



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.00 am, TUESDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2024

Location

Virtual Meeting

NOTE

For public access to the meeting, please contact us

Contact Point

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LANGUAGE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Rhys Tudur
Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn
Jina Gwyrfai
Gwynfor Owen
Meryl Roberts

Menna Baines
Alan Jones Evans
Olaf Cai Larsen
Llio Elenid Owen
Elfed Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Anne Lloyd-Jones
Peter Thomas
Vacant Seat

Hefin Underwood
Vacant Seat

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Member

Councillor Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member Corporate Support - The Welsh Language

A G E N D A

1. ELECT CHAIR

To elect Chair for 2024-2025.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

To elect Vice-Chair for 2024-2025.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest

5. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration

6. MINUTES

4 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 23 April, 2024 be signed as a true record (attached)

7. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN - SOCIAL SERVICES

11 - 18

To present information about the Social Services' contribution to promoting the Welsh Language.

8. GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

19 - 44

To submit the draft Annual Report to the members for them to recommend that the Cabinet Member approves publishing the Report.

9. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLACE-NAMES PROJECT

45 - 50

To present information about the progress of the Place-names Project.

LANGUAGE COMMITTEE: TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Llio Elenid Owen, Rhys Tudur, Jina Gwyrfai, Gwynfor Owen, Alan Jones Evans, Elfed Williams, Anne Lloyd Jones, Peter Thomas and Hefin Underwood.

Officers: Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser), Nia Haf Lewis (Language Adviser), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Item 5: Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive) and Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services).

Item 6: Sioned Eirian Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department).

Item 7: Iwan Hywel (Menter Iaith Gwynedd Principal Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Olaf Cai Larsen and Menna Baines, Geraint Owen (Corporate Director) and Bet Huws (Welsh Language Learning and Development Officer).

Councillor Sasha Williams was thanked for her contribution to the Committee over the past two years. Councillor Rhys Tudur was welcomed as a new Member of the Committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest was received from Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn for Item 7 as he had collaborated with Menter Iaith Gwynedd during the last year. It was not a prejudicial interest and therefore he did not withdraw from the meeting.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 30 January 2024 as a true record.

5. LEADERSHIP TEAM AND LEGAL SERVICES WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN

The report was submitted by the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal Services. Attention was drawn briefly to the following main points:

It was emphasised that the Leadership Team stood firmly on the use of the Welsh language whilst not compromising, as it set a precedent for the rest of the Council. Frustration was expressed that no sufficient Welsh facilities were used in meetings held by the Welsh Government by elaborating that discussions were frequently held in English. It was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd led on ensuring that sufficient facilities were used in meetings and because of this, attention was drawn to the letter that was sent to the Welsh Language Minister at the Welsh Government to declare the Leadership Team's concern regarding the present situation.

It was reported that the Leadership Team and the Council collaborated with many national and regional bodies. The members were ensured that officers encouraged those bodies to try and reflect Cyngor Gwynedd's language policy and to promote an internal use of the Welsh language. An example of this was shared namely that the Corporate Director and the Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser were members of the Steering Group that was established by the Welsh Language Commissioner to develop policy models to increase the use of the Welsh Language within public bodies in Wales. It was explained that the Group, which included representatives from many establishments, allowed Council officers to share experiences such as language policy development, recruiting methods, the Council's internal use of the Welsh language, training and encouragement offered to staff to develop their confidence in the Welsh language. It was emphasised that there was representation from the Council on the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board by noting that the Board had been working on a project regarding recent workforce recruiting matters to attract Welsh-speaking staff. It was also mentioned that the Council collaborated with Menter Iaith Gwynedd (Language Initiative) to develop projects.

It was explained that the Statutory Director (Social Services) had specific responsibilities in terms of promoting the use of the Welsh language within the care sector. It was explained that it was expected for each local authority and Health Board in Wales, to appoint a senior leader as a 'champion' of the Welsh Language as part of the 'More Than Just Words' work programme and confirming that the Statutory Director (Social Services) undertakes that role in Gwynedd. It was confirmed that it was a requirement in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 for the 'champion' to ensure pro-active use of the Welsh language for it to be available without the user having to ask for it. It was emphasised that this was customary within Cyngor Gwynedd since many years and that the Director used his role as a 'champion' and 'More Than Just Words' Chair to assist others to be pro-active in the Welsh Language. It was emphasised that he had also been a judge on the Social Care Wales national awards on the use of the Welsh language in the care sector recently.

It was acknowledged that the use of English within information technology had been a challenge for the Council in the past years. However, there was pride that most Council staff who used computers as part of their jobs, did that with Welsh language software on their devices. It was detailed that this enabled officers to work on e-mails, Microsoft Office and more through the medium of Welsh. It was noted that this change was one that had been a cause for concern for some staff members, but those staff were happy with the software after they got used to it.

It was reported that the Legal Service was a team of 25 officers who worked in the legal field, elections, supporting the coroner as well as propriety duties associated with the Standards Committee and the role of the Monitoring Officer.

It was confirmed that the Legal Services promoted the Welsh language through providing service to many main regional establishments and providing constitutional support for them as part of Cyngor Gwynedd's role as the Host Authority. It was detailed that the Council used its representation within these regional establishments to hold meetings and prepare bilingual documentation and prioritise the Welsh language.

It was explained that the legal service also supported officers of the election service, through responding to new legislations continuously by updating policies. It was noted that the Council drew the attention of the government and other bodies towards any Welsh language need that was deficient to ensure that provision of the Welsh language was available in all aspects of the work where possible.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the legal service's recruiting situation had improved recently as they had succeeded to attract qualified officers who possessed Welsh language skills. It was emphasised that the service had also been involved in the Cynllun Yfory programme and apprentices to teach necessary skills to new young officers and providing legal services bilingually for the future. It was acknowledged that the service used temporary workers occasionally who did not possess Welsh language skills. It was emphasised that they were employed for a short period when specific expertise was needed as the Council officers did not have that expertise. It was noted that the service moved away from using temporary workers because of recruiting successes but it was unlikely that they would stop being used entirely due to the nature of the work that the service involved.

Gratitude was expressed for the report and for ensuring that the Council led on linguistic matters nationally.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN: ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

The report was presented by the Head of Economy and Community Department, and attention was drawn briefly to the following main points:

Attention was drawn to the Arfor project by noting that Cyngor Gwynedd took a leading role on the project's Board. It was explained that the Board was in the process of evaluating the impact of the projects on areas and residents to receive a budget in the future. The committee was reminded that the Arfor project was funded up to the end of the 2024-25 financial year therefore it was important to work on trying to currently receive financial commitment for the future. It was confirmed that important collaboration was happening between Arfor regional counties, namely Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire.

It was reported that the Department had succeeded to attract funding by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, by confirming that a grant fund for businesses was available from this budget in addition to the Arfor project. It was explained that the terms and conditions that were developed through the Arfor project had been included for businesses' applications for funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund too. It was explained that this meant that companies needed to highlight the use of the Welsh language as part of their business as well as sharing how the company promoted the Welsh language, whilst they made an application for funding. As a result, it was noted that 79 businesses from Gwynedd had completed the Welsh Language Commissioner's 'Welsh

Language Offer' assessment during 2023/24 and 12 of the companies had already secured the accreditation. It was acknowledged that the same encouragement would not be available when business grants were not available. However, it was emphasised that work was underway to be able to offer support for small businesses to obtain the accreditation by the Welsh Language Commissioner. It was reiterated that the hope was that the companies would take the opportunity to apply for a 'Welsh Language Offer' accreditation voluntarily in the future, but it was noted that there was no way for the Department to compel them. Disappointment was expressed that Gwynedd was the only county in the north that had set this condition on business grant applications through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

It was confirmed that the Department had launched the Gwynedd and Eryri Plan 2035 which was a Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan for the area, formed jointly with Eryri National Park Authority. It was reminded that one of the plan's clear priorities would be to promote local ownership and to develop opportunities to highlight the Welsh language, our culture and heritage. It was emphasised that work was underway to monitor the impact that the plan had on this priority at present. It was emphasised that this priority had been included as a clause and that the department had agreed to support events, to ensure that the event fulfilled those cultural and language requirements.

It was explained that the Department had adopted a new measure within the marketing and events tourism field, namely 'Percentage of the County's residents who believe that tourism has a positive influence on the Welsh language and culture of Wales'. It was noted that this new measure was included in an annual questionnaire for Gwynedd residents. It was explained that the hope was to collect data from the questionnaire to measure the impact of the work done within the field. It was anticipated that this was the best method of receiving positive responses as it enabled communities to commit as much or as little as they wished. It was emphasised that the measure had been trialled by the Council on behalf of the Welsh Government last year and it was hoped that other counties would incorporate the measure in the future.

In response to an enquiry on how to collaborate with holiday businesses, holiday lets and caravan parks to ensure that the language was prominent in their culture, the Head of Department confirmed that interesting work was underway to encourage businesses to be Welsh language ambassadors. It was confirmed that this was work that had been adopted within the new Visitor Economy Plan and it was required for the ambassadors to be aware of culture and language as well as respecting the landscape and the environment. Hope was expressed that this would strengthen the language as visitors would see the Welsh language clearly when they would visit the area. It was emphasised that the plan had been trialled within Eryri National Park and that positive results were received therefore the hope was that this plan would be successful across the whole of Gwynedd, and to share an information package with businesses.

It was reported that the Department continued to support companies and establishments within the museums and arts field by noting that the language and cultural impact was something that got attention whilst going forward to support them. There was also reference to the Slate Landscape of North West Wales project. It was elaborated that the department collaborated with Bangor University on a long-term plan, and a great deal of time would pass before seeing the plan's changes and impact. It was explained that stimulating the interest of volunteers who possessed Welsh language skills could be a challenge for the Department. It was acknowledged that this was a problem that raised concern for many years and that it was a bigger challenge in some specific areas within the county. It was emphasised that the Department supported those areas by offering more volunteering opportunities through various plans jointly with schools and colleges to stimulate the interest of Welsh speakers to volunteer. An example was shared of where

these plans were successful such as Storiell in Bangor where there were more Welsh speaking volunteers by now.

Examples were shared of how Gwynedd libraries contributed towards promoting the Welsh language as well as providing a bilingual service. It was emphasised that the activities held in the libraries were very popular amongst Gwynedd residents and it was detailed that there was positive feedback from non-Welsh speaking attendees of the way that the local library promoted the Welsh language effectively. It was mentioned that the libraries service was available bilingually across the county, but it was acknowledged that some sessions were held where it was not possible to have all of the resources through the medium of Welsh occasionally. It was explained that the Department was aware of the problem and considered that the challenge would arise in some areas where the number of Welsh speaking volunteers were low. It was emphasised that the Department tried to support everyone who wished to hold activities within the libraries to be able to do so bilingually. It was confirmed that the Council's language policy ensured that no activities were conducted in English only, while acknowledging that some elements were not held through the medium of Welsh on rare occasions.

