Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Welsh Language Commissioner

Talking about Cymraeg

A guide to creating an internal communication plan



Introduction

Cymraeg belongs to everyone. Increasing the use of the language within your organisation is an opportunity to create a culture where the Welsh language is a natural part of everyday work – and everyone has a part to play in that journey.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to organisations on how to communicate their vision for increasing the use of Welsh internally with the workforce.

This guide has been developed based on the theory of change created by the Commissioner's office which outlines how action in different areas can lead to an increase in the use of Welsh over time.

Policy model templates are also available which provide a structure for organisations to follow when creating an internal use policy that will increase the use of the language among the workforce and comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Although public organisations have statutory requirements to create policies on the internal use of Welsh, the message that Cymraeg belongs to everyone is relevant to all sectors, and there is value in every type of organisation having a plan for how to communicate about Welsh with staff.

This guide outlines the steps to create an effective internal communication plan for your organisation.

Step 1: Identify your aim and vision

Setting a vision and aim for increasing the use of Welsh in your organisation gives a clear direction to the work. A policy on using Welsh internally, and any other policies or strategies related to the language should reflect that vision to ensure consistency across the organisation.

Action: Use your vision to inform messages and communicate about the Welsh language with the workforce.

Step 2: Audience analysis

The same messages about Welsh and your organisation's aim to increase its use will not be suitable for everyone. It is therefore useful to consider which audiences need to be targeted and which approaches are likely to be most effective in reaching them.

Audience mapping is a way of identifying the groups that exist in an organisation, and their level of influence in the context of the Welsh language. Understanding the different types of audience will help to target and adapt messages effectively.

You can use the resource in step 5 of the Theory of Change to help you map your audiences.

Action: Identify the main groups within your organisation, what kind of influence they have, and what messages will appeal most to them.

Step 3: Key messages

It's important to have a set of core messages, which are relevant to everyone in your organisation – although messages will need to be adapted to target the audiences you identified in Step 2. These core messages will set the tone for communicating about Welsh, and it's important to repeat them consistently and clearly. The messages should come from – and reflect – your aim and vision.

Here are some examples:

- The Welsh language is respected in our organisation
- We are a bilingual organisation, where everyone has the chance to use their Welsh
- Your Welsh doesn't have to be 'perfect'
- We will support you in your journey
- Everyone has a part to play

These will be the core messages, which will be repeated regularly and consistently by the organisation's managers and leaders.

Action: Agree core and relevant messages about the Welsh language to be used consistently across your organisation.

Step 4: Segment your audiences

Now look at the audiences you identified and consider them individually in more detail. This may depend partly on the size of the organisation, but even in a small organisation, there will likely be several different audiences, and it's important to consider how to target them.

Think about what each audience needs to know; what encouragement or reassurance do they need to support the organisation's aim and vision in the context of the Welsh language?

Here are examples of the types of audiences that can exist in an organisation.

Audience type	Needs / Key messages	Example messages	Communication method
New staff / beginners	Encouragement Safe atmosphere	Our organisation supports you	• Awareness session for beginners

	Clear messages from the start Set the context	to use the Welsh you have	• Video/case study from staff talking about how they use Welsh in the organisation • A document about the Welsh language in the organisation
Leadership Team	Guidance to support change Support to lead by example	Your use of Welsh can set an example; use your Welsh at every opportunity	• Session/presentation to raise awareness of the policies and the important role of leaders • Regular updates in leadership team meetings to ensure accountability • Encourage leaders to take advantage of schemes such as Leading in a Bilingual Country
Learners (intermediate/higher level)	Informal opportunities to practise Safe atmosphere Resources to support them Bridging the gap between learning and using	Use the Welsh you have; there's no such thing as 'perfect'	• Regular emails to remind of resources available to support use • A section on the intranet with easy access to information/resources • Blogs from other learners and an opportunity to share experiences
Learners (any level)	Informal opportunities to practise Safe atmosphere Resources to support them	There are plenty of opportunities for you to practise and use your Welsh here	• Informal 'clonc' or chat sessions • Regular messages to encourage use • Blogs from other learners
Those who do not consider themselves users of the Welsh language	Reassurance Address concerns	Everyone has a role to play	• Awareness raising sessions • 'Challenging the myths' series

	Ways to get involved		• Welsh word of the week
Human Resources / Recruitment Staff	Understanding of the guidance Support to implement guidance	The Welsh language is a valuable skill within the organisation	• Clear guidance on the Welsh language within the recruitment process • Processes to be followed to ensure that applications and interviews can be conducted in Welsh

These are just a few examples in the table, which show value in understanding who the audience is, and tailoring messages for them. Communication works best when it's relevant.

