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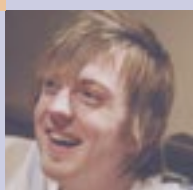
More

than just

words

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Strategic Framework for Welsh
Language Services in Health,
Social Services and Social Care



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Ministerial Foreword

Health and social services care for people as individuals, ensuring that they are accurately assessed and their care needs met. Peoples' cultural identity and language needs must be at the heart of this because it is an essential element to good quality care and high professional standards.

That is why the Welsh Government has developed "More than Just Words..." a Strategic Framework for Welsh language services in health and social services. The Framework outlines the current position and provides a systematic approach to improve services for those who need or choose to receive their care in Welsh. The supporting Action Plans detail the practical steps needed to strengthen Welsh language services and ensure that they are mainstreamed into all service planning and delivery.

In January 2011 we established an independent Steering Group, comprising a service user, people from health, social services and social care, stakeholders, regulators and academia to develop the Strategic Framework. We would like to acknowledge their commitment and expertise, and record our thanks to them for their hard work.

We are aware that the objectives outlined in this Strategic Framework require a long term commitment and that the improvements will be incremental. However, it is equally important to recognise that much can be achieved by making small changes - these improvements can be delivered quickly.

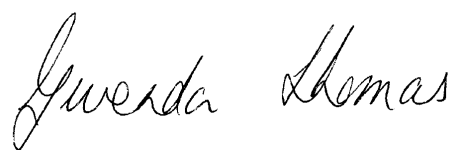
This strategy puts responsibility on the Department for Health, Social Services and Children to provide leadership and clear direction to strengthen services to meet the needs of Welsh speakers. Likewise, the Chairs and Chief Executives of health organisations, and the Portfolio Holders and Directors of Social Services, have a key role to develop a culture within their organisations where staff are sensitive to people's linguistic needs and users receive services through the medium of Welsh as a natural part of their care.

The appointment of a Welsh Language Commissioner earlier this year and the introduction of Standards for Welsh language services in the public sector, provides the context to this work. The Strategic Framework provides a good foundation for organisations to provide services in line with the Standards when they are introduced.

This document marks the start of the journey and we look forward to working with you, to achieve our common goal of providing good quality services to Welsh speakers who use our services.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths".

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Health and Social Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwenda Thomas".

Gwenda Thomas AM
Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services

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Executive Summary

Context

1. The Welsh Government is committed to delivering high quality health, social services and social care services that are centred on users' needs. This strategic framework is built on the values that all users should be treated with dignity and respect and should receive accurate assessments and appropriate care.
2. It is important for people working in health, social services and social care to recognise that many people can only communicate their care needs effectively through the medium of Welsh. For many Welsh speakers being able to use your own language has to be seen as a core component of care, not an optional extra.
3. Many service users are very vulnerable, so placing a responsibility on them to ask for services through the medium of Welsh is unfair. It is the responsibility of service providers to meet these care needs. Organisations are expected to mainstream Welsh language services as an integral element of service planning and delivery.

Why should Welsh language services be strengthened

4. Public services in Wales are committed to providing citizen centred services. Health, social services and social care focus on caring for people as individuals, placing the user at the centre of care. Many people can only communicate and participate in their care as equal partners effectively through the medium of Welsh. Service providers have a responsibility to meet these care needs.
5. There are four good reasons for getting this right:
 - **improving the quality of care** – it is important to recognise the concept of language need. For many Welsh speakers, language is an integral element of their care e.g. some people with dementia, or who have suffered a stroke, and children under the age of five.

- **maintaining professional standards** – numerous professional standards in health and social care list effective communication as a key requirement and highlight the need to maintain respect and dignity
- **meeting the language need of users** – organisations have a responsibility to recognise and accept responsibility to respond to language need as an integral element of care. In the strategic framework we refer to this as the “Active Offer”
- **comply with legal and statutory requirements** – organisations in the public sector have a responsibility to comply with the new Welsh Language (Wales) Measure. This will create standards regarding Welsh, which will result in rights being established that will ensure Welsh speakers can receive services in Welsh.