It was reported that there was an increase in the number of the department's staff who had completed a language self-assessment, emphasising that 96.65% of the department's staff had reached the language designations of their jobs. It was noted that this has increased from the 93% that was reported in 2023. It was confirmed that the Department had faced challenges whilst trying to employ temporary beaches and marine officers in the summer and had had to appoint non-Welsh speaking teams and individuals in the past. It was elaborated that the challenge that arose from this was that they were not employed with the Council for a long enough period to be immersed in the language. It was emphasised that the Marine Manager took actions to ensure that officers spoke Welsh with each other and customers on every opportunity.

It was detailed that financial matters were a barrier that currently faced the Department. It was explained that an extensive proportion of the Department's work was dependent on grants and that was a good way of setting language conditions within the County. It was emphasised that regular public cultural events played an important role whilst people practised their language skills publicly especially if they did not have any other way of doing so. It was acknowledged that ensuring service or events' continuation when various grants came to an end could be challenging to the Department especially considering general financial challenges that currently faced the Council. It was emphasised that the Department continued to target grant funding regularly to ensure support for communities for the future.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

7. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF MENTER IAITH GWYNEDD

The report was presented by Menter Iaith Gwynedd's Principal Officer. Reference was made to the following main points:

The members were reminded that the initiative had now discarded the name 'Hunaniaith' by re-branding with the name 'Menter Iaith Gwynedd' and that the initiative was registered as a not-for-profit company with Companies House under the leadership of four voluntary directors.

It was elaborated that the initiative's primary purpose was to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives and in all communities in Gwynedd.

It was explained that one staff member of the Enterprise had left to work with another department within Cyngor Gwynedd. It was acknowledged that this vacant job had currently not been filled to facilitate the process of externalising from the Council. It was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd assisted to employ a new officer within the Meirionnydd area for 2024/25.

It was explained that the initiative would become independent from April 2025, with the three current initiative officers continuing to be employed by the initiative, as well as the new officer in the Meirionnydd area. It was acknowledged that there had been a delay in this outsourcing transition, but it was explained that this had been due to pension commitment complexities for officers. It was emphasised that the Project Board met regularly with the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services to resolve the difficulties that arose.

It was reported on the campaign that was being initiated in May that focused on people who had moved to the area and learned the Welsh language, by sharing case studies stories on how individuals had succeeded to nurture a feeling of belonging to Gwynedd communities. It was elaborated that there was a second plan in the pipeline with support from 'Gareth yr Orangutang' to explain the history of the Welsh language to young people and share ideas on how to use technology in Welsh, by emphasising that what was important was making use of the language, not worrying about any mistakes made.

An update was given that the initiative had been supporting immersion centres to support families. It was explained that officers provided digital presentations to all parents of the immersion centres' attendees every term. In response to the challenges that the educators had after being in immersion centres and returning to school, it was confirmed that the initiative had commissioned an author to create a production with the children's input before performing to the parents. It was emphasised that the initiative would own the production therefore there would be a way to recreate this scheme in other areas as required. An idea was shared that the initiative could use examples of families who had fostered the Welsh language following these schemes to inspire others in the future.

There was pride that the initiative had received very positive feedback to a gig that was held recently in secondary schools. It was explained that Tara Bandito went around to hold well-being sessions and to share information about girls in music before performing a gig in the afternoon with the Skylark band. Feedback was shared from one school that a pupil had been watching clips of the artists independently, when they attended a free lesson in the days following the performance, suggesting that children and young people would be attracted to modern Welsh culture when they were presented with it. It was noted that this event was held in six secondary schools in Gwynedd.

It was reported that the initiative had joint-funded a community post with support from the Urdd and Cyngor Gwynedd's Youth Department. It was explained that it was a specific post to establish new Urdd 'aelwydydd' (youth clubs) within communities with the intention of targeting year 7 and 8 secondary pupils. It was confirmed that new 'aelwydydd' had opened in Caernarfon and in Felinheli as well as Urdd clubs in schools such as Ardudwy. Details were given on the Urdd Ardudwy club, by noting that many of the children did not come from Welsh speaking homes but they had started to attend the 'aelwyd' as it became more popular. Cadi Roberts was thanked for her work within this field. It was confirmed that the intention for the future was to ensure that volunteers came forward to assist the 'aelwydydd' regularly so that they could run without an employed officer being present every time. The hope was to attract volunteers by focusing on specific areas, attempting to ensure that enough people were helping so that volunteers did not feel that it was burdensome.

Reference was made to Llwyfan Llŷn as the initiative had supported this scheme when it started following Covid-19. It was confirmed that the group met weekly in Sarn Mellteyrn. It was reported that this scheme was an example of how the initiative could support communities when there was a gap to be seen in the community and build it to be self-sufficient within communities without being dependent on the initiative as it developed. It was hoped that this success would be seen with Theatr Derek Williams in Bala as the initiative collaborated with them to re-establish the drama club.

Meirion Owen, the initiative's officer in the Bangor area was thanked for organising St David's Day events in Bangor this year. It was emphasised that the initiative had arranged many events as well as a parade by ensuring that many businesses and establishments collaborated with each other. It was elaborated that many sessions for learners were being held regularly in Bangor and it was emphasised that there was positive feedback beyond these sessions.

It was explained that the initiative collaborated with the North Wales Africa Society as the Society expanded when more families moved to Bangor with mature students who attended Bangor University. It was noted that a series of 'Croeso i'r Gymraeg' events had been organised for members of the Society and similar sessions for Adfer service users in the area. It was explained that these sessions were being used as an initial introduction to the language and it was hoped that the attendees would wish to receive formal Welsh lessons in the future.

It was acknowledged that an extensive proportion of the initiative's work focused on specific areas such as Llŷn, Bangor-Ogwen, Penllyn and Bala. It was explained that this was intentional so as to work on a local level to create a difference that could be evidenced. It was emphasised that the purpose of the initiative was to 'Promote and Encourage the Welsh language across the whole of Gwynedd' and the intention was to outsource to increase capacity to enable the initiative to focus on all areas in Gwynedd.

It was agreed that there was a need to collaborate with young people who were about to leave secondary schools to encourage them to use the Welsh language more regularly. It was explained that one challenge was that all of the social media material was English and that influenced them. It was emphasised that the initiative had been working on many schemes such as the 'Dydd Miwsig Cymru' (Welsh Language Music Day) competition to encourage older young people to use the Welsh language. Detail was provided on an exciting scheme with MSparc with new software for video games that ensured that users could speak Welsh with each other whilst they played on their devices.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the observations received.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.45pm.

CHAIR

Meeting	Language Committee
Date	25 June 2024
Title	Welsh Language Promotion Plan – Social Services
Purpose	To present information about the Social Services' contribution to promoting the Welsh Language
Author	Marian Parry Hughes – Head of Children and Supporting Families Aled Davies – Head of Adults, Health and Well-being

<p>Question 1. Support and promote</p> <p>How does your department go beyond offering bilingual services, and contribute to the objectives of the county's language strategy (what activities and projects have been undertaken during the past year that raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh in the community)?</p> <p>The Council's language strategy sets out priorities for promoting the Welsh language in five areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language of the early years, 2. The language of learning, 3. The language of work and services, 4. The language of the community 5. Research and Technology <p>The current strategy can be viewed here: Appendix-2-Strategaeth-laith-2023-2033.pdf (llyw.cymru)</p> <p>Answer:</p> <p>Language of the early years</p> <p>The Gwynedd Language Strategy (the strategy) identifies the need to raise awareness amongst parents about the Welsh-medium education system and to highlight the opportunities that are available to introduce Welsh to children before they reach school age. We are responsible for leading and ensuring the provision of nursery education (10 hours a week for three-year-old children) and a Flying Start childcare provision (12.5 hours a week for two-year-old children). The entire provision is through the medium of Welsh and immerses young children in the Welsh language from their first introduction to education. Since September 2023 we have extended the Flying Start two-year-old childcare provision to several new areas in Gwynedd, with 22 childcare providers providing the service through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. We have also developed a Flying Start app to provide information to parents in the early years. This includes sharing information about the Welsh language and also promoting the Welsh language. They are currently creating videos on the app that are just in Welsh but with English subtitles because of the shortage of Welsh-medium resources that are available, and are also encouraging parents to speak Welsh with their children.</p>

We are also working closely with members of CWLWM (5 national lead childcare organisations in Wales) to promote and encourage the Welsh language across care settings in Gwynedd which include nurseries, *cylchoedd meithrin* (nursery groups), childminders, after school clubs and so forth. There is a variety of resources, help and support available on the lead bodies' websites for promoting and using the Welsh language, and we promote and share these with care settings and providers locally. The service also offers grants of £100 to new private childminders who are non-Welsh speaking for buying Welsh language resources for the provision. The Unit has led on establishing a procurement framework which is a list of approved childcare providers. To be on the list the providers had to evidence that they are able to provide childcare in Welsh or bilingually, and there are now 72 Gwynedd providers on the list. The early years service has collaborated with *Mudiad* to hold 'clwb cwtsh' sessions online. It is a Welsh taster session for free, which is aimed at new learners and concentrates on the language of home parenting.

There are Welsh Language Support Coordinators working for the 5 organisations, and each organisation works on various projects to promote the Welsh language and to extend the number of Welsh-medium settings in Gwynedd. These projects include:

- the [CAMAU Scheme](#) to encourage the workforce of the childcare sector to use and improve their Welsh language skills.
- The "[Croesi'r Bont](#)" scheme ([Mudiad Meithrin](#)) for the immersion of the Welsh language within *cylchoedd meithrin* and increase language transition with schools.

The strategy also identifies that parents require informal opportunities to practise and gain confidence in their use of Welsh, and that activities for the whole family are needed in order to encourage the communication and speaking between the whole family and not just the children. The Department has led on establishing an Activities Providers Framework for children, young people and families across the Council's departments. To date, 32 activity providers have been approved on the framework and are able to provide play opportunities through the medium of Welsh. The Framework is used to commission fun and creative activities, sports and play opportunities for children and young people.

