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Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Name of Meeting
People and Organisational
Development Committee
Date of Meeting
16 February 2022
Agenda item:
3.3

Welsh Language Update

Executive lead:	Neil Lewis, Director of People and Organisational Development
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Author:	Sara Peacock, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
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Approval/Scrutiny route:	Neil Lewis, Director of People and Organisational Development Business Executive Team (17 Jan 2022)
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Purpose

This paper gives a status report on Public Health Wales’ Welsh-language provision, including how we are meeting our statutory obligations, remedial actions we need to be taking, and our ambitions for the further development of a bilingual culture within the organisation.

Recommendation:

APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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The Committee is asked to:

- **Note** the current position with regard to our Welsh language provision
- **Take assurance** that the organisation has the appropriate plans in place to ensure to meet our statutory requirements, to reinvigorate our bilingual culture and to consolidate awareness across the organisation of each team’s compliance obligations.

Link to Public Health Wales [Strategic Plan](#)

Public Health Wales has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified seven strategic priorities.

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority	1 - Influencing the wider determinants of health
Strategic Priority	2 - Improving mental-well-being and building resilience
Strategic Priority	7 - Building and mobilising knowledge and skills to improve health and well-being across Wales

Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	There is no decision required here so an EHIA has not been completed.
Risk and Assurance	Since our last update, it has become clear that the Welsh Language Commissioner is watching our activities more closely, we have been issued with an action notice following a breach of the Standards, and there are fewer allowances for slippage because of the pandemic situation. All of this would suggest that our risk situation has increased.
Health and Care Standards	This report supports and/or takes into account the Health and Care Standards for NHS Wales Quality Themes Theme 3 - Effective Care Theme 4 - Dignified Care Theme 7 - Staff and Resources
Financial implications	There are ongoing financial implications of the Welsh Language Standards, particularly with regard to translation costs, but these are not anticipated to have changed greatly from last year.
People implications	Recruitment to Welsh essential roles continues to be a priority and a challenge. Upskilling of staff within the organisation is also a focus within the work reported in this paper.

1. Purpose / situation

This paper gives a status report on Public Health Wales' Welsh-language provision, including how we are meeting our statutory obligations, remedial actions we need to be taking, and our ambitions for the further development of a bilingual culture within the organisation.

2. Background

Welsh Language provision in Public Health Wales is determined by various pieces of legislation and government policies. Our direct obligations are set out in the Welsh Language Standards, which are a comprehensive set of standards explaining what we must do with regards to providing services in Welsh, both internally and externally.

The Standards came into force during 2019, and they were mostly embedded well across the organisation by January 2020, thanks to the cooperation of all our directorates. Much of the work of monitoring then had to be paused to focus on pandemic response and only restarted in April 2021.

The Welsh Language Group meets quarterly and includes a representative from each Directorate, who cascade information about Welsh issues and undertake exception reporting back from their teams.

We have a Welsh-language Hwb site on the staff intranet, which will shortly be replaced by new pages on the SharePoint Online site. Since the summer update to PODCOM the responsibility for Welsh language issues within the P&OD team has rested with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, who has had some administrative support from temporary staff.

The new P&OD structure embeds responsibility for the Welsh language across the team, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager welcomes the opportunity to work with the rest of the team to help with the necessary upskilling and to ensure that the language becomes an integral part of operations and considerations across the entire Directorate.

As part of the Kickstart scheme we will be welcoming a young person (aged 16–25) onto a work placement to help the People & OD team with Welsh language matters. This role will be focused on supporting those learning Welsh and developing our bilingual culture, and will give the young person the opportunity to learn more about Welsh language

legislation in the public sector context, as well as gain valuable work experience more generally.

3. Description/Assessment

3.1 Complaint to the Welsh Language Commissioner

In October 2021 we were informed by the Welsh Language Commissioner of his findings with regard to the complaint that had been brought against PHW by a member of the public in September 2020. While accepting the evidence we had presented to show that we had made efforts to ensure that a Welsh language service was available, the Commissioner found that we had failed to comply with **Standard 19** by not ensuring that a third party acting on our behalf had asked this member of the public whether they wished to receive telephone calls in Welsh. The Commissioner's full decision notice is attached to this paper.