Action: Think about what each audience needs to know and tailor your messages to encourage and support them to use their Cymraeg.

Step 5: Identify communication channels

Just as messages need to vary for different audiences, communication channels also need to be varied.

You will likely need to use a variety of ways to convey your messages effectively. Consider which ones will have the greatest impact.

Here are some suggested communication channels:

- E-mail – regular update or bulletin
- Teams or an internal communication method like Slack
- Internal newsletters
- Blogs
- Information or training sessions
- Posters or physical signs
- Computer screen backgrounds
- Intranet with a dedicated area for the Welsh language
- Staff meetings
- Staff induction sessions
- Informal events e.g. coffee mornings

Action: Consider and plan how you can use the different channels to convey your messages effectively.

Step 6: Ensure the support of leaders and managers

Support from leaders and managers is essential if Welsh language use is to increase in the workplace. This is not simply about approving a policy or strategy, but about demonstrating commitment through the example they set.

When leaders and managers use Cymraeg and show that they value the language, they encourage others to do the same. Simple actions, such as chairing meetings or communicating in Welsh or bilingually, make the language more visible and help develop a culture where everyone feels confident to use Welsh step by step.

Do managers at all levels understand how the Welsh language is part of their job, and how to support their teams? Do they understand your intentions regarding the Welsh language, and support your objectives? Getting their consent is key.

Do they receive the right information at the right times e.g. when going through the recruitment process to ensure that the need for Welsh language skills is reflected in the job advertisement?

Bring your leaders on the journey with you, make sure they understand and support your objectives so that this is reflected in the way they work and lead.

You may also have a network of champions or a Welsh language working group within your organisation. Ensure they are involved, gather their views on effective communication, and encourage them to share messages consistently with colleagues.

Action: Consider who the leaders or influencers are in key areas or departments in your workforce e.g. leadership team, human resources or IT. Make sure they understand their role in supporting and promoting the use of Welsh through their behaviour and actions.

Step 7: Include the voice of staff

Language is a social activity. Staff can be inspired and encouraged to use their Welsh by sharing examples from colleagues of how they do this in their day-to-day work.

By gathering and sharing stories of how individuals or teams use their Welsh, an organisation can build momentum and inspire others to do the same.

Seeing colleagues using Cymraeg in everyday situations helps to make the language more visible and shows others that using Welsh is something that everyone can be a part of. Personal examples can help create a sense of community, encourage greater confidence, and normalise the use of Welsh in the workplace.

Action: Gather and share stories and examples from staff about how and why they use Welsh in their daily work, to inspire others to do the same.

Step 8: Create a two-way channel

It's important to consider how staff can communicate back with the organisation. This helps encourage learning and enables you to adapt your strategy and communication methods.

Is there a forum, either virtual or face-to-face, that you can use? If your organisation has a network of Welsh language champions or co-ordinators, they may be able to facilitate discussions. A section on the intranet or internal systems would also enable staff to share feedback in writing, possibly anonymously, making feedback as easy as possible.

Creating channels that give staff the opportunity to share feedback and ideas will ensure more effective communication.

Action: Establish clear and accessible feedback channels to enable staff to share their views, ideas and experiences of using Welsh in the organisation, and use this feedback to improve communication.

Step 9: Monitoring and evaluation

Consider what success would look like for your internal communication plan. Evaluation can be based on quantitative or qualitative measures. Here are a few suggestions:

Quantitative

- Open rates for messages e.g. staff bulletins
- Responses to messages (comments, likes etc)
- Number of video views

Qualitative

- Staff attitudes – measured through surveys*
- Focus groups
- Feedback from key individuals (managers, champions)
- Observing behaviour or work habits

The main objective is to identify changes in staff attitudes and behaviour in relation to Welsh over time.

Having gathered feedback and monitored the effectiveness of your internal communication plan, you may need to make changes moving forward. Consistent and ongoing communication is important so that everyone receives the key messages and joins the journey.

*The Commissioner intends to publish a standard survey that all organisations will be able to use to measure staff's use of Welsh. This survey will be an effective means of establishing a baseline of staff language use and evaluating progress over time.

Action: Establish methods of monitoring and evaluating the impact of your internal communications plan, gathering feedback from staff and using the results to make improvements over time.

What next?

The Commissioner offers a range of resources and guidance to support you. Visit our Resource Hub to see what else is available. For example, there is information on creating Champions or a Mentoring Scheme within your organisation to support staff to use their Welsh.

Resource Hub

If you would like to discuss increasing the use of Welsh in your workplace, please contact post@cyg-wlc.cymru