



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Strategic planning to implement the Welsh language standards

Setting a clear direction to ensure the organisation develops its Welsh language services

Date: October 2018

In order to prepare to implement the Welsh language standards, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board prepared a strategic plan that focuses on strategic intervention, behavioural change, and performance and monitoring.

BACKGROUND

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has implemented a Welsh language scheme for many years. In 2019, it will become subject to the Welsh language standards.

The Health Board believed that the introduction of the Welsh language standards called for a different approach. It believed that it needed to set out a long-term vision to ensure that its Welsh language services evolved to respond to the increasing demand for them.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Health Board decided to produce a strategic plan which focused specifically on the Welsh language. It outlines the organisation's direction and approach for the next three years (2018-21) and sets out a robust framework which ensures that staff across the entire organisation are aware of it and take ownership of it.

Three clear dimensions were set out in the plan in order to have a firm basis on which to build:

Strategic Intervention

This dimension sets a vision for the Health Board in terms of the Welsh language. It delivers clarity in terms of the intervention needed at a senior leadership level, ensuring the Welsh language is rooted in operational planning.

Behavioural Change

This dimension creates a context that encourages staff to use their language skills. It is essential in encouraging cultural change at all levels to create an environment where Welsh language awareness is paramount.

Performance and Governance

This dimension ensures that the strategic plan remains a live work in progress. By setting actions and monitoring them, it allows for clear reporting and evidence of compliance.

WORK STREAMS

In order to measure performance, work streams were created for each of the three dimensions in the Strategic Plan which respond to the requirements of the Welsh language standards and the objectives of 'More Than Just Words', the Government's strategic framework for health.

Strategic Intervention

- 1 Workforce Planning:** The Bilingual Skills Strategy focuses on bilingual workforce planning and includes actions to identify and record the Welsh language skills of the current workforce; assess the needs of Welsh language services; identify skills gaps within services and teams; and specifically, recruit based on strategic decisions. Every frontline post is now always advertised with Welsh language skills as an essential requirement. These posts include reception, switchboard and call centre staff and clerks on the wards. This is a positive step towards increasing the capacity to be able to offer Welsh language services.
- 2 Service Planning:** In order to plan services, the Health Board ensures that the Welsh language is mainstreamed into all the organisation's policies through a linguistic impact assessment. In addition, after close collaboration between the Welsh Language Team and the contracts department, all contracts, including care homes and nursing homes, include consideration of the Welsh language.
- 3 ICT systems:** Information Technology is imperative to ensure that processes are in place to record patients' language choice and that these systems are used proactively to arrange Welsh language services. In the Health Board's Audiology department, there is a system which records patients' language choice and this information appears on screen every time the patient attends the clinic, or when personal correspondence needs to be sent. This means that the Audiology department can designate a Welsh-speaking professional to the patient.

Behavioural Change

- 4 **Training:** The Health Board has appointed a Welsh Language Tutor to give staff the opportunity to learn Welsh and improve their Welsh language skills. Welsh language training has been included as one of the elements of the Study Leave Policy, and is included as part of Staff's Professional Development.
- 5 **Corporate Identity:** It is essential to create an environment which welcomes and encourages individuals to make use of Welsh language services, by placing 'Cymraeg' posters throughout the Health Board's hospitals and clinics, and creating 'Siaradwch Gymraeg yma' plaques to be placed at reception areas.
- 6 **Communication:** A Communications Plan was produced for the Welsh language. It sets out the actions that the Welsh Language Team takes to encourage staff to take ownership of the Welsh language at an individual and service level.

Performance and Governance

- 7 **Frontline Services:** Frontline services combine several work streams in terms of workforce planning and this stream is the basis for measuring the success of Welsh language provision.
- 8 **Governance processes:** Robust processes support the organisation in terms of learning lessons, identifying general concerns and ensuring that services are quality assured.
- 9 **Good practice:** It is important not to forget to celebrate the good work which happens by sharing and highlighting good practice.

