

Meeting	Language Committee
Date	20 June 2022
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.
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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 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.

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

<i>A matter that the members wish to discuss:</i>	Boosting and promoting
<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>	
<i>1. <u>Language of the Family</u></i>	
<p>The language of the child care sector - The Early Years Service collaborates with members of CWLWM (5 lead child care organisations in Wales) to promote and boost the Welsh language across care locations in Gwynedd, which are private nurseries, crèches, nursery groups, private childminders, after school clubs and so forth.</p> <p>There is a variety of resources, help and support available for promoting and using the Welsh language on the websites of lead bodies (Pacey, NDNA, Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin and Cymru Kids' Clubs) and we promote and share these with local care settings and providers.</p> <p>Welsh Language Support Coordinators work for the 5 establishments which fall under the CWLWM umbrella, and every organisation works on different projects and offer support in order to promote the Welsh language and expand the number of Welsh language settings in Gwynedd.</p> <p>The work to promote the CAMAU plan https://dysgucymraeq.cymru/cymraeq-gwaith/camau/ to encourage the child care sector to use and improve their Welsh language skills continues.</p>	

Mudiad Meithrin have started a "Baby Steps into Welsh" podcast this year lead by Nia Parry, and we have supported the Mudiad by promoting it in Gwynedd.

The "Cynllun Croesi'r Bont" from Mudiad Meithrin continues, and the main purpose is the immersion of the Welsh language within the nursery groups and to increase language transition with Nursery classes in Welsh Schools. This year there are 11 groups in the county who receive support from the scheme.

The Early Years Service also offers grants of £100 to new private childminders who are non-Welsh speakers for buying Welsh language resources for the provision.

Bangor Language Initiative have held a workshop for parents and guardians with children under 3 years old to play traditional and creative games in Welsh. Ideas and advice are available on using simple Welsh in the games to practice and play in Welsh with your children.

Parents' support - The Early Years Service has collaborated with Mudiad Meithrin to conduct on-line 'clwb cwtsh' sessions.

The Family Support Team, Threshold Team and the Youth Service have all received training to provide 'Friends' parenting courses through the medium of Welsh, 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. This year, we have seen some teams move to using the Welsh resources of the FRIENDS programme in our groups.

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.

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 55 Nursery Education providers, who receive Early Years Teacher support from us.

Flying Start Child Care - The department is responsible for leading and ensuring provision of Flying Start Child Care (12.5 hours per week for 2-year-old children) for specific disadvantaged areas in Gwynedd. All the education provisions offer their service through the medium of Welsh and immerse small children in the Welsh language from their first introduction to education at 2 years old. There are 12 Flying Start Child Care settings in Gwynedd

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. It is the Youth Service that 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. The Welsh language Duke of Edinburgh Award App has been introduced and is available for young people.

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 to those workforces who want to venture. We are very proud this year that Stephen Wood (the Youth Justice Service manager) has won the Learning and Using the Welsh Language Award in Dafydd Orwig's Memorial Awards for his success with the Welsh Language. Stephen said the following about his success

*'I was delighted to be nominated for the **Dafydd Orwig Award**, and winning it was a lovely surprise. I couldn't have achieved this without the support of my friends at the Youth Justice and the encouragement of my co-workers in the Children Services Management Team, thank you to everyone that helped.'*

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.

Specialist Training and Developing Social Work Practice The "Effective Child Protection" Programme is a project in the child protection field. It has developed a database of written, video and PowerPoint presentation resources that have been voiced-over for professional use. These resources have been developed in Welsh and English for regional and national use.

4. The Language of the Community

Youth Service - 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.

During the year our 16-25 Years Old Youth Support Project succeeded to translate the 'FRIENDS' programme to Welsh to use it with local young people. The aim of this programme is to increase social and emotional skills, promote resilience, and prevent lifetime anxiety and depression, which is an integral part of the team's work. Young people have noted that participating in the programme through the medium of Welsh, their first language, has been positive for them in terms of their ability to take part and as a result of this in their personal development.

Activities and Play - The Department has led on establishing an Activities and Play Framework for children, young people and families across the Council's departments. To date, 24 activity providers have been approved on the framework and can provide play opportunities through the medium of Welsh. The Framework will be used to commission fun, creative, games and play activities for children and young people. Throughout the school holidays in 2020-21, and during the winter months the Department commissioned fun activities and play through the medium of Welsh throughout the county. Partners such as the William Mathias Music Centre, Sbarduno, Byw'n Iach, Dawns i Bawb, Leisa Mererid, Elfennau Gwylt, Urdd and Cimera provided a varied range of activities throughout the county for children under 5 and their families, primary age children and young people 11-25 old.

5. Research and Technology

Recently, a Gwynedd Well-being Week was held, where over 50 local organisations came together to offer well-being activities for young people. The Service trialled new IT technology which was a 'Haia' platform as an innovative way of offering the service. 'Haia' is a hybrid events platform (combination of on-line and face to face activities) The Well-being Week and the Haia platform enabled us to offer the provision through the medium of Welsh. Using this platform helped us expand the activities, and reach young people, through the medium of Welsh.

The Department has been working with the Council's Well-being Team to develop an app for supporting young carers. the Ai Di App was launched in March and it's a convenient way for young carers to keep in touch with their school, and to use it in the community to receive discounts on activities and services.

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 contracts 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 education matters through the medium of Welsh 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. In order to reduce the likelihood of having to recruit social workers who are non-Welsh speakers and/or use non-Welsh speaking social workers via an agency to ensure service provision, the department has proceeded to develop a Workforce Plan. Various recruitment campaigns have been held from the department through 'Gofalwn Cymru', and we have emphasised the importance of being able to speak Welsh to our service users, and the ability to live in natural Welsh communities as part of this recruitment pack.

Meetings - Collaboration through the medium of Welsh with partners can be challenging at times. This includes national, regional and local meetings with partners. A number of our partners do not offer translation / Welsh provision in virtual meetings. We have also not been able to hold some meetings bilingually as cyber safety could not be guaranteed to protect the discussions held / translated through a platform such as Zoom. We hold most of our multi-agency meetings bilingually, with the excellent support of the Council's Translation Unit.

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. In the same manner, we are also concerned about the language needs of young offenders who receive a custodial 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?

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.