

1. Welsh Language Training Report 2021-22

Introduction

Over the last two years, as a result of the shift from classroom-based learning to online distance learning, we have seen an increase in the number of individuals taking advantage of opportunities to learn or develop their Welsh. In general, the main reasons for this was:

- **no need to travel** - as a result, staff were able to spend more time in the workplace
- **availability of online resources**
- **flexibility in the arrangements**, in terms of type of courses and time
- **no geographical restrictions**, i.e. able to gain access to any course from anywhere

Here is an overview of the provision offered to staff to learn or develop their Welsh language skills during 2021-2022:

- Community-based courses over an academic year (online weekly lessons)
- 1:1 individual sessions with external tutors
- Intensive courses (a week or more)
- Online self-study courses, e.g. *Entry level Self-study*, *Work Welsh Induction* and *Improving Work Welsh*
- Work Welsh courses (online)
- Specially-commissioned courses on various levels
- Internal Welsh Friends scheme

The new online Language Improvement course was piloted, to replace the traditional Language Improvement course in the classroom. After a successful pilot we hope to offer this course from September 2022 onwards. In the long term, we hope to expand the choice by offering training such as *Mutations* and *Using Welsh Technology*.

Some of the year's highlights

The success of a learner from the Adults, Health and Well-being department and Byw'n Iach

An individual who works for the Adults, Health and Well-being department and also for the Byw'n Iach company has been attending commission lessons at an Intermediate level since May 2020. Previously it was difficult to find lessons available in a convenient location or at a suitable time of day for her to attend. Since the start of lessons in 2020 her confidence to use the language has grown tremendously, and she has been praised by her managers and several members of the public for her willingness to use Welsh at work. Some have pointed out that they are learning more Welsh because of her. The individual was nominated for the 2022 Caring in Welsh Award (Social Care Wales) and was shortlisted. Her commitment and attitude to learning Welsh is to be praised highly.

Commissioned courses

Following the successes of the 2020-21 commission courses, several special courses for our staff were also commissioned during 2021-22. Due to the diverse needs of our workforce, these courses allow for greater flexibility while also offering staff the opportunity to get to know each other better. Here are some examples of the courses organised:

Level	Course details	Number of participants	Additional information
Entry	Weekly, three-hour lessons over 15 weeks	6	This course was organised specifically for community care staff. We realized that many of these members of staff work shifts and cannot commit to a community or intensive course. As a result, a short 15 week course was commissioned to introduce the Welsh language, at a time and date to which attendees could commit. The course had to come to an end after December due to the increased workload that staff were facing because of Covid-19 and other reasons beyond our control. However, 3 of the attendees are now following a community course.
Intermediate Part 2	Weekly, three-hour lessons over 15 weeks	8	Due to the success of last year's Intermediate course for Byw'n Iach, Adults, Health and Well-being and Economy and Community staff a follow up course was arranged between March and June 2021, with a further course arranged from September 2021 to June 2022. At the end of the course, learners will complete the Intermediate level and will be offered the opportunity to sit an exam and/or continue to study an Advanced level course in September. We will also offer them central support through the Welsh Friends Scheme.
Language Improvement	Two five-hour sessions over two consecutive days	8	As well as organising courses for learners, we believe that maintaining the standard of our fluent Welsh speakers is as important. Following the success of a previous Language Improvement course organized through Working Welsh, a specific Language Improvement course was organized for staff from the Council's Housing and Property department. Once again, it was great to see that staff were willing to commit time to maintaining and developing their Welsh language skills.
Confidence Building (Work Welsh)	Two hours a week for 14 weeks (+ 2 revision session)	7	After several individuals expressed an interest in a course to increase their confidence in using Welsh in the workplace, this course was organised in conjunction with Working Welsh and Canolfan Bedwyr. The individuals attended weekly lessons between September and December 2021 before going on to take the Language Skills Certificate examination in May 2022. It was nice to be able to offer the individuals a qualification at the end of the course and we hope to be able to run the course again in September 2022.

Work Welsh 'Use' Courses

These courses, held online by Nant Gwrtheyrn, have proved very popular with Council staff this year. They are 5-day intensive courses and are available from Intermediate to Proficiency level. 18 members of staff attended these courses between June 2021 and March 2022, with more continuing to show interest. It was encouraging to see that staff and managers are willing to prioritize language training, and that they clearly see the value of giving their time to develop these skills, for their own benefit but also for their services. It is clear that being able to attend a course like this online is much easier for staff, although some stated that they would have liked to have been able to attend a face-to-face class.

