

 Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales	Name of Meeting People and Organisational Development Committee Date of Meeting 15/03/2023 Agenda item: 5
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Welsh Language Update				
Executive lead:	Neil Lewis, Director of People and OD			
Author:	Sam Sutton, Welsh Language Adviser			
Approval/Scrutiny route:	Business Executive Team People & OD Committee			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and take assurance on the current position with regard to the Welsh language provision within Public Health Wales and the goals that we have set for the coming year (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 in April 2022, 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 than was the case during the pandemic. 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 has been replaced by new pages on the SharePoint Online site.

Since the last update to PODCOM the responsibility for Welsh language issues within the P&OD team currently rests with the Welsh Language Adviser, as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager left the organisation at the end of November 2022. A new Welsh Language Manager will be joining the Team from April 2023.

The new P&OD structure embeds responsibility for the Welsh language across the team, and the Employee Experience Team continues to work with the rest of the Directorate 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 in Summer 2022, we welcomed a young person (aged 16–25) onto a work placement to help the People & OD team with Welsh language matters. This role focused on supporting those learning Welsh and developing our bilingual culture, and gave 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

CS103

In December 2021 we were informed by the Welsh Language Commissioner of a complaint brought against PHW by a member of the public in earlier in that month. The complaint was in relation to a suspected failure to comply with Standard 46, which stipulates that if a person contacts you by social media in Welsh, you must reply in Welsh (if an answer is required). It was adjudged by the Commissioner that PHW failed to comply with Standard 46.

The following steps were required to be undertaken by PHW-

1. PHW must put arrangements in place to ensure that, if a person contacts PHW via social media in Welsh, PHW replies fully to that message in Welsh if the person in question has specifically requested a response to the message.
2. PHW must check weekly the automated replies sent from its social media accounts to ensure that they comply with the requirements of standard 46.

The above steps have since been implemented.

The following step recommended by the Welsh Language Commissioners Office has also been implemented –

1. It is recommended that PHW ensures that it routinely sends bilingual automated replies from its English language accounts.

CS1051

In September 2022 we were informed by the Welsh Language Commissioner of a complaint brought against PHW by a member of the public in earlier in that month. The complaint was in relation to a suspected failure to comply with Standard 39, which stipulates that the Welsh language websites should be fully Welsh and functioning to the highest standard. We have since fed our evidence notice back to the Commissioner regarding this suspected breach, we await their deliberation on the matter.

3.2 Other outstanding Standards issues

A monitoring exercise was undertaken with Welsh Language Group members during the Summer of 2022 to ascertain whether the Welsh Language Group in its current format was the best way to progress Welsh Language matters. Results from this exercise suggested that the group was the most appropriate way to communicate such matters. Additionally, the notion of a Welsh Language Network emanated from those discussions. The overarching format of this network would be akin to how the existing diversity networks run. The aim of this network is to provide a stronger voice to PHW's Welsh speaking employees, rather than the monitoring of the Welsh Language Standards, which remain with the Welsh Language Group.

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 theoretical 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**) was halted because the JDs that were translated weren't suitable as baseline JDs, and a new all-Wales template is being developed. There is however a want to revisit this situation in the future once more standardised JDs are in place.

3.3 Welsh language skills

We currently employ 73 members of staff who have intermediate language skills, 93 who have higher skills and 141 who are proficient. We also have 475 staff who are on the entry level and 94 who are on the foundation level (based on current ESR self-declared data). This is a slight decrease on the numbers reported last year. PHW's overall employee headcount has decreased from the last report, and we have a 93% declaration rate across the organisation.

3.3.1 Welsh skills development

In the autumn 18 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. There had been 100 registrations for these modules from PHW staff in 2022, culminating in 35 completions. We have

circulated an email to those who have not completed their modules in an effort to better understand constraints. The common barriers were:

- Lack of available laptops for lab staff
- Work pressures/loads
- External forces e.g. family duties
- Time pressures

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 on our Welsh Language Hwb to staff 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). Two of our staff attended these in 2022.

3.3.2 Additional support

We now have a Welsh area on Teams, 'PHW_Cymraeg', which currently has around 110 members. This has four channels: General, Dysgwyr Cymraeg (for learners), Siaradwyr Rhugl (for those happy to converse in Welsh) and the Rhwydwaith y Gymraeg – Welsh Language Network channel. Despite the network being in its early days, it has garnered interest, with upwards of 35 colleagues expressing desire to join the network upon its official launch.

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.

This was relaunched in October 2022 with 10 different participants, who were paired up. The scheme has been considered as a success by both the mentors and mentees and we continue to promote it.

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

The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider and take assurance** on the current position with regard to the Welsh language provision within Public Health Wales and the goals that we have set for the coming year (to reinvigorate our

bilingual culture and to consolidate awareness across the organisation of each team's compliance obligations.)