During the school holiday periods in 2023-24, the Department commissioned fun and play activities through the medium of Welsh throughout the county. Partners such as Sbarduno, Byw'n Iach, Logis Bach, the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, With Gobaith, Gwallgofiaid, Theatr y Ddraig, the William Mathias Music Centre, Welfare Training Wales, Codi'r To and Pontio provided a varied range of activities throughout the county for children under 5 and their families, primary age children and young people aged 11-25 years old. 4,768 children enjoyed and had the opportunity to join in sessions across the County during the summer holidays, with 408 attending sessions during the half-term holiday. Over the last period the Unit has established a Play Trailer service where a mobile trailer full of play equipment can be taken to communities across Gwynedd, which provides additional opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

The Language of Learning

The strategy identifies that ensuring work-related learning opportunities through the medium of Welsh, such as apprenticeships, can be challenging, and this is something that the Council is currently addressing.

The Adults and Children departments have been part of the Council's Apprenticeships Scheme for a long time and have had some very successful examples. We have worked with the Talent and Apprenticeships Officers to press on the further education providers to provide Welsh-medium courses and to keep to their word that these resources are available in Welsh. However, the area of apprenticeships is challenging in itself for the social services as there are no social work apprenticeships or similar available in Wales at present. We believe this is a missed opportunity and there is work currently underway to establish a Care Academy here in Gwynedd in order to provide a clear professional career path for individuals in a care role to qualify as social workers, occupational therapists or the care managers of the future. As part of this development, the ability to train and qualify entirely through the medium of Welsh will be a core part of the Academy.

One of the other aims of the strategy is to encourage more of the Council's staff to learn Welsh and to improve their skills by taking advantage of various training methods. Across the Adults and Children departments, 22 members of staff have been or have arranged to go on language courses since the start of 2023, including:

- 10 who have/are following Welsh language beginners' courses (entry and foundation level). These are all front-line workers who have direct contact with individuals in the county, including social workers, occupational therapists, support workers and residential workers.
- 5 who have/are following courses for increasing language skills (intermediate and higher level). As above, these are also front-line workers who have direct contact with the county's individuals.
- 7 who have/are following language refresher courses. These are a mix of front-line workers and back office or administrative workers.

Of course, releasing the time of front-line staff in field where there are so many recruitment challenges can be incredibly challenging, which became evident recently as the Adults Department strived to provide Welsh courses for staff in a residential home. Unfortunately, although a high number of staff were interested at the beginning of the course, circumstances meant that only a few of them attended in the end. We will discuss with the home to try to understand why this did not work this time, and try to learn from those experiences for the future.

Nevertheless, ensuring Welsh language skills development amongst the workforce is something that requires much more attention by the social services. As a result of challenges in recruiting the care workforce as well as the specialist workforce, we have more and more staff who do not reach their posts' designated language level as time goes by. It is not clear what the position of the social services, or the Council more widely, is on enforcing language training and securing improvement within a specified timescale. This had been raised as a matter that requires addressing in a meeting of the Gwynedd 'More than Just Words' group where a representation from the Language Unit sits on the group, and we will continue to discuss the way forward.

The Language of Work and Service

We have already referred to the challenges in terms of the language skills of our workforce and recruitment difficulties, and the same information could be revisited in relation to the language strategy's objectives to go beyond the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and focus on increasing use in order to be able to evidence the need more effectively. We should add, however, that the social services have been involved in the ARFer research programme by Bangor University. ARFer is research that explores how work teams' language practices can be influenced, and we have

one adults social work team in Bangor that have been part of the latest trialling stage, and we are waiting to get to understand the findings. We are hoping to arrange for a care home to participate in the next round so that the programme can be trialled in a different environment.

Of course, social services is a unique field where language challenges are particularly problematic in assessing, supporting and providing services. Communication is fundamental to our ability to understand individuals' true needs and in responding to those needs. Although both departments are confident in the ability of our social work teams to provide support through the medium of Welsh and to take the Welsh language into account as part of decision-making on care packages or placements, fostering or adoption, measuring success is not easy in this respect. Furthermore, there are circumstances where adults or children must be placed out-of-county or in placements where there is no Welsh-language provision. In such situations, the support of our Social Workers will be essential to continue addressing the adult or child's needs.

The Government's framework to strengthen Welsh-medium services in the health and care field – *More Than Just Words* – and the principle of the active offer is crucial to our ability to respond to individuals' needs and evaluate our success in this respect. The active offer means, simply, the ability to identify the need for Welsh-medium services and provide them without someone having to ask for the service. A small group has been established, led by the Statutory Director of Social Services, to lead on the work that stems from the Government's latest five-year plan in this field. The group has been mapping the actions to identify the areas that we need to address, and it has identified main headings that need addressing to steer our work:

1. Learning about the Active Offer amongst managers and practitioners
2. Measuring success
3. Language training
4. Promoting the Active Offer
5. Promoting Use of the Language

We have also been giving attention to the website pages of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, being mindful of the need to present information to the public in a way that could increase the chance of selecting the Welsh version rather than the English. This involves looking at our use of the Welsh language and ensuring it is as accessible as possible, without being overly formal. We will address the pages of the Children and Supporting Families Department website in the same way over the next period, and update them. An Information for Families newsletter is sent out every month, is uploaded on the Council's website and is shared on social media and we have been addressing the use of the Welsh language to ensure that it encourages residents to read the Welsh version. Additionally, we have contributed to specific campaigns where we have been involved in producing marketing material, videos etc. in Welsh, for example Dare to Care or the Foster Wales Campaign. It is an excellent opportunity to emphasise the use of Welsh as a language of work, and is a way of trying to attract Welsh speakers to the field.

The strategy identifies the need to reconsider the support and encouragement given to the private sector to use the Welsh language, and this of course is entirely relevant to the social services department which commissions a large part of its care provision from private providers. The service's Commissioning Manager is a member of the More than Just Words group in Gwynedd, and provides a private sector perspective in those discussions. The service also looks at language clauses within domiciliary care contracts and nursing and residential contracts. In the last financial year, the service has begun addressing language clauses within adults and children care agreements, with the

aim of securing clarity and strengthening them to correspond with the principles of the More than Just Words framework.

Research and Technology

The Gwynedd Language Strategy recognises that it is a significant challenge for the Welsh language to keep up with the continual developments. By now, technology is completely focal to responding to the challenge of increasing demand in the care field, and it can be problematic providing the same options in Welsh as are available in English.

We are aware of the need to encourage more people to use the Welsh language on-line and when using the Council's digital services. We have introduced the AskSara software, which provides a virtual occupational health service to enable adults, children and their families to obtain advice through our website on ways in which they can try to help themselves from day to day. When working alongside the company, we realised that the Welsh version was not up to standard and we refused to operate the service in Gwynedd until this was resolved. We have now translated the whole system on behalf of the company, and this self-assessment system will be available in Welsh to everyone in Wales as a result. We are also re-branding in Gwynedd to ensure that the tool is also promoted in Welsh.

The AiDi app has been commissioned by us to be used by unpaid carers and young carers across the county. The purpose of the app is to create an ID card, to share useful information and show discounts in local shops. Additionally, the app can notify a school or college if a child or young person is running late because of their caring responsibilities. This is the only bilingual app of its kind, and consequently there are discussions taking place regionally and nationally with the aim of other authorities also adopting the app. We are extremely proud that our work in developing an app for Gwynedd carers can potentially lead to opportunities for unpaid and young carers throughout the country to be able to use the Welsh language. The Children and Supporting Families Department is also in discussions around creating an app to provide support to individuals with autism, in the hope that it will have been developed and operational by the end of March 2025. We hope that this will enable us to further influence other organisations.

Furthermore, we were required to roll out new telecare digital equipment by December 2025. We ensured that it was a condition of the new contract with Chiptech that the technology can be used fully through the medium of Welsh in future, by ensuring that all the pre-recorded messages can be uploaded in Welsh. The call centre that receives the calls already provides a service in Welsh.

As part of the work of the More than Just Words Group, we intend to tackle the language difficulties that exist when trying to work multidisciplinary with teams of staff where Welsh language skills vary. We have started discussions with Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University with the aim of trying to research how we can address the challenges in creating and sharing individuals' case records. We have discussed the option of developing a 'plug-in' to enable professionals to see the translated version as they record on our social care data base. This would enable them to check as they go and would ensure that the record is available bilingually when required, without affecting the language that is used between us and the individuals and without creating unreasonable extra work for our employees. However, research and work is needed in order to develop the language models so that we can use them in our field from day to day and trust in their accuracy. We plan to address this over the next period.

Question 2. Policy and Standards Matters

- i. Staff language skills – the number of Welsh speakers and learners within the department (latest Language Designations data).
- ii. Barriers – Are there any barriers that prevent you as a department from offering a full service in Welsh (i.e., acting on the requirements of the Welsh Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards)?
- iii. Compliments and Complaints – provide information on any compliments or complaints that the department has received during the year regarding Welsh/bilingual services.

Answer:

Staff language skills

There are around 1,600 staff across the social services. According to the latest quarterly language report, 73.4% of these have completed a language assessment. Of those who have completed the assessment, 85.5% reach the language requirements of their post. Here follows the figures per department: Children and Supporting Families: By now, 79% of the Children and Supporting Families staff have completed the language assessment, which is a 10% increase since we presented our language committee report last year. Of those who have completed the assessment, 94% reach the language designations of their post.

Adults, Health and Well-being: 69% of Adults, Health and Well-being staff have completed the language assessment, which is a 9% increase since we presented our language committee report last year. Of those who have completed the assessment, 79% reach the language designations of their post.

Looking across the social services, the vast majority of staff who have not completed the assessment are staff who provide front-line care – home care, Learning Disabilities support services, children's support services, and childcare services. These are members of staff who do not have IT accounts or easy access to technology. The language self-assessment questionnaire is an electronic questionnaire that has been placed on the staff self-service system, and although all members of staff can access the self-service system, those without use of IT equipment or accounts are disadvantaged compared with their office-based colleagues. The More than Just Words group have been scrutinising the figures regularly and have decided that using a simple tool that enables the line manager to assess whether or not the individual reaches their post's language designation is a reasonable solution to try to address the gaps that remain in the data. Since this decision we have already managed to secure an assessment for an additional 68 members of staff, with 65 of them reaching their posts' language requirements.

Looking at the members of staff who have been assessed as not reaching the language requirements of their posts, many of them are also carers or support workers. This reflects the recruitment challenges faced by the field, and there is more on this below. There are some social workers and therapists who do not meet the language requirements of their posts either according to their self-assessment, but in several instances the line manager did not agree with the conclusion of the self-assessment (and was of the view that the employee did reach the requirements of their post). Of

course, in a self-assessment, it is very possible for the individual's confidence in their skills to affect the results, which must be borne in mind when considering the data.