LOCAL LEVEL DELIVERY

The Health Board's Welsh Language Team leads the work from day to day within the remit of the Welsh Language Strategic Forum. In order to ensure that strategic guidance is delivered at a local level, a Project Management Group was established specifically for the Welsh language standards, with senior leads as members.

The group provides a focus to the work and ensures compliance as every service is subject to a matrix and scoring system. Every work stream is monitored and importance is placed on evaluating and measuring the impact of any work, whether internally on the Health Board's staff or on the public's experiences.

Examples of five work streams and the initial evaluation findings are appended to this document.

RESPONSE TO THE SCHEME

Health Board response	it sets out a long-term vision
Staff response	it increases confidence to use the Welsh language and the numbers have increased significantly
Public response	a survey was conducted in the Outpatients Department at Ysbyty Gwynedd, asking several questions on the bilingual environment, face-to-face services and consideration given to linguistic needs:

Question	✓	X
Do you feel that there is a Welsh atmosphere at the hospital? <i>(this referred to posters, signs and whether Welsh could be heard in the department)</i>	100%	0%
Were you greeted bilingually at reception?	92%	8%
Was the correspondence sent to you bilingual?	100%	0%
Do you feel that the Health Board's staff consider your linguistic needs in terms of the Welsh language?	95%	5%
Does receiving (or not receiving) Welsh medium services make a difference to your experience when you're in hospital?	84%	16%
Did you have your consultation (or part of it) through the medium of Welsh?	40%	60%

Further comments were made regarding:

- the importance of providing a bilingual service as part of the care package
- identifying staff who speak Welsh within departments by using 'Iaith Gwaith' badges on their uniform or by wearing lanyards
- improving the skills of the current workforce so that they can have a basic conversation in Welsh

The survey has been extended and is currently being conducted within the Outpatients Departments at Glan Clwyd Hospital and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. The findings will allow the organisation to highlight good practices as well as identify gaps in the services. This will allow the service to target support where it is most needed while moving forward to strengthen its provision of Welsh language services further.

HOW CAN THIS WORK FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

It is possible to transfer several aspects of this good practice to other organisations:

- strategic planning to implement the Welsh language standards;
- leaders taking ownership and setting out a firm direction for the organisation and encouraging ownership by the rest of the workforce;
- setting out specific work streams to deliver the strategy in practice;
- a robust procedure to evaluate and monitor impact.

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THE COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

In my assurance report for 2017-18, 'A Measure of Success', I reported that the Welsh language standards had led to a definite change in the way organisations worked in order to increase the use of the Welsh language. This case study shows the importance of organisations proactively encouraging that change.

The Health Board has done more than just outline its vision and set out a strategic direction at a high level to encourage and develop use of the Welsh language: it has also shown this through action. Through projects and campaigns on the ground it is securing the commitment of its workforce to develop the offer of Welsh language services.

The organisation has given detailed and strategic consideration to the need to increase opportunities for patients to use the Welsh language, and it is essential that it plans to be proactive when raising patients' awareness of those services. Alongside its patient provision, it is also working to increase the confidence of its workforce and encourage internal use of the language amongst its staff.

I welcome the fact that the organisation is improving its understanding of real user experiences and monitoring and measuring the impact of all its projects.

Appendix: examples of work streams from the Welsh language strategic plan, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Welsh Language Training Programme

