

Meeting	Language Committee
Date	27 June 2023
Title	Report of the Children and Supporting Families Department on the implementation of the Language Policy and Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd.
Purpose	To present 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 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.

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

Question 1	Boosting and promoting
<i>How does your department go beyond providing bilingual services and contribute to the Council's language strategy priorities?</i>	
<p>1. <i>Language of the Family</i></p> <p>The Welsh language in the childcare sector - The Early Years Service collaborates with members of CWLWM (5 lead childcare organisations in Wales) to promote and boost the Welsh language across childcare 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://dysgucymraeg.cymru/cymraeg-gwaith/camau/ to encourage the childcare sector to use and improve their Welsh language skills continues.</p>	

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.

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.

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

The Family Support Team, Trobwynt Team and the Youth Service have all received training to provide 'Friends' parenting courses through the medium of Welsh, locally to different groups of children, young people and parents.

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 package, support needed by the family /child; their care setting; and in 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. In such circumstances, 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.

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. The Youth Service provides and administers the licence for all 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. This year the Welsh language Duke of Edinburgh Award App has been introduced and is available to our young people- excellent!

3. The Language of Work and Services.

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 an array of written, video and PowerPoint presentation Welsh resources that have been voiced over for professional use. These resources have been developed in Welsh and English for regional and national use.

Foster care - as part of Maethu Cymru's national fostering campaign, a group of foster carers from Gwynedd have created a video for use nationally to attract people to think about fostering. The video is presented through the medium of Welsh with English subtitles and is regularly seen as part of fostering campaigns. It is a great opportunity to underline the use of the language as a day-to-day working language and a way of trying to attract Welsh speakers to the fostering community.

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.

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 2022-23 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 Gwyllt, Urdd and Cimeria 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, the Gwynedd Young People Well-being Week was held, where over 50 local organisations came together to offer well-being activities for young people. All of the face to face, hybrid and virtual activities were available in 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.

Question 2

Policy and Standards Issues

i) Welsh Language Workforce -

69% of the department's staff have completed the language self-assessment. The pockets of employees who have not completed the self-assessment can be seen mainly in the teams where there is a high number of casual staff, and staff without access to a computer.

93.8% of the department's staff meet the language requirements for their job. There are currently 21 members of staff who do not meet the language requirements of their job. We have 3 members of staff attending language training at the moment.

We will continue to encourage the completion of the self-assessment through our managers and identify a support package for those who do not reach their language requirements.

ii) Barriers

Recruitment – Challenges to recruit 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, the department has proceeded to develop a Workforce Plan. Various recruitment campaigns have been held by 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 speaking communities as part of this recruitment drive.

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 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. Although we have not had a single young person receive a custodial sentence for several years now, it is possible for that to change and if it were to happen the Youth Justice Service / Department do not have any control over the sentence location, 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.

iii) Complaints and Compliments.

We are aware of one young person who is in our care, and who is cared for in an unregistered placement due to the lack of suitable registered placement for him, that he is dissatisfied that the staff who look after him are non-Welsh speaking. This is a real concern for the service and an indication of the challenging situation we face when trying to find suitable placements for children in our care that meet all their needs, including their linguistic needs.

Question 3

New opportunities

Do you have ideas about new ways we could be promoting the Welsh language within 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.