Barriers

- 1. Recruitment** – recruitment challenges in this field are evident in both departments, although the impact on the ability to provide services through the medium of Welsh is perhaps seen more in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department. The services providing direct care and our private care providers are finding it very difficult to recruit a care workforce in general, and subsequently it is very difficult to press for workers who reach the language requirements of the post, especially in some areas. We are also facing specific difficulties in recruiting in the occupational therapy field, and as a result we have had to appoint non-Welsh speaking therapists in several teams. Within Children and Supporting Families, we are also experiencing problems in recruiting qualified social workers.

In order to try to address these challenges an Action Plan has been developed across the two departments. Various recruitment campaigns have been undertaken by the department through WeCare Wales, and we emphasise the importance of being able to speak Welsh and the ability to live in naturally Welsh communities as part of that recruitment pack. Amongst the recruitment efforts we have seen:

- Promotion material, videos, continuous social media campaigns calling for carers and promoting the field.
- Workforce planning workshops have been held with services.
- We have collaborated with Human Resources on the Council's new jobs website and on exit interview arrangements.
- 145 work experiences were organised during the 2023/24 financial year across the field, with the opportunity for the sector's prospective workforce to have experience of Welsh as a language of work and service.

Work is also underway to establish a Care Academy – this has already been mentioned in question 1. The Welsh language and the principle of the active offer will be completely central and essential to these developments.

- 2. Provision / Placements beyond Gwynedd and Wales** – We are fairly restricted when trying to secure intensive care placements for a child or a residential placement for adults with Learning Disabilities from Gwynedd out-of-county. Projects have been identified as part of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 to address the lack of provision in Gwynedd.
 - a. Developing a residential provision for looked after children in small group homes A project to develop registered residential homes for small groups of up to two children, which will allow them to receive care in Gwynedd, attend local schools, and fully participate in the lives of their communities.
 - b. Supported Housing in the Community – a minimum of 6 houses located across the county to offer suitable and safe care homes to individuals with Learning Disabilities. The service has an accommodation project where they identify individuals who have been placed out-of-county and prioritise them to enable their return to Gwynedd if they wish.

In the same manner, we are also concerned about the language needs of young offenders who receive a custodial sentence. Individuals who were sentenced to prison during the past year have been sent to England because there is not a suitable provision in North Wales. This weakens the young person's contact with their family, language and their culture. This matter has been escalated nationally to the Welsh Government for some years, but the situation remains the same. This puts young people from Gwynedd at a disadvantage by failing to meet their language needs, and is of course a matter of significant concern.

- 3. Technology** – we try to ensure that any technology we use to provide care services is available in Welsh, but this does cause challenges for us. Very often, the latest technology available is very specialist in nature and is only available in English. We try to work with companies to develop resources in Welsh but are finding it difficult to gain their interest in doing so unless there is an additional financial incentive available to them.
- 4. Working with partners** – running integrated services jointly with the Health Board can create challenges for us linguistically, as many of the meetings begin in English. We do make an effort to influence, for example by pressing on them to ensure a simultaneous translation provision in more formal meetings. The same is true when we attend regional and national meetings in the field. A number of our partners do not offer a translation provision, particularly in virtual meetings, and we often have to ask and press on them to be able to contribute in Welsh.

Complaints and compliments – we have not received any formal complaints or compliments during the year that relate specifically to Welsh or bilingual services. Of course, we have received many compliments in relation to individuals and families' satisfaction with the services they receive, and many of these services are in Welsh, therefore we believe that meeting individuals' language needs naturally contributes to the quality of the service.

However, there are several possible reasons why compliments or complaints do not reach us formally. There is some evidence to suggest that individuals in the care field especially are unwilling to complain for fear that it could affect the care and/or support they are receiving. Since a substantial proportion of our service is available in Welsh, it is also possible that these services are such a natural part of individuals' lives that they would not consider complimenting them formally - but we certainly know that there are workers in the field who are aware of informal thanks and comments from residents because they are being provided care in Welsh.

Question 3. Development Opportunities

Do you have ideas about new ways that we can promote the Welsh language in the county's communities – either in your own services or by collaborating with others?

Answer

In order to further promote the Welsh language within the communities of Gwynedd, it is essential that the Social Services fully implement the principles of More than Just Words and ensure that the residents of Gwynedd always receive services in Welsh without having to ask.

We need to ensure that our entire workforce is aware of the requirements of More than Just Words and what it means to them. We are in the process of developing short videos to this end as a first step. There is a feeling that some of the county's most vulnerable residents are not receiving a

service in Welsh without having to ask every time, and that in some cases we are asking them which language they would prefer. We need to continue working towards a situation where the active offer is a custom and that no-one has to express any language preference, that we make the best use of our employees who are fluent in Welsh, and that we can effectively measure the impact of this on the residents of Gwynedd.

As has already been mentioned, it is crucial in order to promote the Welsh language that we continue to push for any technology that is developed as part of alternative care in future to be fully available in Welsh. We will continue to work with Universities and national companies to ensure that the latest care technology can communicate in Welsh.

We will also continue to ensure that our involvement with our partners is bilingual and will promote the importance of use of the Welsh language for the county's residents, and by doing so influence practice in organisations outside the Council.

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	25 June 2024
TITLE:	Gwynedd Council's Annual Report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards
AUTHOR:	Llywela Haf Owain Senior Language Advisor
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To submit the draft Annual Report to the members for them to recommend that the Cabinet Member approves publishing the Report

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Language Standards, imposed on the Council under Section 44 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, the Council is required to *"produce and publish an annual report by 30 June following the financial year to which the report relates regarding your compliance with the operational standards with which you had a duty to comply."*

1.2 The Standards set out specific requirements for annual reporting (158, 164 and 170), noting that we must include information on the following:

- *the number of complaints you received during the year that related to your compliance with the standards;*
- *the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (based on the records you kept in accordance with Standard 151);*
- *the number of staff members who attended training courses offered by you in Welsh during the year (based on the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);*
- *if a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during the year, the percentage of the total number of staff who attended the course who attended the Welsh version (based on the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);*
- *the number of new posts and vacant posts advertised by you during the year categorised as posts that require -*
 - i) that Welsh language skills are essential,*
 - ii) that Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post,*
 - iii) that Welsh language skills are desirable, or*
 - iv) that Welsh language skills are not essential (based on the records you kept in accordance with standard 154).*

1.3 Other than the above-mentioned information, the Council is free to include any information we feel adds to the public and the Welsh Language Commissioner's understanding of the Council's work in the context of the standards and promoting the use of Welsh medium services, and any information about specific steps taken to ensure compliance with the Standards.

1.4 As the Language Committee is responsible for maintaining oversight of the implementation of the Language Standards, the attached report, for the year to the end of March 2023, is submitted to committee members for information, and they are asked to recommend that the Cabinet Member approves it to be published.

1.5 The final report will need to be published on the Council's website by 30 June 2023.

2. SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

2.1 The report includes key information about recruitment and staffing arrangements, which ensure that the Council's workforce continues to be able to offer services through the medium of Welsh as a default and wherever it is needed across the Council. The key data includes:

- 98.9% of Council staff have some degree of Welsh language skills.
- 92% of Council staff meet the language designation of their post.
- 850 job adverts have been published over the year where Welsh language skills were essential.

2.2 Information is also included about developments during the year to improve compliance with the Standards including

- Specific actions taken to promote the new Language Policy adopted in 2022.
- Information about the new Language Strategy that was published at the end of 2023 which notes the Council's vision for increasing Welsh language use across Gwynedd.
- Information about the work of the More Than Just Words in-house forum
- Bilingual Workforce Recruitment Project

2.3 The report also highlights some of the challenges the Language and Scrutiny Committee and services across the Council will be addressing during the coming year to improve bilingual provision and the Welsh active offer.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to:

- accept the content of the Annual Report,
- offer any observations on the matters included in the report, and
- recommend that the Cabinet Member publishes the report before the 30 June 2023 deadline.

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CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S WELSH STANDARDS ANNUAL REVIEW

APRIL 2023 TO
31 MARCH 2024



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FOREWORD

Councillor Menna Trenholme

Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
(with responsibility for the Welsh language during 2023-24)



I am very proud of the work that has been achieved within the Council to ensure that Gwynedd residents are able to use all of our services through the medium of Welsh. We can take pride in this report which bears witness to the good work that is being done across all Council departments.

The new Language Strategy was adopted during 2023, and it underlines the Council's diligence and commitment to increase opportunities for all residents in Gwynedd to see and use the Welsh language in different contexts. By working on raising status and increasing people's use of the language in all parts of their lives, we will also hopefully increase the motivation for others to learn the language.

The strategy focuses on seeking to increase young people's use of the language in coming years, by showing them the value of the language as a skill for the labour market and try to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives. It also addresses how we can have a positive influence on the way in which residents use the Welsh language in the various ways that technology is part of their lives. I look forward to seeing the further development of the strategy's work programme, which will concentrate on plans or projects on areas where the Council has the power and influence to take action.

It is pleasing to note that the vast majority of Council staff are able to speak Welsh, and a large number have fluent Welsh language skills, which means that the use of Welsh as the daily language of work continues to be a natural practice, and we are able to guarantee a Welsh language service proactively and by default.

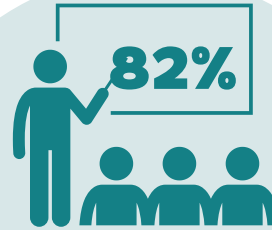
The Council has a number of other plans in the pipeline that will prioritise community prosperity and the prosperity of the language in the future, I am therefore pleased that Cyngor Gwynedd is continuing to lead the way, looking beyond bilingual provision, by prioritising the needs of residents and the commitment to operate in the interest of the Welsh language.

SUMMARY



98.9%

98.9% of Council staff have some degree of Welsh language skills



82% of the training events were held in Welsh with simultaneous translation available.



850

850 posts have been advertised during the year where Welsh language skills were essential



92%

92% of Council staff meet the language designation of their post



A new Language Strategy was published for 2023-2033 with a vision of increasing use of the Welsh language across Gwynedd.

BACKGROUND

THE DUTIES OF THE STANDARDS

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 establishes a legal framework that places a duty on the Council to comply with the standards in relation to the Welsh language. The individual standards explain how organisations are expected to use the Welsh language in different situations.

The duties that derive from the standards mean that the Council should not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language in Wales, and the Council should promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language (making it easier for people to use it in their everyday lives).

