

# Monmouthshire County Council Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2017-2018

This report reflects Monmouthshire County Council's progress on its Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards during the financial year 2017-2018.

The report presents data on the required indicators in the following fields in compliance with: Standards 158,164 and 170: complaints: staff language skills: Welsh medium training for staff and recruiting to empty posts. This report will be published by 30th June 2018 in compliance with Standard 158.

## Legislative requirements

This year has been a year of translating documents, forms, leaflets, twitter and Facebook interactions etc to ensure that we are providing the Welsh speaking population of Monmouthshire a genuine language choice. Also we have worked to ensure that our website and in particular transactional pages are coming on line in a bilingual format. That has been challenging due to the fact that many of those software providers not having originally incorporated Welsh Language capacity in the specification. Therefore not only has this been a time consuming process of translating text and awaiting functional up grades from the suppliers. Notwithstanding, good progress has been made.

## Managing change

We have been very pro-active with our recruitment process having introduced a **Welsh Language skills assessment** for all vacant posts which was developed through close co-operation between the Welsh Language Officer and People Services. The skills assessments are checked at the stage that the advert is sent for translation and the most pleasing aspect of this process has been the increase in the number of vacancies that have been assessed as Welsh desirable (details in Recruiting to empty posts (*Standard 154, 170(c)*) are detailed below). Some managers have required reasoned discussions in order to prompt changing assessments from *Not Required* to *Desirable* but this has worked very well in the main. Having said that the numbers of "not required" and reducing numbers of "essential" assessments show that there is further work to do.

The Welsh Language Officer has also developed a **Workforce Planning** exercise which has been carried out with the following divisions so far:

Human Resources, Contact Centre, Libraries and Hubs in the north and south of the county. The process has also just begun with Communications and Engagement, Policy and Performance and Community Partnerships Development Team.

The response from managers to the above process has been positive with significant numbers of future vacancies highlighted as requiring Welsh Essential designation.

It is important to highlight to the Commissioner that it may well be difficult to recruit Welsh speakers to some of these roles as the council is not yet seen as an employer of Welsh speakers and there are low levels of expectation in the old Gwent area as to the opportunities for Welsh speakers to secure roles where the ability to speak Welsh is either essential or desirable.

One example of the potential problem was a vacancy for a Dementia Carer in a nursing home in Chepstow to look after a lady from North Wales that had reverted to her mother tongue. It was

advertised through the normal channels but also a short video was made for Facebook and Twitter that attracted thousands of views and likes. The vacancy was also advertised on bespoke Welsh Language recruitment sites, Job Trac Cymru and Lleol.Cymru and there were a number of radio and television interviews also carried out with S4C, BBC Radio Cymru and BBC Wales due to the interest of the media in the dementia and Welsh Language aspect of the vacancy. Sadly we did not have one application despite the huge interest.

Having said that it is felt that in time we will get an increase in interest in Welsh Language vacancies and there needs to be a pro-active piece of work done with the local Welsh Medium secondary schools to tell the students about the job opportunities that now exist for Welsh speakers in the South East Wales area and further afield in Local Government and other sectors under the auspices of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Our **Welsh Language Line** is becoming ever more popular. Established on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 we have had 158 calls in total despite the number of calls being very few in the early months.

The numbers of late have increased considerably and the attitude of the Welsh speaking callers has been one of pleasure and also a lack of expectation that the Welsh line will be answered by a Welsh speaker. The following figures show the growth in calls for the first quarter of the year:

1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 – 21calls

1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 – 40 calls

The following is a sample list of the service required or the nature of the phone calls received by the Welsh line since its inception on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017. There were others that were not recorded accurately or were one offs which were difficult to categorise. This list will be useful when carrying out the ongoing Workforce Planning exercise in order to assist in the decision making process for differentiating between Welsh essential or desirable designations in vacancies.

- Welsh Language Officer 15
- Refuse 10
- Communications Team 10
- Council Tax 6
- Occupational Therapy 3
- Tourism 2
- Estates 4
- Volunteering 2
- HR 3
- Museums 2
- Grounds maintenance 2
- Grass Routes 3
- Education 2
- Property services 2
- Welsh Wedding Services 5
- Blue Badges 2
- Youth Service 2

## Data required each year from 1 April – 31 March

- Information on complaints (*Standard 158(2); 164(2); 170(2)(d)*)
- Information on staff language skills (*Standard 170(2)(a)*)
- Welsh medium training for staff (*Standard 170 (2)(b+c)*)
- Recruiting to empty posts (*Standard 154, 170(ch)*).