The enforcement action imposed by the Commissioner requires us to take certain steps to prevent the repetition of this failure to comply, which will ensure we offer an improved service when communicating with stakeholders external to PHW. These are being addressed as part of a wider piece of work around standards in research. An action plan to address the specific needs of this enforcement notice will be produced, and approved by Executives before we are required to report back to the Commissioner by 1 March 2022.

3.2 Other outstanding Standards issues

A monitoring exercise was undertaken with the Welsh Language Group during November/December 2021 to ascertain confidence around compliance with the more public-facing Standards. Results from this exercise suggest that there is more we can be doing to raise awareness among our staff of their Standards obligations with regard to:

- Correspondence
- The recruitment process (including Welsh language skills assessment)
- Meetings and events

There are still concerns about our ability to comply with **Standard 17**, requiring telephone calls to be dealt with in Welsh (until such point as they can be transferred to a member of staff with the necessary specialist knowledge to address the caller's need, at which point the conversation can change to English if that member of staff does not speak Welsh). This remains a mostly theoretic challenge, with the majority of our staff still working from home.

The work to create a library of bilingual job descriptions (to help us meet the requirements of **Standards 106/107**) is underway, and by April

2022 we will have almost 400 job descriptions available in both English and Welsh for our managers to access via the SharePoint Online site.

3.3 Welsh language skills

We currently employ 76 members of staff who have intermediate language skills, 102 who have higher skills and 148 who are proficient. We also have 449 staff who are on the entry level and 107 who are on the foundation level (based on current ESR self-declared data). All of these figures show an increase from the last report, and we have a 94% declaration rate across the organisation.

3.3.1 Welsh skills development

In the autumn 24 staff enrolled on courses with the Centre for Learning Welsh (via their Cardiff and Bangor providers) for full year-long courses.

In addition, we continue to inform people about the free online "Work Welsh" modules, recommending them as a good starting point for those new to learning Welsh. By October 2021, there had been 77 registrations for these modules from PHW staff.

Two longer self-study courses have recently become available via the Work Welsh online providers (one at Entry level and one at Foundation), and we have started to publicise these with our staff also but do not yet have any enrolment data.

We also continue to publicise the free week-long intensive courses available through the Work Welsh scheme (these have been online since spring 2020, but will also be available again as residential courses from spring 2022 onwards). Three of our staff have attended these recently.

3.3.2 Additional support

We now have a Welsh area on Teams, PHW_Cymraeg, which currently has around 80 members. This has three channels: General, Dysgwyr Cymraeg (for learners) and Siaradwyr Rhugl (for those happy to converse in Welsh).

In December 2021 we launched a group practice session for our beginner learners on Teams, and a "Mentor Cymraeg" scheme, which will match up more advanced learners with fluent speakers who are willing to meet them regularly on a (virtual) social basis to enable speaking practice and build confidence.

3.4 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This report contributes to the following Public Health Wales well-being objectives

Goal 1 - Build capacity and support system change

Goal 3 - Support the NHS to deliver high quality, equitable and sustainable services

Goal 6 - Maximise the potential of our natural and cultural resources

Public Health Wales is committed to becoming a bilingual organisation, and by meeting our statutory obligations with regard to the language we will be strengthening our structures and improving the quality of the services that we are able to offer. This report outlines the work that has already been completed towards meeting these obligations, as well as the issues that still need to be resolved.

This work has been put together following the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act, in the following ways:



The work outlined in this paper is concerned with embedding long-term changes in systems and procedures, in line with our People Strategy.



Embedding Welsh-language procedures will prevent our organisation from failing to provide the service that is expected of us by the Welsh speakers we serve.



The work of the Welsh language team provides an integrated response to a number of cross-cutting frameworks, including the Welsh Language Standards, the More Than Just Words initiative, and the Health and Social Care Standards.



The Welsh language team are working closely with teams across PHW to help them to ensure they are meeting their obligations, providing practical help and support where needed.



Cultural work across the organisation described in this paper aims to increase the number of staff who can feel a sense of ownership of the Welsh language

Recommendation

That the Committee:

- **Note** the current position with regard to our Welsh language provision
- **Take assurance** that the organisation has the appropriate plans in place to ensure to meet our statutory requirements, to reinvigorate our bilingual culture and to consolidate awareness across the organisation of each team's compliance obligations.