The Language Standards are divided into five fields:

- service delivery
- policy shaping
- operational
- promotion
- record keeping

This Council received a compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner under Section 4 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, on 30 September 2015. This notice specified the precise standards the Council is required to comply with and on 30 March 2016, 147 standards came into effect, with four promotion standards coming into effect on 30 March 2017.

The Standards that the Council must comply with, along with a copy of the Council's current Language Policy, can be viewed in their entirety by visiting the Standards and Policy section of the corporate website:

[THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS AND LANGUAGE POLICY WEBPAGE](#)

Reporting in accordance with the requirements of standard 170

The Council is required to create an annual review that provides information on compliance with the Welsh language Standards. The exact requirements are listed in standard 170:

(1) You must produce a report (an “annual report”), in Welsh, for each financial year, which reports on the way you have complied with the policy making standards with which you had a duty to comply during that year.

(2) The annual report must include the following information (where relevant, to the extent that you have a duty to comply with the standards referred to) -

(a) number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (based on the records you kept in accordance with Standard 151);

(b) number of staff members who attended training courses offered in Welsh during the year (based on the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);

(c) if a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during the year, the percentage of the total number of staff who attended the course and who attended the Welsh version (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 152);

(ch)) the number of new posts and vacant posts advertised by you during the year categorised as posts that require -

- (i) that Welsh language skills are essential,*
- (ii) that Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post,*
- (iii) that Welsh language skills are desirable, or*
- (iv) that Welsh language skills are not essential (based on the records kept in accordance with standard 154);*

(d) the number of complaints you received during the year that related to your compliance with the operating standards with which you had a duty to comply.

4

COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS

a) DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE YEAR

The Council's Language Policy is its main method of acting in accordance with the Language Standards and ensuring Welsh-medium services for the people of Gwynedd.

Over the last year, efforts have been made to remind staff of the latest policy which was adopted in 2022 by communicating via various methods including providing information in the staff weekly newsletter, updating the language awareness e-module course, sending e-mails and updating information on the staff intranet. Consequently, there is better awareness of the language policy. Indeed, the fact that every department reports annually to the Cyngor Gwynedd Language Committee on the implementation of the language policy and their contribution to realising the language strategy has also helped along with the expectation for every department to complete a departmental self-assessment on compliance with the language policy and standards. Matters arising from the self-assessments have been addressed and suitable support has been offered such as a refresher session on the Welsh language standards and language policy for managers within the education ancillary services.

During the autumn term, a new Welsh language strategy was adopted, namely, 'Gwynedd Welsh Language Strategy 2023-2033', a follow up to the previous strategy, 'Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23'. The new 10-year strategy reflects the Council's commitment to promoting the language across the county and to meet the requirements set out in the Welsh Language Standards.

The strategy's main vision is to increase use of the Welsh language, focusing plans or projects on areas where the Council has the power and influence to take action. Note that the Council is eager to see 100% of Gwynedd's children being given the opportunity to speak Welsh and to use the language regularly. There are 5 general areas of implementation, namely, Language of the Early Years, Language of Learning, Language of Work and Service, Language of the Community and Research and Technology.

The Welsh language was also addressed in the Council's principal strategic plan, namely 'The Council Plan 2023 - 2028' with a Welsh Gwynedd noted as one of the seven priority areas that staff are expected to implement. In it, there are three projects that cover the Welsh language namely modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children, promoting the use of the Welsh language by Gwynedd residents and reviewing the Gwynedd Education Language Policy.

The vast majority of Council staff are able to speak Welsh, and a large number have fluent Welsh language skills, which means that the use of Welsh as the daily language of work is now natural practice, and we can proactively and by default provide a Welsh language service. The need to consider the Welsh Language, and the Council's role in maintaining opportunities to use Welsh in our communities, is also a natural practice, and no decisions are taken on changing services or developing strategic plans without the Welsh language and developing opportunities to use the Welsh language being a core part of those plans. The Council continues to lead and goes beyond

the requirements of the Standards by setting language requirements when recruiting and also by holding all of its public meetings in Welsh, by default.

To tackle the challenge of increasing the use of the Welsh language among Gwynedd residents and to collaborate with partners and key stakeholders, the work of the Gwynedd Language Forum was coordinated and supported. There are now representatives from 25 partners across the County who convene regularly to discuss and plan opportunities for people to use the Welsh language across the county. Due to this collaboration, it was decided to create a young people sub-group that will convene next year to collaborate on a new project.

It is pleasing to note that the Council's language advisers are members of various boards in order to feed into regional and national promotional activities. We have a representative on the World Heritage Site Strategic Board and its Benefitting Sub-group, and the hope is that collaboration between partners will develop to gather data of how the Welsh language is benefitting from the status and what impact the Welsh language is having on the success of partners that are part of the status.

The More than Just Words in-house forum continues under the leadership of the Statutory Director of Social Services and supervises the work of the Adults and Children's departments in the context of the More than Just Words framework. Officers from the Language and Scrutiny Unit attend the forum to ensure that the requirements of the Standards are also highlighted and implemented alongside the requirements of More than Just Words.

Challenges have been highlighted in relation to the standards including the need to ensure clear guidelines for care homes etc. on the use of the Welsh language on social media and the need to find a solution for multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that meeting the language needs of individuals along with the language needs of non-Welsh speaking employees from other organisations does not cause an additional workload for our professionals. Officers from these departments act on these issues as they arise.

Over the last year, there has been focus on seeking a better picture of the language skills of the workforce and to consider how the language use of service users can be recorded effectively in order to facilitate implementing the active offer. The group has also considered methods of promoting Welsh language services that are available by looking at the possibility of including language badges on employees' uniforms and planning short videos to convey what the active offer entails for employees on the ground.

The Council's language advisers are also members of the Welsh Language Sub-group which is part of the Gwynedd and Môn Public Services Board structure. Over the last year we addressed the challenges of recruiting bilingual workers who speak Welsh to public bodies across north Wales on behalf of the three public services boards in the north. Recommendations on good practice will be published next year. This is a good example of sharing resources and collaborating on a regional level.

We continued to assist Bangor University with research that looks at people's attitudes towards using Welsh medium services. A questionnaire was issued in February and the closing date was the end of April 2024. We hope that this research will improve our understanding of how we can influence decisions and encourage more people to use the Welsh medium services (especially the digital/on-line ones) that are provided by the Council.

b) GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS TO COMPLY WITH THE STANDARDS

Cyngor Gwynedd takes advantage of every opportunity to promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language across Council departments. Over the past year, the following have received particular attention by adhering to specific steps to strengthen compliance with the standards.

Group of standards	Actions taken	Action required
Promotion - 145, 146 Operational - 98	Create the Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023-33 which shows how we are going to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use across the County.	There are meetings in place with the heads of departments across the Council to combine departmental work to create a work programme to implement the Language Strategy. When complete, the strategy and its content will need to be promoted.
Policy shaping - 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93	Assist officers as they include language questions in Consultations .	Create a simple document to reiterate the purpose of the language questions in consultations and provide clear guidance of the questions to include.
Operational standards - 98 Policy standards - 165	Promote the steps of Cyngor Gwynedd's language policy by including brief messages in ' Gair Wythnosol ' for Council staff and updating the language awareness e-module.	Develop a new way of promoting the content of the language policy among Cyngor Gwynedd staff and residents, including the Language Unit's internal communication and social media.
Service delivery - 56, 58, 60 Operational - 121, 122, 124, 126	Work continues to review the technology systems to use the Welsh language and ensure that we comply with the requirements of the standards.	Further work will ensure consistency in using the correct Welsh designs and references across the Council to comply with the standards.

C) COMPLAINTS

Standard 170: Report on language complaints

In accordance with the Council's accountability and internal reporting arrangements, any complaints or enquiries about services received in relation to the Standards or the Council's Language Policy between April 2023 and March 2024 are recorded by the Language and Scrutiny Unit and reported to the Council's Language Committee as a part of this report.

The following complaints and enquiries were received.

Complaints regarding Compliance with the Language Standards (Welsh Language Commissioner)

1. CS1126 - Council placed an English-only advert in the 'Sibrydion' booklet (February 2023)

The Commissioner received a complaint that the Council had placed an English-only advert in the 'Sibrydion' booklet that was distributed in the complainants' area. It was explained that the Council had paid to advertise in the magazine, but not an advert for a box with the Council's contact details and logo on the upper right-hand side of one page. The Council had no control over the information that was included on the remainder of the page. The response was accepted and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

2. Rhandir Mwyn estate sign, Caernarfon (March 2024)

The Commissioner received an enquiry regarding the sign for a new housing estate in Caernarfon, Rhandir Mwyn, which included the wording 'Nos' on it and it was asked whether the Council had contacted the owner of the site to rectify the situation. Although Cyngor Gwynedd was not responsible for the sign it was explained that the Council had already contacted the owner of the estate, a local housing association, to draw their attention to the error in the sign and was notified that the sign would be replaced by them in due course. The response was accepted and the Commissioner did not proceed to investigate this matter.

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

	Department	Information about the enquiry / complaint	Explanation and actions taken
	Complaints		
1.	Corporate Support	A complaint that the advert for the post of Head of Ysgol Llanllyfni was advertised in English only on a social website.	It was reported that the advert had been shared in error by a staff member. By now, steps have been taken to ensure that all staff members are aware of the Language Policy and the expectation that posts in the Council's schools are advertised in Welsh only.
2.	Corporate Support	A complaint was received that the Council's recruitment policy was unfair by stipulating the need to be fluent in Welsh for every post. The individual had a hearing impairment which meant that the person could not understand or learn Welsh well. As he was under the impression that the language requirements for posts meant that there was a need to be fluent, he felt that he could not apply for a post with the Council. He had been turned away from the Council's recycling centre when he tried to submit a CV as he could not speak Welsh. He therefore felt that the policy discriminated against him and that he should receive compensation.	An apology was sent to the complainant for the response he received at the recycling centre, and the policy was explained in terms of setting language requirements for posts. One of the posts in question by the complainant (LGV driver post) was looked at and it was confirmed that the language requirements were Basic/Entry level for that post. The Equality Advisor was also part of the response to this complaint as the complainant claimed there was discrimination on the grounds of disability. The complainant was not satisfied with the Council's response and therefore lodged a complaint with the ombudsman. The ombudsman decided not to investigate.
3.	Environment	A member of the public enquired whether the Council's language policy applied to banners displayed by organisations/businesses on private land. They also asked if the planning service could intervene.	It was reported that the Council has no legal power to force businesses or organisations to display Welsh or bilingual banners/signage. There are some powers within the planning process therefore a request could be made for bilingual signs if a planning application is submitted. It was explained that the

4. Environment

A complaint about the use of English names in a street closure notice (traffic notices and orders) in the Press, which is contrary to the Council's Language Policy.