The Present Situation

6. Currently there is some good practice, but more often than not it is the result of the commitment of individuals, not a planned element of service provision. There is lack of capacity within the workforce and differing levels of understanding among staff regarding the Welsh language as a component of care. There is also inadequate use of the hidden Welsh language skills among the workforce.
7. In most organisations there is inconsistent leadership and ownership of Welsh language services and little evidence that it is mainstreamed into key systems such as workforce and service planning, education and training programmes and quality frameworks.
8. The challenge now is to spread good practice in a systematic way and to mainstream into all aspects of service planning and delivery.

The Strategic Framework

9. The Strategic Framework provides a means to achieve this. The policy document provides the evidence for change, an overview of current provision and the strategic direction to improve services. Our vision is for Welsh speakers to receive services that meet their needs as a natural part of their care.
10. The Strategic Framework outlines the six key objectives that all organisations need to work towards:
 - implementing a systematic approach to Welsh language services as an integral element of service planning and delivery
 - building on current best practice and planning, commissioning and providing care based on the “Active Offer” service
 - increasing the capability of the workforce to provide Welsh language services in priority areas and language awareness among all staff
 - creating leaders who will foster a supportive ethos within organisations, so that Welsh speaking users receive language sensitive services as a natural part of their care
 - providing education, learning and development programmes which reflect the services’ responsibility to plan and provide Welsh language services
 - ensuring that all national strategies, policies and leadership programmes mainstream Welsh language services.

Three Year Action Plans

11. The Strategic Framework is supported by three-year Action Plans – one for the NHS and one for Social Services. While they are complementary and some of the actions should be taken forward in partnership, they reflect the very different accountability systems and processes within both sectors.
12. The action plans detail the practical steps needed to achieve this, starting in April 2013.

13. In November 2015 a second cycle of Action Plans will be published.
14. Achieving progress in the first year is crucial to ensure the foundations are in place for the future, to initiate immediate impact and to reflect the determination of the Welsh Government to meet the needs of Welsh speakers.
15. Key expectations during this period include strengthening leadership, mapping the workforce and starting the process of accepting responsibility for meeting users' language needs by increasing awareness of the "Active Offer" principle.

Monitoring Progress

16. A robust monitoring system will be implemented in partnership with the service. The system will be based on the principles that the service users' voice will be central to the process, the focus will be on users' experience and that it is integrated into existing monitoring systems.
17. Organisations will be expected to report progress to their local community through open meetings of their Boards and Councils.
18. The system will operate at local and national level.
19. The focus of the monitoring system will be on providing support, to enable organisations to deliver high quality care.

Our Vision

- 1.1. The Welsh Government is committed to delivering a high quality health, social services and social care service that is centred on users' needs.
- 1.2. Our vision is to provide a service that will satisfy the needs of Welsh speakers and their families or carers, by ensuring they are able to receive services in their own language throughout the care process. This will enable people to communicate their needs effectively and receive the best possible care. It will also help to improve outcomes for users and the health, social services and social care service.
- 1.3. This Strategic Framework is built on the core values that all users should be treated with dignity and respect, and should receive appropriate, effective care. It is informed by evidence gathered from people within the service, a range of partners and, most importantly, by the voice of users themselves. Their experiences demonstrate why it is so important to meet the needs of those who can only express their requirement for care through the medium of Welsh. It also emphasises why the language is so much more than just a means of communication – it is an integral part of the user's identity.
- 1.4. The Framework aims to improve users' experiences of care by increasing Welsh language services, with a specific focus on the informal use of Welsh by front line staff when supporting or caring for people. It also focuses on the need to strengthen the infrastructure to ensure information technology systems incorporate Welsh language data, to help plan services more effectively.
- 1.5. If you are a Welsh speaker, being able to use your own language has to be seen as a core component of care and not as an optional extra. Many service users in health, social services and social care are vulnerable so placing a responsibility on them to request services through the medium of Welsh is unfair. It is every health board, trust and local authority's responsibility to provide appropriate, safe and effective services. This will only be achieved by providing a service that enables users to express their need for care through the medium of Welsh.

