



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Proactively Offering a Welsh Language Service

November 2015

Cwm Taf University Health Board offers Welsh-medium care on B2 general ward at Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda. The ward, which provides care mainly for long-term patients in need of rehabilitation, was established in order to proactively offer a Welsh language service.

OFFERING LANGUAGE CHOICE

When patients are admitted to the community hospital, they are asked whether they wish to stay on this ward so that they can receive their care in their language of choice.

The B2 Ward initiative is an extension of the 'Dyma fi' scheme, which was introduced for dementia patients admitted to the hospital. A booklet was provided to the patient or their carer in order to collect information on the individual's needs, choices, likes and dislikes. This information was then shared with professionals in order to allow them to meet those needs, including linguistic needs.

A Welsh language service is now offered proactively to every patient when they are admitted to a general ward at the community hospital.

RECORDING INDIVIDUALS' LANGUAGE CHOICE

Arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a record of individuals' language choice and that all members of staff are aware of it. This is done via the patient record, patient information chart, sign above the bed and/or notice boards on the ward.

PROMOTING THE AVAILABILITY OF WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES

The '[Iaith Gwaith](#)' logo is used effectively on staff uniforms on B2 Ward to show patients and visitors that those members of staff speak Welsh.

Public awareness of the ward's Welsh language service was raised via local and national press coverage. Positive feedback from patients and their families was used to promote the initiative. There has also been coverage after the initiative was shortlisted for the Institute of Welsh Affairs Awards 2014 and after winning the Minister's Special Award in the Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care Awards 2015.

The initiative was promoted internally to staff in news items on the intranet, the Chief Executive's blog and the bulletin board on the intranet and a Welsh language notice board was placed on the ward for staff, patients and the public.

PROVIDING ALL ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE TO INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR CHOSEN LANGUAGE

Workforce planning lies at the heart of the health board's ability to provide healthcare to Welsh speakers in their chosen language on B2 Ward. This is done in an area not considered to be traditionally Welsh-speaking by making the best use of the current workforce's skills and resources.

The Welsh language skills of current staff members were analysed in order to identify those able to speak Welsh, placing them on the ward and providing Welsh language training to staff who wished to learn or improve their existing skills.

An action plan was produced and progress was monitored by the hospital's Senior Nurse and Ward manager. Staff from the health board's Welsh Language Unit meet with the Senior Nurse in charge of the ward on a regular basis in order to maintain the initiative. They also provide Welsh language training for hospital staff wishing to learn or improve their Welsh.

AWARENESS OF PATIENTS' LINGUISTIC NEEDS

Welsh language awareness training sessions are provided to existing staff and new members of staff as part of the rolling programme 'Creating a Culture of Care' and a Welsh language awareness session forms part of the corporate induction programme for new members of staff. Language awareness sessions were held for key members of staff at Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda as part of this initiative.

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE TEAM'S APPROACH

Cwm Taf's Welsh Language Group was established five years ago, a strategic group that met on a regular basis every three months. The members included the Chair of the health board, who was also the Welsh Language Champion, the health board's Secretary who was also the Corporate Director, the Head of Corporate Services, the Director of Workforce and Organisational Development, a number of senior nurses, Welsh Language Unit staff and directorate representatives. The Group has now merged with the Equality Group to form the 'Equality and Welsh Language Forum'. Senior managers facilitate the work of the Forum and relevant information is cascaded to all directorate staff.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE ACROSS THE ORGANISATION

The health board's Welsh Language Unit has held sessions on the success of the initiative on Ward B2 at Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda with other departments. As a result, the health board has introduced similar initiatives at Ysbyty Cwm Cynon and Ysbyty George Thomas (a community hospital for long term Mental Health inpatients).

The health board has adopted a Bilingual Skills Strategy since April 2014 and there is ownership of the strategy at the highest level. The Workforce and Organizational Development/Welsh Sub-Group meets regularly.

The strategy focuses on the following:

- Auditing the Welsh language skills of the current workforce — finding out where Welsh speakers are located
- Assessing the need for Welsh language services analyzing data in order to decide what Welsh Language provision is needed to meet the needs of the local population
- Identifying current skills gaps — within specific departments and teams across the health board
- Bridging the skills gap — developing action plans with team managers; using creative methods of working with current Welsh speaking staff; providing training for staff to learn Welsh; recruiting Welsh speakers

Cardiff University's Development Manager for Welsh Medium Provision arranges annual visits to the ward for a group of medical students as a part of their studies concentrating on the Welsh Government's *More Than Just Words* strategy (Mwy na Geiriau) and the proactive offer. This provides a valuable opportunity for the students to meet with the staff and patients on Ward B2 to discuss the advantages and benefits of providing Welsh medium care.

Contact Details

Name: Kathryn Cobley

Organisation: Cwm Taf University Health Board.

E-mail: Kathryn.Cobley@wales.nhs.uk