Council takes advantage of suitable opportunities to promote the use of the Welsh language by businesses and seeks to demonstrate to them the value of using the Welsh language.

An explanation was provided that the Council has to seek to ensure that documents involving changes to the roads network must be explicitly clear, comprehensible and comprehensive to road users and therefore street names are used in Welsh and English in traffic notices and orders.

5. Highways, Engineering and YGC

A complaint was received about English-only road signs which were erected in Llanllyfni and on the road to Penygroes warning residents that the road would close on 19 July.

An apology was issued that some English-only signs had been erected in the area and bilingual signs were immediately erected. It was also explained that a different type of bilingual sign had already been erected by the Council to notify the public that work was to commence in the area.

6. Finance

A complaint was received that an individual had received an English-only SSP1 from the payroll service.

The circumstances were investigated and it was established that a misunderstanding between officers within the unit had led to sending out an English-only form. An apology was made and arrangements were put in place to ensure that both Welsh and English copies of the form are sent out in future.

7. Finance

A complaint was received that an individual received documents in Welsh only from the Pensions Service.

It was explained that when the individual joined the pension fund that it was not a requirement to note an individual's language of choice when receiving the service, however, this changed in light of introducing the Welsh Language Standards under Section 44 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011. It was elaborated that the Council must act in accordance with Standard 5 which notes 'If you don't know whether a person wishes to receive correspondence from you in Welsh, when you

8. Economy and Community

A member complained about English-only documentation at a meeting in Pwllheli.

correspond with that person you must provide a Welsh language version of the correspondence.' As no chosen language had been recorded for the individual, correspondence was sent to him in Welsh.

It was reiterated that the Welsh Language Measure ensured the individual's right to receive Welsh language services. It was noted there is no provision under the Measure that provides the same protection and rights to English services. It was added that the individual's chosen language would be recorded and that an English copy of the letter would be sent to him.

9. Economy and Community

A phone-call was received from a member of the public who wished to complain about the Neuadd Dwyfor website as it appeared in English first, and that he had received a confirmation e-mail in English-only when booking tickets.

External consultants were commissioned to prepare a proposed plan for the Glandon and Pwllheli harbour area and a public Drop-in Session was arranged to offer an update on the work for local residents and businesses. In error, the details shown on the plans were not translated in full. The department gave assurances that it would check that commissioned companies or consultants provided bilingual documents in future.

It was explained that the Neuadd Dwyfor website was available in both languages but that the Council has no control over which language the public sees first. It appears that search engines such as Google are increasingly showing and referring to the English versions of websites, even when the individual searches in Welsh or when an organisation tries to set Welsh as the default option, which is what the Council does.

10. Economy and Community

A complaint was received from a member of the public regarding the language conditions that are imposed on Business Grants.

It was reported that Cyngor Gwynedd expects businesses receiving grant support to commit to comply with different conditions including some relating to the Welsh language and others such as paying a living wage.

It was explained that the Welsh language conditions reflect the core values and the commitment of the Council towards ensuring that the language continues and thrives in our communities. It was also reiterated that they reflect the Council's language policy and the statutory duty to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

11. Economy and Community

A complaint was received that Cyngor Gwynedd officers responded in Welsh to questions asked at a meeting, rather than responding in the language used to ask the question, namely English.

It was explained that officers follow the Council's Welsh language policy and therefore speak Welsh at public meetings. It was reiterated that simultaneous translation was available to those who do not understand Welsh.

12. Housing and Property

A complaint was received by a Member regarding a letter one of their electors had received in English-only from the Housing and Property Department.

It was reported that the department usually sent letters for the Disabled Facilities Grant in Welsh and English, in separate forms, due to the complex nature of the contents of the letter. In this case, unfortunately, the lack of staffing within the service led to an administrative error. An apology was issued and a Welsh language version was sent out directly. Staff were reminded of the need for all staff to adhere to the Language Policy and Welsh Language Standards at all times.

Enquiries

13. **Corporate Support** An enquiry was received from a member of the public as to whether the Council could do something about the English names being used for rock-faces on OS maps. It was reported that a firm commitment has been made to protect Welsh place-names by establishing the Protection of Place-names Project. Although Cyngor Gwynedd does not have responsibility or statutory powers over the maps of other bodies or organisations such as the OS, it was noted that it has sought to influence others to seek to change things in terms of updating maps and using Welsh names.
14. **Corporate Support** A phone-call was received from a member of the public asking why the Council uses one 'c' rather than two in the name Cricieth. It was explained that some names had several forms and several different spellings and that the Council was trying to rationalise the names used internally and externally. It was explained that this was the recommended spelling by the Welsh Language Commissioner on its list of place-names.
15. **Highways, Engineering and YGC / Corporate Support** A request was made by a member of the public to change her address to spell Cricieth with one 'c' rather than doubling the 'c' on all Council systems that included her address. It was explained that the Council has a number of different information technology systems which store information about addresses and that they cannot all be amended at the same time. It was reiterated that work is ongoing to seek to rationalise place-names used by staff and that the Council uses the name Cricieth with one 'c'. This is also the spelling included on the Welsh Language Commissioner's list of place-names. However, it was emphasised that the Council respects others' rights to use 'cc' if they so wished.

CH) GENERAL LANGUAGE SKILLS OVERVIEW

This section contains an overview of data relating to staff language skills and the language designations of posts. In line with our Welsh Language Policy, Cyngor Gwynedd adheres to the following principles:

- *Welsh is considered to be an essential skill for all posts within the Council.*
- *The linguistic requirements of each post must be assessed against the language framework.*
- *Job interviews will be conducted in Welsh.*
- *An assessment of the language skills of all staff must be undertaken, either on appointment, or as part of induction arrangements.*

To coincide with the purpose of this report, the data will report on the staff of the main Council departments only, and it does not include staff from GwE, the Trunk Road Agent, Byw'n Iach, North Wales Economic Ambition Board or Gwynedd schools' staff, as they do not operate under the standards. The work of gathering information about individuals (staff members) is continuous, **and the figures noted will never entirely reflect the actual number of staff employed by the Council.** However, it is aimed to obtain the most accurate picture of the workforce's skills at any time. Staff turnover, changes in jobs, restructuring and individuals who hold more than one job within the Council are all factors that affect data accuracy.

The language skills system gathers and stores information about the language designations of posts and staff's language skills. This means that we can see how many staff members have the language skills that correspond to the designation of the post and generate live reports, to track progress and changes across departments.

Standard 154: Report on the number of posts advertised during the year according to every "category"

Every post that is advertised by the Council notes language requirements as an **essential** skill, i.e. some element of language skill for every post in the Council.

That Welsh language skills are **essential** = **850**
(*this number does not include re-advertising*)

That Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post = 0

That Welsh language skills are desirable = 0

That Welsh language skills are not necessary = 0

Standard 151: Report on the number of staff members who possess Welsh language skills

It is seen here that 98.9% of Council staff have Welsh language skills which is a 0.5% reduction since last year.

	2022-23		2023-24	
Number of staff members (who are assessed on the language skills system)	3886		4000	
Staff who possess Welsh language skills (of any kind)	2726	99.4%	3957	98.9%
Staff with no Welsh language skills at all	15	0.6%	43	1.1%

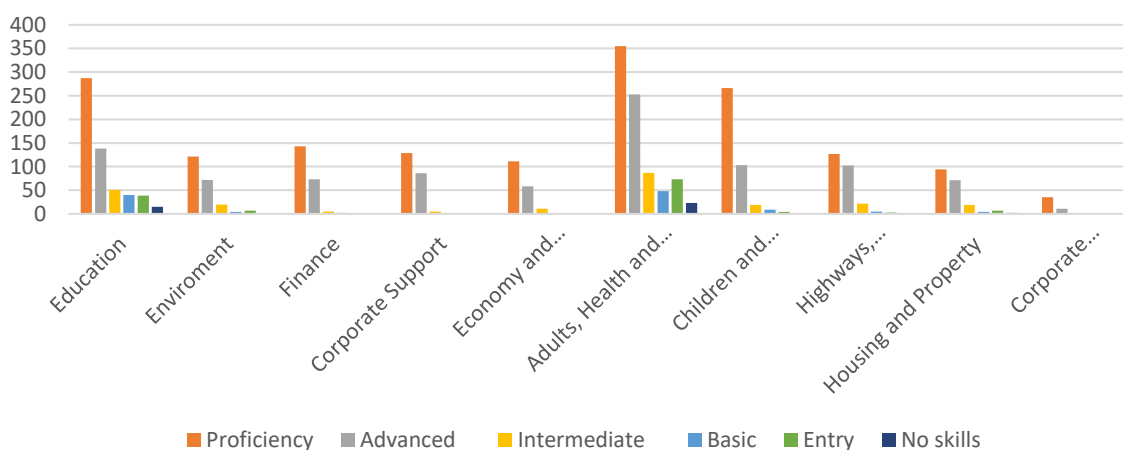
However, by looking back further, we see that the percentage has dropped over the last 6 years from 6% to 1.1%, in 2018/2019.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Staff with no Welsh language skills	6% (234)	0.1% (4)	0.3% (7)	0.9% (26)	0.6% (15)	1.1% (43)

Language Levels of staff per department:

The following graph and table show the staff language level for each department.

Staff language levels by department



	Education	Environment	Finance	Corporate Support	Economy and Community	Adults, Health and Well-being	Children and supporting families	Highways, Engineering and YGC	Housing and Property	Corporate Management Team
Proficiency	287	121	143	129	111	355	266	127	94	35
Advanced	138	72	73	86	58	253	103	102	71	11
Intermediate	51	20	5	5	11	87	19	22	19	1
Basic	40	4	2	1	1	48	9	5	4	0
Entry	39	7	0	1	0	73	4	3	7	0
No skills	15	0	0	0	1	23	1	1	2	0

Language Designations

Every quarter, the management team of every department in the Council receives a report from the Learning and Development Service noting the latest picture regarding the number of staff who reach the language designations of their post and their language skills. Following this, a meeting of the Language Designations Forum is held with representatives from all departments to discuss the findings of the reports and how to improve the process of collecting assessments and targeting training.

The Language Skills Self-assessment Questionnaire is on the Council's Staff Self-service portal, and the Forum has identified access problems for staff who have no e-mail accounts meaning that they are not able to complete the self-assessment. The situation has been acknowledged in a digital plan that will secure an official e-mail address for every member of staff in due course.