“Our son had only one language until he started school...This caused problems. He didn't understand anything the health visitor said to him... it was a fake assessment, with the health visitor relying on what I told her... The child isn't given fair play in terms of his assessment. He isn't comfortable.¹”

~ user experience

¹ Elaine Davies, *Welsh Speakers' Experiences of Health and Social Care Services*, (May, 2011) p.42.

1.6. The Welsh Government has identified four priority groups where Welsh language services are especially important, these are:

- children and young people
- older people
- people with learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems

These people are particularly vulnerable because their care and treatment suffers when they are not treated in their own language. During the next three years, priority will be given to providing services that enable these groups to express their needs in Welsh.

1.7. There are a number of good examples across Wales where linguistically sensitive services are provided (see Annex One). These examples need to be spread across the service, to help improve the experiences of all users who need to receive care through the medium of Welsh.

1.8. Our vision is for Welsh speakers to receive services that meet their needs as a natural part of their care.

This happens when:

- users are immediately sure that the service is centred on their communication needs rather than those of the provider.
- users are empowered to express their needs and are able to fully participate in their care as equal partners.
- users are able to see and hear the Welsh language, and feel comfortable with the environment and services they receive.
- users are aware that the service has a supportive ethos, where Welsh is used as a natural means of expression.
- users are aware that the service recognises that language is more than a means of communication and are able to express their ideas and emotions effectively.
- users are aware that the service acknowledges their language needs by ensuring the “Active Offer” is available.
- users are shown respect for their cultural identity and are able to access Welsh language services without any obstacles, although not everyone involved in their care can speak Welsh.

- 1.9. Realising this vision is unlikely to require additional resources; but will require organisations to operate differently. Organisations will be expected to mainstream Welsh language services as an integral aspect of their service delivery and workforce planning. It will also become a natural feature of governance, helping to embed a supportive ethos which will help both users and providers.

The Underlying Principles of this Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework is based on the following set of principles:

2.1 Providing a User-Centred Service

- 2.1.1. Placing citizens at the centre of health and social care provision places a responsibility on all services to respond to the needs of individuals.

2.2 The Active Offer Principle

- 2.2.1. The concept of language choice is familiar to service providers. However, the concept of language need also has to become an integral part of care services. This means moving the responsibility from the user to ask for services through the medium of Welsh, to the service which must ensure it provides them. This is a core principle of this Strategic Framework. We recognise that this will not happen overnight, but the next three years will start that process.

2.3 Quality of Care

- 2.3.1. Every individual is unique with different needs and it's vital that health and care services try to meet these needs. To provide high quality care, there has to be an appreciation that language is a matter of need.

2.4 Respect and dignity

- 2.4.1. Language is at the core of establishing and expressing identity. Responding sensitively to language, whilst focusing on the individual, is an essential principle of maintaining dignity and respect in care within a bilingual setting.²

² Roberts, Gwerfyl; Jones, Enid; ap Rhisiart, Deian; *Giving Voice to Older People: Dignity in Care – Welsh Language Toolkit*, Welsh Government (July 2011). See for further information.

“It’s not practical to expect everyone to be able to communicate in Welsh but everyone can show respect and flexibility. Professionals need to take a step back and show a bit of professional humility ... It doesn’t have to cost money. It’s about attitude, the wish to improve.”

~ user experience

2.5 Equality

2.5.1. Equal opportunity is a crucial cross-cutting theme in this Strategic Framework, as it is in every Welsh Government policy and strategy. Failure to provide services in Welsh when needed by users, could lead to circumstances where people do not receive the timely and suitable services they require.