## Information on complaints (Standard 158(2); 164(2); 170(2)(d))

In 2017-2018 we did not have any formal complaints from members of the public.

## Information on staff language skills (*Standard 170(2)(a)*)

### Welsh Language Skills of Employees as at 31/03/18

Staff Competency	Total	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Fluent	Total
Welsh Language skills	3,623	2018- 131 2017- 112	24 20	10 5	29 31	195 168

### Welsh language spoken skills by service area at 31 March 2018. (Not including school based staff in Children and Young People)

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Fluent	Total
Resources	9	1	2	0	12
Social Care	27	9	3	12	51
Highways/Operations	7	2	0	2	11
Children and Young People	4	1	0	0	5
Deputy Chief Executive Dept	79	11	6	13	109
Elected Members	5	0	0	2	7
Grand Total	131	24	11	29	195

## **Recruiting to empty posts (*Standard 154, 170(ch)*).**

Job application processes have been amended to be fully accessible in Welsh in accordance with the Standards.

Below are the details of advertised posts in **2017 - 2018**

(a) The number of vacant/new posts advertised from 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018; **491** (402 in 2016 – 2017)

(b) The number of the vacant/new vacant posts advertised from 1st April 2017 - 31st March 2018 that had 'Welsh language skills essential'; **9** (21 in 2016 – 2017)

(c) The number of vacant/new vacant posts advertised from 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 that had 'Welsh language skills desirable or desirable but not essential'; **294** (105 in 2016 – 2017)

(d) The number of vacant/new posts advertised from 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 specified as posts where it is 'necessary to learn Welsh-language skills when someone is appointed to the post'; **0** (8 in 2016 – 2017)

(e) The number of vacant/new posts advertised from 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 that 'did not require Welsh language skills'; **170** (90 in 2016 – 2017)

(f) The number that did not include an assessment 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 - **16**

(g) The number not stated 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 - **2**

## **Welsh medium training for staff (*Standard 170 (2) (b+c)*)**

In 2017-18, we are running the following Welsh Language sessions and financially supporting (fees and books) individuals in their own time:-

40 members of staff are attending the Cwrs Mynediad Year 1 Cymraeg yn y Gweithle 2 hour 30 week course provided by Coleg Gwent Welsh for Adults.

3 members of the Integrated Autism Team staff are attending a Mynediad course in Ebbw Vale

1 member of staff is attending a Canolradd 2 course

1 member of staff is attending a Sylfaen 2 course

1 member of staff is attending a Sylfaen 1 course

More classes will be offered in September 2018

## **Exciting developments on the Border**

This is an exciting report from an officer working at the Chepstow Hub. It is worth noting that these opportunities are also provided at other venues across the county but this is the most pleasing due to the perception of Chepstow being relatively anglicised:

**Clwb Cwtch.** “This was an eight week program that was run in Chepstow Hub between March and May 2018. It is a Welsh taster course focusing on speaking Welsh with young children. The project was expected to cover 600 Welsh learners over 50 sites in Wales. Chepstow Hub was chosen, although it wasn't expected to be particularly popular, due to the proximity being so close to the border. However, it was with great surprise that at the first session that we were greeted by 30 plus adults and many children. This was the most for any Clwb Cwtch Program in the whole of the Wales! Da iawn Hyb Cas-gwent !

Despite the logistics we managed to squeeze everyone in and supplied them with tea and biscuits to keep them going. During the whole eight weeks it remained hugely popular and Rhiannon was a fantastic facilitator and there was nothing but positive feedback over the whole time.

Following the success, Rhiannon has requested further funding for a further program and this has recently been agreed and is likely to start in October of this year and is already looking to be equally as well attended.

Baby Massage Started in Chepstow Hub in 2017 and has gone from strength to strength.

The project is run by Liz Evans Braun from Mudiad Meithrin, the Welsh early year specialists.

The sessions initially ran for an hour on Monday mornings and usually catered for around 15 mums and babies. Due to the success of the sessions Liz received further funding and we now run both baby massage and baby yoga on Mondays. Both are very well attended and continue to grow in numbers every week. As with Clwb Cwtch there nothing but positive feedback to the sessions and using massage and yoga together with rhymes and songs to learn Welsh certainly does appear to appeal to the Mums and babies!”