In the meantime, through Forum discussions, a pilot was held of a simple assessment to be completed by managers and individuals jointly with the Council's Highways Department - which campaigned for a 3-month period to ensure that every member of staff was assessed. The Department's response level increased from 58% to 96% and identified 13 members of staff who did not reach the Language Designations of their posts. Of these, 4 are already following a Welsh language skills training course and others have, or are about to have a 1:1 consultation with a Welsh Learning and Development Officer to support them to reach the Language designations.

Number of staff who reach the language designation of their post.

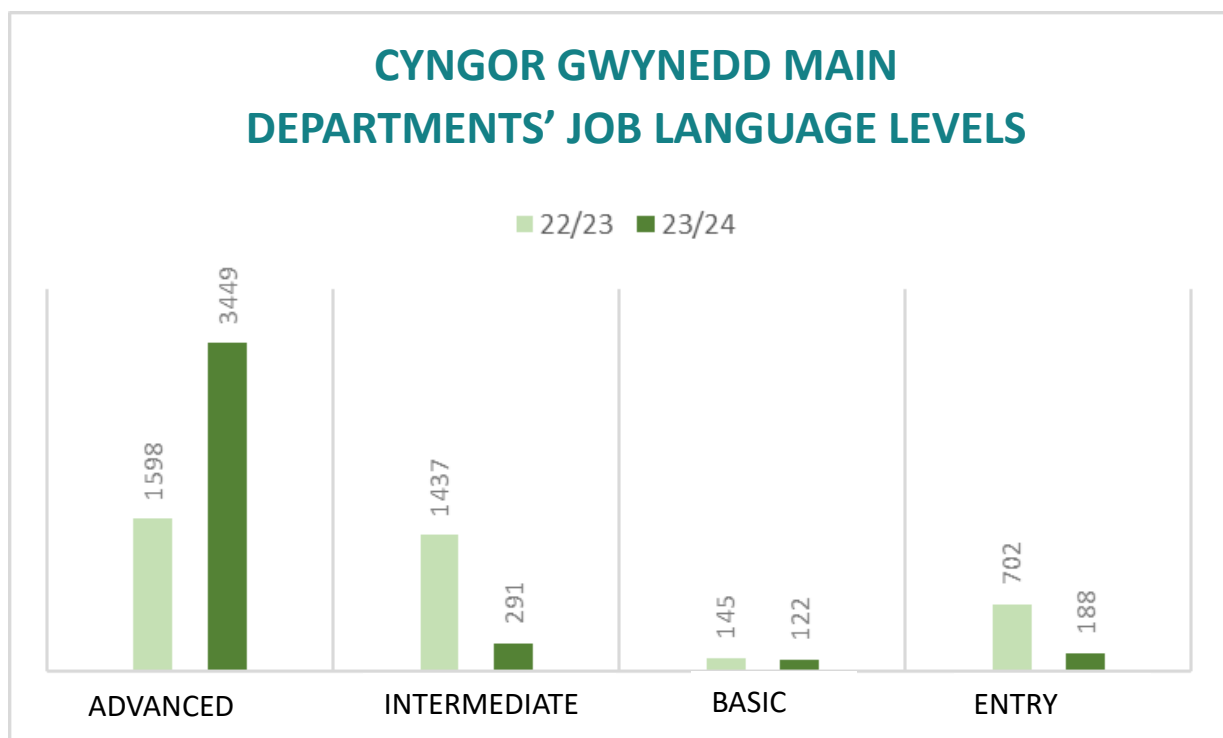
We see here that 92% of staff meet the language designation for their post which is an increase of 1% since the previous year.

	2022-23		2023-24	
Staff who reach the Language Designation of their post	2679	91%	2962	92%
Staff who do not reach the Language Designation of their post	253	9%	275	8%

Assessing and Setting the Language Levels of Posts - number of posts across the Council that have been designated per level:

Although Welsh is an essential skill for every post within Cyngor Gwynedd, there are various language designations within these posts with the exact designation depending on the nature of the post and contact with the public.

The following table highlights the language designations that have been set for current posts across the Council, calculating the speaking and listening level as the 'primary level', usually the highest level, as language level varies between either skill within a single post. See 2022/23 data next to 2023/24 data.



The highest level set for any post's language designation is Advanced, but it is possible for the individual's language skills to be assessed on a Proficiency level. This means that a large number of staff possess language skills that are more advanced than the need identified for their post. For this table, the Advanced and Proficiency levels have been categorised together.

By comparing this year's data with the same data from 2022/23, note there is a significant reduction in the number of posts that have been noted to have an Entry language level with a reduction of 73%. The number of posts designated to be of an Advanced and Proficient level have doubled over the year with 85% of posts stipulating that language designation. A table that shows very positive development within a year.

D) TRAINING

This section contains an overview of data relating to training within Cyngor Gwynedd. In line with our Welsh Language Policy, Cyngor Gwynedd adheres to the following principles:

- All training offered by the Council will be provided in Welsh.
- Every step will be taken to help staff participate in training through the medium of Welsh
- Training through the medium of English will not be offered for core subjects unless absolutely necessary.

English-only training will be offered when training is required in specialist fields, and the services of specialist trainers bought in. Even then, every effort will be made when commissioning services to obtain bilingual materials, and every opportunity will be taken to attempt to influence national providers to improve Welsh medium training provision for the public sector in general.

Standard 152: Report on the number of staff members who have attended training courses.

General Training

Although the Learning and Development Service provides training to other departments within the Council, the data below reports on the training provided to central departments that are subject to the requirements of the Standards.

It can be seen that the number of training courses held through the medium of English and bilingually have reduced significantly compared to last year.

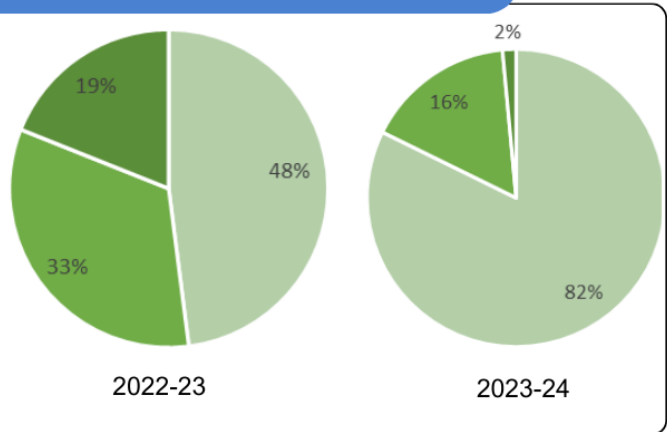
Number of individual events between 01.04.23 and 31.03.24 - **262**

Number of titles (level of Post/Organisation) between 01.04.23 and 31.03.24 - **44**

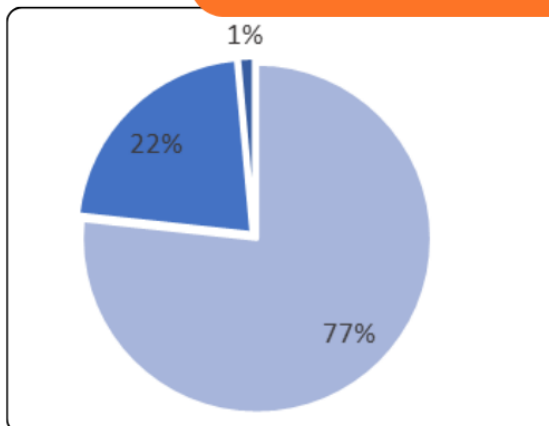
General Training - Number of events

The change since 2020:

	NUMBER OF EVENTS			
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Welsh	289	524	428	223
English	305	402	295	44
Bilingual	92	46	169	4



General Training - Unique Attendees



The change since 2020:

	UNIQUE ATTENDEES			
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Welsh	1044	1612	1409	962
English	796	1032	881	274
Bilingual	453	159	519	18

Standard 128: Report on providing training in Welsh

It was ensured that staff had the opportunity to attend training through the medium of Welsh in the various fields noted in Standard 128 during the year. The following contains details of the number of staff who attended welcome workshops and received language awareness training.

73 individuals attended the welcome workshop in the period 01.04.23 - 31.03.24.
6 events held.

Each one through the medium of Welsh and in-person.

Number of language awareness sessions during the year - **0**

Number of staff who have completed the Language Awareness e-module - Council and department level
- **522**

Training provided by the Council for the Byw'n Iach Service:

Number of individual events provided between 01.04.23 and 31.03.24 - 29

Number of titles provided between 01.04.23 and 31.03.24 - 9

TRAINING EVENTS	NUMBER	UNIQUE ATTENDEES
Welsh	19	22
English	10	16
Bilingual	0	0

Standard 130: Report on the opportunities to learn Welsh.

Numbers of Language Training for staff

The Council supports staff to develop their Welsh language skills and through the language designations project it is possible to identify the staff who need support and funding is available to assist with those costs. The following data represents the number of staff who attended courses per level during the last year.

Refresher	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic	Entry	Taster
30		6	6	22	3

Courses including some internal, community, virtual, self-study, intense and commissions.

CHALLENGES IN MOVING FORWARD

Language Strategy

With a Language Strategy in place, there will be a need to develop the work programme further and implement the plans. Officers from the Language Unit will meet with heads of department to ensure that their plans and priorities contribute to the objectives of the new strategy. There will also be a need to ensure that appropriate monitoring arrangements are in place. We hope to further promote the Language Unit's work by sharing the content of the Language Strategy and the projects further on social media and in the press.

Training

Specific attention was given over the last year to reducing the number of English only and bilingual training courses being offered. It is pleasing to see that the number has dropped and that the majority of the training being provided is provided through the medium of Welsh. Nevertheless, there will be a need for further collaboration with the organisation's Learning and Development Service to identify the courses being offered in English and try to ensure they are available in Welsh.

We will build on language awareness amongst staff and councillors, by promoting the mandatory e-module and resuming live language awareness sessions, ensuring that they are current and up-to-date. A session has already been held for councillors about their role in the community in terms of the Welsh language, recognising there are different messages to be shared with those who are non-Welsh speakers.

Raise awareness of the requirements of the Standards

We will continue to raise the awareness of Council staff and residents of the Welsh Language Standards and the Cyngor Gwynedd Welsh Language Policy. In addition to continuing to share features of the policy with staff in 'Y Gair Wythnosol', we will ensure that the documents are easy to access on the council's website and the staff intranet.