2.6 Joint responsibility

2.6.1. Strengthening Welsh language services in health, social services and social care is a joint responsibility. The Welsh Government has a central role in setting strategic direction, but it needs the support of several partners across two extensive sectors with many different stakeholders. Local authorities and NHS organisations will have to plan and be accountable for services in their own areas, including services provided by the independent and third sector. This framework is founded on improving the quality of care provided and will therefore be particularly relevant to the Royal Colleges, professional bodies and further and higher education sectors.

Why Should Welsh Language Services be Strengthened?

- 3.1. Health, social services and social care focus on caring for people as individuals and placing the user at the centre of that care. These sectors must recognise that many people can only communicate their needs for care effectively through the medium of Welsh and services have a responsibility to meet these needs.
- 3.2. Research, policy documents and health and care sector professionals emphasise the importance of language in ensuring accurate assessment and effective care. Meeting linguistic needs is an integral part of this.
- 3.3. There are four very good reasons for getting this right:
 - (i) Improving the quality of care
 - (ii) Maintaining professional standards
 - (iii) Responding to users' language needs
 - (iv) Meeting statutory requirements

(i) Improving the Quality of Care

- 3.4. Providing a service that is citizen-centred is a fundamental theme and requires public services to respond to the needs of individuals in order to provide the best possible care for the people of Wales. This aim is reinforced in two major documents *Sustainable Social Services for Wales* and *Together for Health*.

*We will expect service providers to put in place stronger arrangements to involve those who use services directly and we will use our regulatory powers to measure the progress made.*³

- 3.5. To achieve this, service providers must consider the language needs of the local population and understand the linguistic demographics of the communities they serve.
- 3.6. Language is considered a core component of providing sensitive and accessible services. To ensure users are able to express themselves and information is communicated effectively, it is important that Welsh speakers are able to use the language.

³ *Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action*, Welsh Assembly Government, (2011), p.15.

“A nurse said to my mother ...‘You should speak English so that I can understand you.’ Many of the staff had no idea about the need to understand the emotional requirements of a Welsh speaking patient who was confused.”

~ user experience

In cases of serious illness or sensitive issues, suitable usage of language is of key importance as bilingualism is not simply a matter of having two languages which are both equally available at all times; so much depends on context, feelings, sickness or health.⁴

3.7. This is supported by international research which shows that clinical outcomes and satisfaction with care are enhanced when both parties speak the same language and understand the cultural context in which communication takes place.⁵

3.8. Additionally, strengthening language awareness within the care environment contributes to a sense of familiarity, belonging and satisfaction.

‘I feel more at ease speaking in my mother tongue. It’s like being at home with all the usual familiar worn and comfortable clutter around you. Speaking the second language is like being you but in someone else’s house.’⁶

⁴ Misell, Andrew, *Welsh in the Health Service: The Scope, Nature and Adequacy of Welsh Language Provision in the National Health Service in Wales*, (2000), p. 12. See for further information.

⁵ T.D.Goode, M.C. Dunne, S.M. Bronheim (2006) *The Evidence Base for Cultural and Linguistic Competency in Health Care*. The Commonwealth Fund Henderson S Kendall E & See L (2011). The effectiveness of culturally appropriate interventions to manage or prevent chronic disease in culturally diverse communities: a systematic literature review *Health and Social Care in the Community* 19 3, 225-249.

⁶ Davies, Elaine, *Different Words: Different Worlds?* – The concept of language choice in social work and social care, Care Council for Wales, p.20.

