

Meeting	Language Committee
Date	
Title	Report of the Children and Supporting Families Department on the implementation of the Language Policy and activities to promote the Welsh Language
Purpose	To submit information about the Department's contribution to the Language Policy and how we attempt to promote the Welsh Language in our work.
Author	Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Supporting Families

## Introduction.

1.1 This report is submitted to provide information about the contribution of the Children and Supporting Families Service to the Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd.

1.2 In 2016, the 'Follow-on Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care (More than just Words)' was launched. The Framework sets expectations on local councils and health boards to provide Welsh medium services and to make an "Active Offer" to all Welsh speakers. Being able to provide the "Active Offer" means that no one in Wales should have to make a request for a Welsh language service as the service should be available to them in Welsh without them having to ask.

1.3 The framework supports the Council's Language Policy and the Council has committed to 'More Than Just Words' from the outset when it was published in 2012, and we have welcomed the principles of the Follow-on Strategic Framework published in 2016. The clear advantage of the framework is that it ensures consistency nationally and across organisations.

1.4 The following is the Service's response to members' questions:

<b><i>A matter that the members wish to discuss:</i></b>	Boosting and promoting
<b><i>1. Can you highlight any projects within your department that contribute to one of the Council's language strategy priorities, namely the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd?</i></b>	
<p><b><i>1. Language of the Family</i></b></p> <p><b>The language of the childcare sector</b> - The Early Years Service has collaborated with Hunaniaith to hold a language awareness workshop for the county's childcare providers. The service is also working with the members of CWLWM (5 lead childcare organisations in Wales) to promote and boost the Welsh language in the early years.</p> <p>During 2020-21 we promoted the CAMAU scheme, and we continue to do so.  <a href="https://dysqycymraeg.cymru/cymraeg-gwaith/camau/">https://dysqycymraeg.cymru/cymraeg-gwaith/camau/</a> to encourage the childcare sector to use and improve their Welsh language skills. CAMAU will be live from June onwards for practitioners in the sector. We are also collaborating with a Welsh Language Coordinator, newly appointed by the PACEY child care organisation, to present more resources, help and support to childminders through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short You Tube Videos</li> <li>- Welsh Culture Information Pack</li> <li>- Outdoor Activities Pack</li> <li>- Transport Activities Pack (members only)</li> </ul>	

- *EY Smart- On-line Training Platform*
- *Pirate Puw's Quest - Bilingual Book*
- *Welsh Language Activity Ideas*
- *Monthly Welsh Language Help Webinar*
- *'Hwyl gyda'r Gymraeg' Webinar*

We are also collaborating with NDNA (National Day Nurseries Association) Cymru's Welsh Language Project Coordinator which supports members via 1:1 site visits.

'Cynllun Croesi'r Bont' (Welsh language immersion project) by Mudiad Meithrin, commenced back in September 2019. Its main purpose is for the Immersion of the Welsh language in the cylchoedd Meithrin and increase language transition with Nursery Classes in Welsh Schools. This year, 11 'cyllchoedd' in the county receive support from the scheme.

The Early Years Service also offers grants of £100 to private childminders towards buying Welsh language resources.

**Parents' support** - The Early Years Service has collaborated with Mudiad Meithrin to conduct on-line 'clwb cwts' sessions for parents the months of January-March. 35 individuals joined during this period.

The Early Years Service jointly with the Libraries Service have created 1,200 'Gwirioni ar Stori' packs to be shared with children under 3 in the county.

The Family Support Team, Edge of Care Team and the Youth Service have all received training to provide 'Friends' parenting courses locally for different groups of children, young people and parents. We are proud that our involvement with this programme jointly with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has led to the translation of resources into Welsh and these will be available this year.

**Support for vulnerable children / young people** - The Social Work Teams consider the language requirements of every child who receive care and support from us. Language is a factor in determining matters such as the contents of the care pack and the support needed by the family /child; care setting, fostering and/or adoption of any child. Of course, some of the children who come into our care have done so due to the serious risks they face and / or because of the complexities and the intensity of their care needs. At the time, out-of-county placements may be the only option for the child, however, when this happens the Social Worker will continue to address the child's language needs via Welsh medium visits and by ensuring resources (books etc.) for them in their placement. In addition, the Education Department is collaborating with the Department to ensure that children and young people placed in units far from their locality receive consistency in language promotion by providing educational elements via the 'Tute' programme. Every attempt is made to find Welsh speaking tutors for each child in this situation, but more often than not, this is very challenging.

## **2. The Language of Learning.**

**Nursery Education** - The Early Years Service is responsible for leading on ensuring the provision of nursery education (10 hours a week for 3 year olds). All the education provision is through the medium of Welsh and immerses small children in the Welsh language from their first introduction to education. Gwynedd currently have 60 Nursery Education providers.

**Youth Workers in Schools** - The Network of Youth Service Support Workers within the Youth Service provide informal learning opportunities and accreditations for young people through the medium of Welsh. The workers provide learning opportunities and the ability to gain accreditations via secondary and special schools, with a transition to social activities in the community.

**Duke of Edinburgh Award in Gwynedd** - One of the Youth Service's main accreditation programmes is the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Youth Service provides and administers the licence for Gwynedd secondary schools. We have ensured that all elements of the award here in Gwynedd are available through the medium of Welsh, through direct provision by ourselves and by commissioning the Urdd to lead on some elements. We have also been working with the Award nationally to introduce Welsh medium systems in order that the young person and the administrators can do this through the medium of Welsh. This year the Welsh language Duke of Edinburgh Award App has been introduced and is available - excellent!