We will also take further advantage of the social pages of the Language Unit in order to convey the messages. By receiving annual departmental self-assessments to report on compliance with the standards, we will be able to act on the challenges to raise staff awareness of the requirements, as needed. Following a discussion with the departments regarding the lack of awareness of the Welsh Language Standards among the managers of some services, we will hold brief training to remind them of the main matters. This is continuous work as staff turnover is a challenge.

Staff with no Welsh language skills

An increase was seen in the number of staff without Welsh language skills during the last year. Consequently we will investigate the reasons behind this and consider how we can ensure that the percentage of staff without Welsh language skills falls in the next year.

Measuring the public's use of Welsh language services

We will look at ways of trialling how to measure the number of residents who choose to use Council services through the medium of Welsh in locations such as Siop Gwynedd receptions, libraries, leisure centres and on-line. It is also hoped to have an opportunity to look at the results of research undertaken, led by Bangor University, with the Council's support, which looks at people's attitudes towards using Welsh medium services. We hope that this will improve our understanding of how we can influence decisions and encourage more people to use the Welsh medium services (especially the digital/on-line ones) that are provided by the Council.

Progress Report

Place-names Project Cyngor Gwynedd

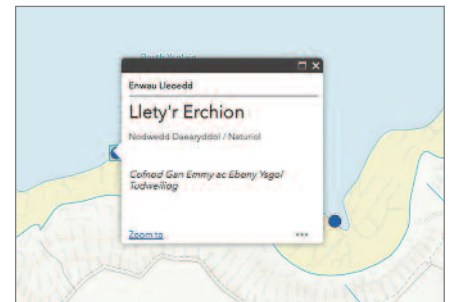
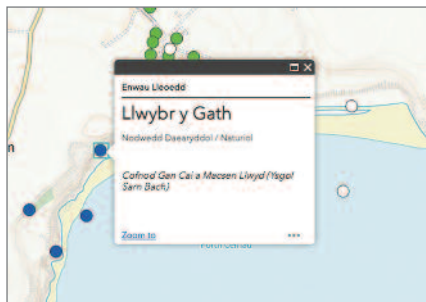
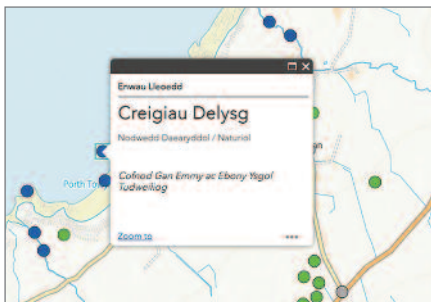
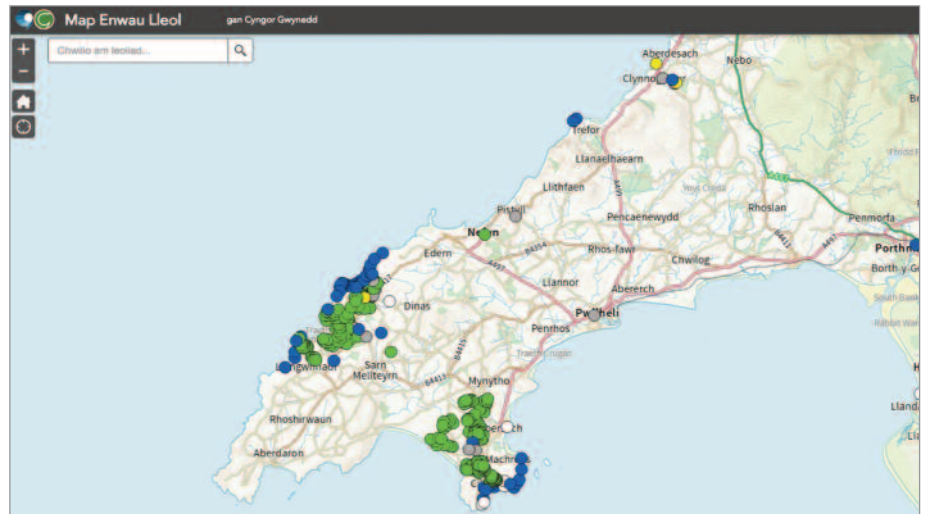


Place-name Project

The project was established by Cyngor Gwynedd due to growing concerns over many years that, for various reasons, native Welsh names were being lost. In 2021 a Place-names Project Officer was appointed to work on the project which since then has achieved a lot:

Local Place-names Map

Cyngor Gwynedd's **Place Names Map** is an online map that identifies local names for places within the county. Those names that are alive orally but have never been included on official maps - the names of fields, lanes, buildings, areas, rivers and so on.



The map continues to be populated with a host of interesting names as a result of workshops in **15 primary schools** and **one secondary school**. A number of individuals who have sound knowledge of their local areas have also been uploading names to the Map which so far contains over **670** local names.

An '**Imaginary Island Map**' education resource has been created especially for school classes in order to generate interest in maps and place-names within an area close to the school. A specific poem has also been composed to accompany the session.

Asked 'What was the highlight of the term?' the pupils of Yr 7, Ysgol Tryfan, Bangor replied unanimously "Mei Mac's session on maps!"

Inspired by the map, and following conversations with Waterford City and County Council, Ireland there is now also a similar map in the Irish language.

Newid

Does neb yn cofio'r marchog
 Fu'n crwydro'r caeau hyn,
 Yn arwain gwŷr i ryfel
 Ar gefn ei geffyl gwyn.
 Fe aeth holl stori'r brwydro blin
 Pan aeth 'Bryn Cledd' yn 'Hazeldean'

A beth am y ddau gariad
 A foddodd yn y llyn
 Y bore wedi'r briodas
 Ar goll mewn eira gwyn?
 Diflannodd hanes eu mis mêl
 Pan aeth 'Llwyn Serch' yn 'Willow Dale'.

A chwedl Dafydd Esgryn,
 Y 'sgotwr dau gant oed
 A ddaliodd gyda'i ddwylo
 Yr eog mwya' rioed.
 Does neb yn dweud ei hanes o
 Ers troi 'Pwll Du' yn 'Tally Ho!'.

Nid dim ond enwau a gollwyd
 Ar hyd yr ardal hon
 Ond calon bro, ei harddwch,
 Ei llais, ei henaid bron;
 Os dewch i fyw i'n canol ni
 Newidiwch ddim ar ddim da chi.

Meirion MacIntyre Huws
 2022

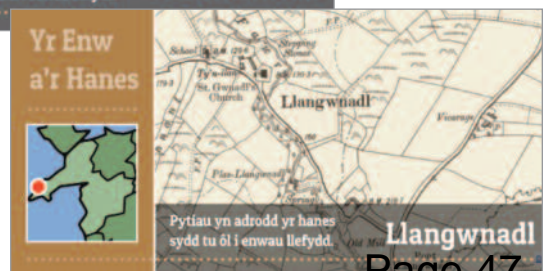
Promotion and awareness

In order to raise awareness of the importance of place names and the historical, linguistic and cultural wealth they contain, the project has:

held occasional talks on Radio Cymru about place names etymology and their importance.

been posting interesting material about place names on social media

published 'The Name and the History' articles on the Council's intranet discussing the history of a place name within the County. This is the page that gets the most hits of all the Menwrwyd pages.



Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Boduan 2023

At the Cyngor Gwynedd stand on Maes Prifwyl Boduan, 202 the Place Names Project Officer was:

- a member of a national discussion panel (organized by the Place Names Project) in the company of Jeremy Miles MP, (Welsh Language Minister) and Dr Dylan Foster Evans (Cymdeithas Lleoedd Cymru). Chairing was the broadcaster Bedwyr Rees.
- talking about place names and local accents on an evening program on BBC Radio Cymru
- chairing a conversation in the Lân Tent on local names for the Festival. Picks from the conversation were broadcast on S4C.

Arwyddion

For various reasons, which have been reported elsewhere, the original intention by the Council's Leadership Team to try to have only Welsh street signs throughout the county changed direction. An 'alternative intention' was adopted which includes a number of plans:

Installation of local name signs in Twthill (Caernarfon), Lôn Rocar (Llandygai) Maes-y-Groes (Bethesda) and Lôn Groes (Pistyll).

Following meetings with Cymdeithas Ddinesig Caernarfon it is intended to erect signs indicating the old Welsh names on some of the streets of the old walled town.

Initial talks are underway with the Trefor village councillor to have Welsh only signs placed on the streets there, as a number of signs are missing.

With the co-operation of the Trefor village councillor, it is intended to install signs when reaching old commotes/townships (e.g., Arllechwedd and Dunoding) on 'A' roads. This is due to the interest in the 'Llŷn' signs which appeared during the Boduan National Eisteddfod, 2023.

As a result of discussions with the Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government, success was achieved with legislation to give villages and towns the right to have monolingual Welsh 'Croeso' signs for the first time ever. A letter informing town councils in Gwynedd of this development will be sent to council clerks in due course.

A Gwynedd Names 'App' has been created, in collaboration with the Council's IT department. The app will be installed on the Council's Intranet for staff to turn to to check the spelling of place names.

This will help when using the names that will be adopted by the Council in all internal and external correspondence.

Research work is currently being carried out to install signs on bridges and rivers where new English names have started to gain ground on maps and travel manuals.

Collaboration with external bodies/organisations

The Project Officer continues to meet as a member of the Welsh Place Names Forum, with representatives from the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Welsh Government, Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri and some officers from other county councils.

Monthly talks are held with Mapio Cymru with the hope of having digital Welsh maps as a base layers for Cyngor Gwynedd maps.

Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri is also working on protecting place names within the land environment and geographical features so there is collaboration with them to share ideas and avoid duplication of activities.

Work with internal departments

On a weekly basis the project advises Building Control on matters relating to the naming of properties/streets/schools/estates.

A property naming 'good practice' booklet was published explaining who is responsible for what on matters of changing properties/streets etc. Leaflets were also published encouraging the use of Welsh names on properties to be sent out when the Council receives a request to change a name.

Another part of the project is to respond to requests from different departments for names and/or the correct spelling of places in Gwynedd. Up to April 2024 the Officer has consulted on approximately 80 house names and advised on the validity of an address, street name, postcode, and other matters relating to numerous addresses and property names.

Responses to complaints of various nature from the public who are concerned about misuse of Welsh names and/or names being replaced by English ones are also part of the Project Officer's work.



On the horizon

A Bwrlwm Arfor podcast discussing the significance of place names and their connection to dialects as part of Welsh identity.

Article for Llŷn AONB/AHNE magazine 'O Dan y Don' - place names and their connection with the sea.

