

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	1 May 2019
TITLE:	Praise and Complaints Report
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Mair Williams Welsh Language Development Officer
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Present the latest information about complaints and instances of good practice to the members.

Successes in promoting the Welsh language and securing Welsh language services for residents:

There are two particular cases in the last few months where staff members have gone above and beyond to ensure the language is promoted and that users can access quality Welsh language services.

1. **IOSH training materials** – the Health, Safety and Welfare Service was recognised in the Council awards recently for their work in securing that staff can follow IOSH training completely through the medium of Welsh. Council staff members had been leading training sessions in this field for some time, but having to use English only materials as they were not provided bilingually by the chartered body. The matter had been referred to the Welsh language Commissioner to get their support and influence, but in the end it came down to the perseverance of the team members, who raised awareness of the requirements of the language Standards, and the need and demand from council staff for Welsh language materials that manages to change the situation.
2. **New online forms for Blue Badge application from direct.gov** – the manager of Siop Gwynedd and Galw Gwynedd and her team have recently been working hard to try and ensure the new online forms are not only available in Welsh but of a decent standard. The Council have refused to transfer to the new online system until the quality of the translations provided are up to standard. The team noticed numerous mistakes and errors while proofing the system, and have been working to correct the matter, contacting the team in direct.gov as well as Welsh Government. The translating unit and the Website team of the Council were also included in this work to ensure quality and consistency. To date, not all of the changes requested have been made, and so discussions are ongoing and the new system is not being used.

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE LANGUAGE STANDARDS

3 complaints and enquiries were received by the Council since January 2019, with a decision not to proceed with an investigation in all three cases.

1. **Standard email sent in English only in a response to an email from GwE.**

The investigation was terminated after the Commissioner received correspondence from GwE, confirming that steps had been taken to rectify the matter, and also from the legal team of the Council stating that the standards set on the Council were not relevant in this matter because of the status of GwE as a Joint Committee, and that the Commissioner should as a result be setting separate, specific standards for them if they were expected to comply.

2. **English only receipt sent by the Welsh Penalty Processing Partnership.**

This had happened due to a technical error after the administrator had made updates to the payment system. The matter had already been brought to the attention of the Council and resolved by the time the complaint was received by the Commissioner, and they agreed not to investigate further as they were happy with the steps taken.

3. **Able2 – Blue Badge assessments**

We received an enquiry from the Commissioner about this service that conducts the assessments and processes the applications for blue badges on behalf of the Council. The Council confirmed that this was a service run under contract by the Welsh Government, and that officer had received several complaints, and had already contacted Welsh Government on more than one occasion to voice concerns about the Welsh language service. The Commissioner accepted this response and that the lack of Welsh service was not the responsibility of the Council. They then referred the complaint itself, as well as the concerns of Gwynedd Council, to Welsh Government.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DIRECTLY REGARDING SERVICES OR THE COUNCIL LANGUAGE POLICY

Department	Number of Complaints	Nature of the complaint
Finance	2	<p>Answering machines</p> <p>1 message in English only on an answering machine for the unit that deals with bass puss applications.</p> <p>1 message in Welsh only on an answering machine for the unit that deals with council tax.</p> <p>Both matters resolved.</p>
Corporate Support	1	<p>Enquiry received by a member of staff from GwE about the need for bilingual communication after an internal message to staff was sent in the standard manner for all internal communication– with the message itself un Welsh and a translation provided in the attachment of the email.</p> <p>It was confirmed by the language unit that this message complied with the Language Policy, and that no action was needed.</p>