Friends Scheme

Our Friends Scheme was launched in 2019 in order to support learners to use their new Welsh language skills in the workplace and continue to hone their ability in the language outside the classroom, in the company of fluent speakers across the organisation. The Scheme was also welcomed by a number of fluent speakers at the Council, as it provided an opportunity for them to support learners on their learning journey and offer support and lend an ear in an informal atmosphere.

It was not possible for some couples to continue meeting due to the pandemic and an increasing workload, but it is great to see that some have now resumed their meetings. By the end of March 2022 6 individuals were receiving support from 5 'Friends'. The opportunity to have informal conversations with other Council staff is proving invaluable to learners, with many appreciating the opportunity to practice and ask questions. We hope that these sessions will support their formal lessons and help them gain confidence. Here are some comments from a few of our 'Friends' about the progress of some individuals:

"Her confidence to speak Welsh has improved tremendously - and we are discussing very diverse topics - everything from Japanese food to fairies!"

"She is now writing emails in Welsh and getting better."

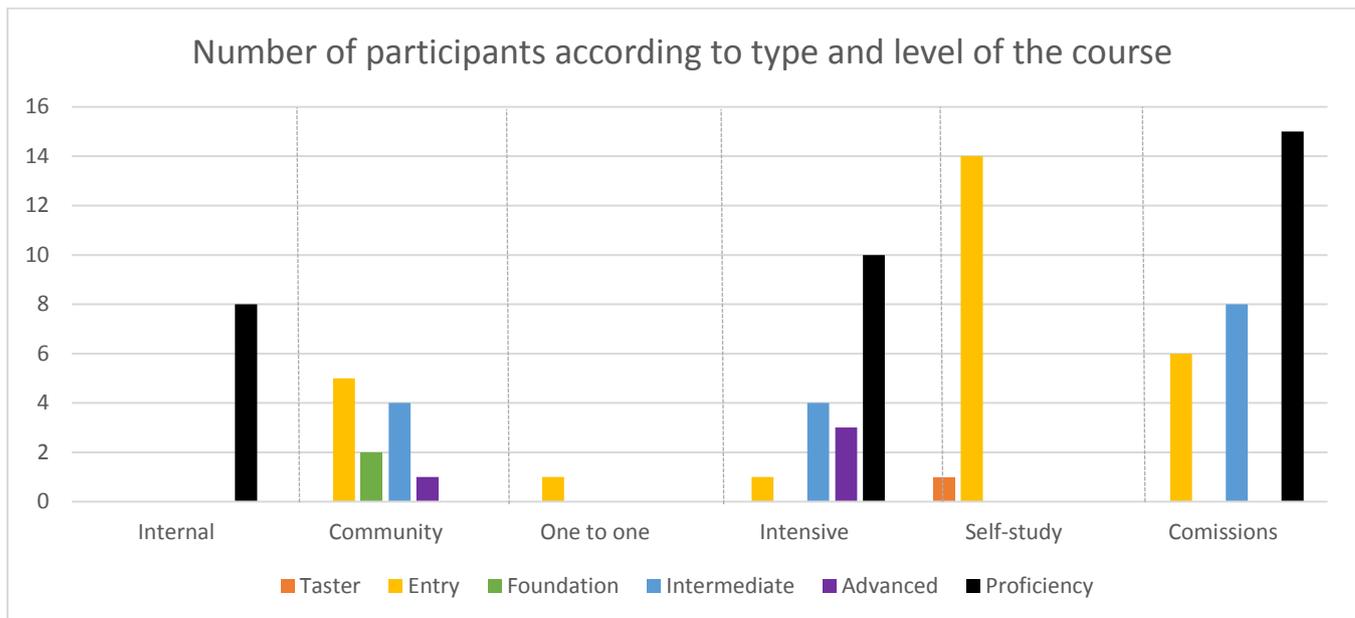
We will continue with the current arrangements and look for more Friends to support learners during the next year, whether online or face to face.

The tables below provide more information about the language training held during the year 2021-22.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO TYPE/TITLE OF COURSES

Course	Number of Individuals
In-house	
Language Improvement	8
External	
Community Welsh Learning Courses	12
1:1 with an external tutor	1
Intensive courses	18
Online self-study courses (Work Welsh)	15
Various commissions	29
	83

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO TYPE AND LEVEL OF THE COURSE



These learners are divided across the Council's departments as follows:

