged jointly between Siôn Elwyn Hughes and ourselves, where we review the courses on offer, and review which staff we have following the various courses.
- ❖ During the lockdown period, our Welsh lessons have continued, with staff receiving their lessons through various methods:
- ❖ Abigail Caulfield has attended her Welsh lessons through Teams.
- ❖ Telor Williams attends a Language Refresher course at Nant Gwrtheyrn, Llithfaen
- ❖ Bob Humphreys is a good example of someone who has regularly followed Welsh courses. Bob decided to complete Welsh Courses by using the Learn Welsh pathway offered by Bangor University. He started with a "Stori a Sgwrs" course, which included reading novels and then reviewing them, with the second course in the form of lectures, where he learnt about Welsh culture. Bob has enjoyed his learning, and has been exceptionally successful.

"Arfer" Scheme run by the University

- The Water and Environment Service agreed to collaborate on the Arfer Scheme run by Bangor University. The purpose of this project was to change language behaviours to enable colleagues who were able to speak

Welsh (but had established a habit of using English) to use more Welsh in the workplace.

- Arwel Tomos Williams, a researcher from the University, worked on this Scheme. He has attended the Water and Environment office on a weekly basis to meet the staff. His message of changing the language in the workplace and changing the culture within the Department is working. They now converse through the medium of Welsh in the office, and also respond to telephone calls in Welsh.

Dafydd Orwig Memorial Prize

During recent years, five members of YGC staff have won the Dafydd Orwig Memorial Prize, namely:

- Alex Jones
- Nancy Wilkinson
- Jon Chapman
- Owen Angus Duncan
- Nia Jane Owen-Midwood

These awards were won for learning Welsh, or for using and promoting the Welsh language in the workplace.

Eng Tech professional qualifications

As many of YGC's services are in the field of Civil Engineering, we work closely with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), and have forged a positive relationship with them.

Many of our young technicians are working towards a professional qualification known as Eng Tech. This qualification is a level of professional registration for Engineering Technicians which is recognised world-wide. It is a formal recognition of engineering skills and competency, and is an important step towards becoming a corporate or chartered engineer.

In 2014, we formalised the arrangements with ICE to enable the interviews to be held in Welsh, and for the written work to be submitted in Welsh. This assisted those individuals who were more confident in Welsh. The arrangements for the professional interviews in Wales were also changed to be held in Galeri, Caernarfon, which enabled staff to stay in their locality without having to travel to

Manchester or London. Gwynfor Hedd Roberts, a Senior Project Engineer with YGC, was one of the first to follow these arrangements.

The Future

In future, YGC will:

- Further extend the use of the Welsh Language within YGC with other bodies, including our contractors and consultants, by continuing to hold conversations in Welsh and responding to e-mails in Welsh.
- During August 2021, aim to enhance our Investors in People accreditation, and the aspect of our work in relation to the Welsh language will be a significant element of this task.
- Continue to work closely with Siôn Elwyn and Llio from the Welsh Language Learning and Development Department.