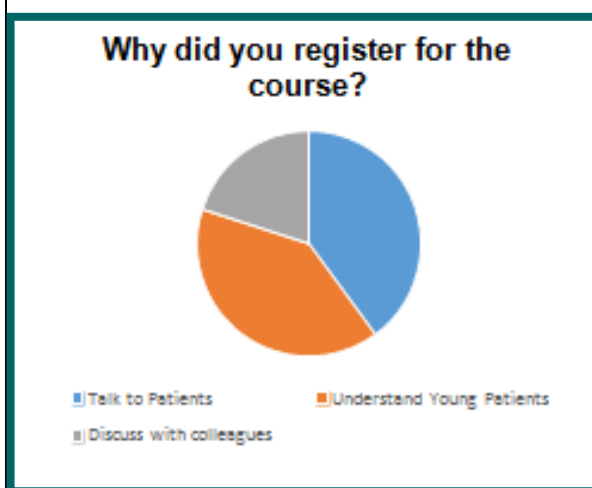
The organisation requires adequate staff capacity to provide bilingual services. Therefore, providing training to improve the Welsh language skills of staff was a key priority.

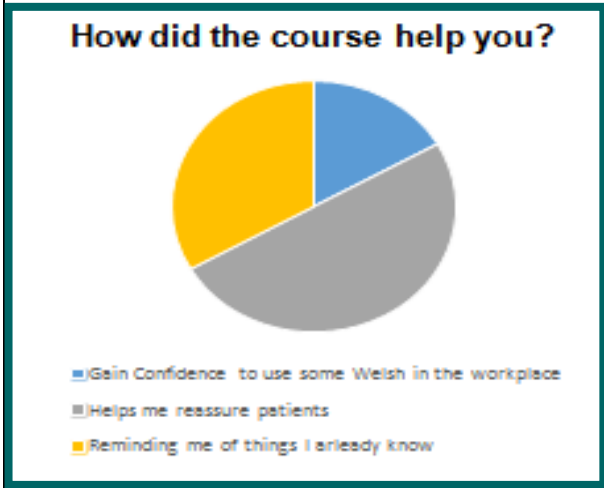
An in-house Welsh language tutor was appointed and the work undertaken has been exceptional in terms of the content of the courses delivered, the number of attendees and the impact this has had on the staff's ability to provide services in Welsh.

Innovative work has been done to tailor courses for staff in different departments, in terms of linguistic level and the kind of work being done by them daily. The following courses have already been delivered and tailored for staff:

- Adult Mental Health
- Pharmacy
- Medical Undergraduates/Postgraduate Students
- Fast-track Courses for Receptionists
- Primary Care and Care Homes
- Audiology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Pharmacy and Substance Misuse Service HMP Berwyn
- Dementia Care Workers and Specialist Dementia Nurses

In order to evaluate the programme, the Tutor collects staff feedback on a regular basis to ensure that the courses meet their requirements and check whether any alterations are needed to reflect the service's needs. The feedback has been positive in terms of the Tutor's approachability and the value of the courses.





Language Choice Scheme

The Language Choice Scheme was introduced on Glaslyn Ward at Ysbyty Gwynedd, but it has now been implemented on every ward at Ysbyty Gwynedd as well as community hospitals across North Wales. The scheme was welcomed by staff and patients alike as it allows wards to plan their workforce and be proactive in offering services in the language of choice of Welsh-speaking patients.

One community hospital which has seen a positive impact is Ysbyty Alltwen, Porthmadog which has been implementing the scheme for over a year. During this period 100% of patients who speak Welsh have been offered a language choice.

The patients and hospital staff who implement the scheme were asked for their opinion in order to monitor the scheme and its impact on the wider workforce. The following positive changes were recorded:

- facilitated scheduling and improved staff allocation
- pairing of Welsh-speaking staff with patients who speak Welsh
- allowing staff to identify the patient's language choice immediately
- avoiding having to ask the patient again whether they would like a Welsh language service
- the entire multi-disciplinary team is aware of the patient's language choice
- improved relationship between healthcare professionals and the patient

One clear theme identified is that, in light of the scheme, patients can explain and discuss their symptoms and thoughts more easily in their mother tongue. Another theme highlighted by the staff was that they were more aware of the patient's language choice and the importance of acting on this information to the best of their ability.