### **3. The Language of Work and Services.**

**Welsh Language Workforce** - 91% of the Department's workforce have achieved the language designation of their post. We also continue to encourage learning the language with those members of the workforce who want to venture, and it is pleasing to see the journey and development of Stephen Wood, Youth Justice Service Manager, to learn Welsh with the support of a 1:1 tutor; it is also pleasing to see a new officer to the Council taking advantage of the self-study course soon after her appointment as a Social Worker, namely Zoe Pope. The service Management Team is committed to support staff who want to learn or refresh their language skills to attend the variety of opportunities available to do this.

**Welsh Language Services** - we take pride in the fact that we are able to report that all our services can provide through the medium of Welsh.

### **4. The Language of the Community**

**Youth Service** - The service also works closely with Hunaniaith on activities and opportunities for young people to socialise and use the Welsh language e.g.,

- Quizzes - 'Cwis Mawr Cymru'
- Band / Welsh language music evenings
- Evening to promote Successes with the group Bwncath providing the entertainment

The Youth Service is also working jointly with Menter iaith Bangor to provide Welsh language medium social opportunities for young people. The 'Bangoriaid' project brings young people together as 'Bangoriaid y Byd'. The young people of Bangor, Northern Ireland and our Bangor are already discussing bilingualism, culture and identity.

All the social provision of the Youth Service is available through the medium of Welsh and the activities vary from gardening schemes, climbing clubs, graffiti and art workshops, cookery sessions within communities throughout the county.

**Activities and Play** - The Department is leading on the establishment of an Activities and Play Framework for children, young people and families across the Council's departments. The Framework will ensure a Welsh-medium provision. The Framework will be used to commission

fun, creative, games and play activities for children and young people by bringing together the resources of the play grant, Hwyl yr Haf Grant and the Children and Communities Grant and Flying Start.

Throughout the school holidays in 2020-21, the Department commissioned Welsh-medium fun activities and play throughout the county. Partners such as Cwmni'r Frân Wen, Wild Elements, Yr Urdd, Byw'n Iach, Syrcas Syrcas and Dawns i Bawb provided a varied range of activities throughout the county for children under 5 and their families, primary age children and young people aged 11-13 years.

**A matter that the members wish to discuss:**

Externalisation of work and awarding third party contracts

**2. If the department awards work externally on contract, can you refer to any good practice, either when imposing conditions or when monitoring in order to ensure compliance with the linguistic conditions?**

The Department includes language requirements on all / the majority of our 3rd party contract and each contract is regularly monitored on behalf of the provider, between the Service Manager and the Manager. Some contracts dealing specifically with out-of-county placements to address profound care needs are driven by the very limited provision available across Britain. We have already referred to Welsh-medium education matters that derive from the need to place a child or young person in an out-of-county placement that meets with their care needs. At these times, a decision has to be made on a suitable placement based on care needs and safeguarding as the main priority.

Our external contracts are very varied e.g. specialist care placement provision for a child, to offer support to young carers, to provide parenting services and early intervention on our behalf. We also collaborate with local providers to build specialisms in work to support children and families in order to ensure a Welsh medium provision e.g. counselling, and family mediation locally.

**A matter that the members wish to discuss:**

Operating bilingually

**3. Are there any obstructions that prevent you as a department to offer a full service in Welsh?**

**Recruitment** - Problems with the recruitment of qualified social workers is a cause of concern for the Department. There is a risk that the department will have to recruit social workers who are non-Welsh speakers and/or use non-Welsh speaking social workers via an agency to ensure service provision, however, this may be necessary in terms of our care and safeguarding statutory duties, but contrary to our language standards. The staffing problems that have already started to emerge have been escalated appropriately within the Council's structure.

**Meetings** – Welsh-medium collaboration with partners can be challenging at times. This includes national, regional and local meetings. The translation provision on Zoom is easy and effortless for those who require it; however, there are barriers as the police are not currently willing to use Zoom as a platform for meetings and the Health Board has not been able to use this until very recently. However, from the start of the recent period of working under the COVID-19 restrictions we have demanded that all our multi-agency meetings are bilingual, with excellent support from the Council's Translation Unit. We are aware that North Wales Police have by now started to experiment with Zoom and this is welcome news and maximises the opportunities to hold meetings through the medium of Welsh.

**Provision / Placements beyond Gwynedd and Wales** - We have already referred to the limitations we have when securing an intensive needs out-of-county placement for a Gwynedd child. Similarly, we are also concerned about the language needs of young offenders who receive a custodial sentence. We complete a Young Person's Needs Assessment on sentencing, highlighting the young person's language needs. The assessment is submitted to the location of the sentence. As a Justice Service / Department we do not have any control over the sentence location designation, and a young person may go to any location throughout the UK that weakens the young person's contact with his family, language, culture. We have included this matter on our Departmental Risk Register as we believe that young people from Gwynedd are placed under a disadvantage in terms of their choice and use of their first language in prison.

***A matter that the members wish to discuss:***

Developing new opportunities

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

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

The Department continues to promote and support the use of Welsh in each one of our services. Providing services to the communities of Gwynedd through the medium of Welsh is a priority.

We will continue to ensure that all our dealings with our partners are totally bilingual and promote the importance of using the language and language choice for the County's residents and by doing so influence practice in organisations outside the Council.

We will continue to encourage any member of staff in the service to attend courses to learn or refresh the language for the benefit of Gwynedd residents and we already adopt the practice of ensuring that staff who are learners use Welsh in meetings, either to introduce themselves or when introducing an item in order to build their confidence in a safe environment. We know that this pays dividends and the language develops through confidence and the support of colleagues.