A patient who has benefited from the scheme said:

'During my stay at Ysbyty Alltwen, I chose to be a part of the language scheme, and the staff placed the 'Welsh' magnet above my head so that they knew I preferred to speak Welsh. It's an excellent idea, and it allows staff to communicate better with the patients who prefer to speak Welsh, which helps to provide even better care.'

Use Your Welsh Campaign

The innovative *Use Your Welsh* campaign is a new continuous campaign which is led by the Health Board's Welsh Language Team.

The organisation's staff often say that they are not confident enough to speak Welsh in the workplace, or that their Welsh isn't good enough. Therefore, the purpose of the campaign is to encourage staff to use as much Welsh as possible in the workplace, in every aspect of providing care to patients, service users and their families.

The campaign also aims to encourage staff to use Welsh with their colleagues and to practise Welsh with learners within their teams. It targets fluent Welsh speakers, learners and individuals who can only say a few simple greetings, as feedback from patients emphasises that they appreciate any effort made to try and speak to them in Welsh.

By introducing this campaign across the three main hospitals, awareness of the Welsh language was raised internally amongst staff and its importance within the health sector. The aim is to create behavioural change, where staff will feel more able to use as much Welsh as possible in the workplace, but also increase opportunities for patients to use the language.

Promotional materials were developed to advertise and promote the campaign, as well as questionnaires to measure how staff use the language and monitor whether their use has increased since launching the campaign. Stalls were organised by the Health Board's Welsh Language Team to promote the campaign, as well as visiting wards and departments to include and encourage clinical staff.

Supporting resources were shared with staff, such as 'Siarad Cymraeg' lanyards and badges, various cards with Welsh phrases and CDs. These events also provided an opportunity to share information regarding the Welsh language training sessions available and to raise awareness of the in-house training programme further.

The campaign was welcomed with optimism and enthusiasm and further opportunities were offered to engage with staff and to influence linguistic practices.

In the lead up to the launch, a series of videos of staff discussing their experiences of learning and using Welsh in the workplace was created to share with the public on the Health Board's social media channels. These were viewed by over 50,000 social media users. The posts succeeded in promoting the campaign to over 59,000 individuals and over 7,000 positive responses to the posts and tweets were received.

Encouraging internal use

Encouraging the internal use of the Welsh language within the Health Board has been occurring gradually and the next natural progression for the organisation was to produce a procedure for using the Welsh language internally as will be required by the operational standards.

The organisation considered how to maximise use of the Welsh language within the organisation's operational arrangements. Producing a new procedure provided an opportunity and focus to achieve the work.

The procedure focuses on the following areas:

- telephone communication
- Health Board and committee meetings
- internal communication including bilingual corporate messages
- signs
- IT packages
- policies
- raising concerns
- disciplinary cases/complaints/dignity at work
- training
- bilingual skills - recruitment
- Electronic Staff Record

The *Procedure on Using Welsh Internally* has been approved by the Strategy, Partnerships and Population Health Committee, and the next steps are to publish and use it across the organisation.

Identifying each other as Welsh speakers

A campaign was launched to encourage staff to identify themselves as Welsh speakers on the Outlook E-mail System so that Welsh-speaking colleagues are aware of this before beginning to correspond with them. The purpose of the work was to encourage staff to use Welsh internally, via e-mail and over the telephone, and the number of staff who have completed this information has increased 84.5% within a year.

A total of 12,831 operational e-mail users have now updated their linguistic skills, which is equivalent to 68% of the total number of users:

- *Doesn't speak Welsh* - 7484 users (58%)
- *Can speak some Welsh* - 1592 users (12%)
- *Learning Welsh* - 1115 users (9%)
- *Can speak Welsh* - 2640 users (21%)

The next step is for the Information and Workforce Teams to establish a parallel between the Outlook Directory, the Electronic Staff Register and the Informatics Portal. This will allow more accurate management of user accounts based on users employed within the organisation and this will lead to all users either updating or confirming their details.