- 3.9. Many older people in residential care settings discover that their 'sense of self' and 'social recognition' diminishes because their body and mind is deteriorating. Some will have already suffered losses such as bereavement, their home, and some physical and mental skills. It's essential therefore to provide care that reflects a person's language and cultural background in order to respect their identity and maintain their dignity.⁷
- 3.10. In this context it's important to ensure people receive services that empower them so they can feel in control of their environment. There are many simple things that can help including:
- engaging with residents in their own language
 - supporting access to Welsh language radio, television and books
 - planning social activities that embrace the Welsh language
- 3.11. This is confirmed in Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action which states: *'We will ensure that service users and carers have a much stronger voice and greater control over their services'*.⁸
- 3.12. In the healthcare context, language and communication is a fundamental aspect of care that leads to increased compliance, greater patient satisfaction, improved outcomes and high quality care.⁹

(ii) Maintaining Professional Standards

- 3.13. All the above reasons for providing high quality services are supported by numerous professional standards in health, social services and social care.¹⁰ The NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) Code of Practice, for example, lists communication as a key requirement, as does the Welsh Government's Fundamentals of Care: *'People must receive full information about their care in a language and manner sensitive to their needs.'*¹¹
- 3.14. In the Care Council for Wales Code of Practice for Social Care Workers, there is a focus on ensuring dignity and respect at all times for the user. Code One states: *As a social worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers by:*
- *respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users*
 - *promoting equal opportunities for service users and carers*

⁷ Roberts, Gwerfyl; Jones, Enid; ap Rhisiart, Deian; *Giving Voice to Older People: Dignity in Care – Welsh Language Toolkit*, Welsh Government, (July, 2011), p.4. See for further information.

⁸ *Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action*, Welsh Assembly Government, (2000), p.3. See for further information.

⁹ Audit Commission 1993.

¹⁰ NMC Code of Practice, RCN 'Principles of Nursing', WG 'Fundamentals of Care', GMC Good Practice Guidance. See for further information.

¹¹ *Fundamentals of Care: Guidance for Health and Social Care Staff*, Welsh Assembly Government, p.7.

- *respecting diversity and different cultures and values*¹²

(iii) Responding to Users' Language Needs

- 3.15. Language 'choice' is a familiar concept to public service providers in Wales. Following the implementation of Welsh Language Schemes, public organisations are duty bound to treat English and Welsh on an equal basis when providing services, ensuring language choice for users.
- 3.16. In the context of health and social care, it is also important to recognise that the user is not always in a position to express their choice. People are often vulnerable, and not confident to ask for services in Welsh. Language must therefore be an integral part of the care provided.
- To a certain extent, we are all vulnerable consumers when we present ourselves at a doctor's surgery or a hospital since we are seeking help with an injury or illness, often to discuss quite sensitive and personal matters. Very few consumers are likely to feel able to demand their rights in such a situation, however confident they normally are.*¹³
- 3.17. Many vulnerable users, such as older people who suffer from dementia or stroke, also lose their second language; in this context again, as above, a Welsh language service is an integral part of their care.
- 3.18. Additionally, many toddlers only speak Welsh, and so providing services through the medium of English only is inappropriate for them:
- 'When X was really little, I'd left him for two minutes with a therapist who didn't speak Welsh. X had turned round and said "one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten," that is, every English word he knew at the time. She couldn't understand why he'd said this to her, so I had to explain, "He's using all the English words he can to communicate with you."*¹⁴
- 3.19. The concept of language choice and language need is also important during assessments. For young infants who only speak Welsh, it is extremely difficult for non-Welsh speaking health visitors to assess them effectively, casting doubts on the efficacy of the process and the outcome.
- 3.20. When a service meets the linguistic needs of the user it can make a real difference – as is shown in this example from a parent of a child with learning and physical disabilities:
- We receive a number of services in Welsh, for example, from our GP, our social worker, and all the education based services. In all these services, our son can be included fully in every discussion, he can express his opinion clearly and the professional can get to know him as an individual with his*

¹² *Code of Practice for Social Care Workers*, Care Council for Wales, p.7-8.

¹³ Misell, Andrew, *Welsh in the Health Service: The Scope, Nature and Adequacy of Welsh Language Provision in the National Health Service in Wales*, p.12.

¹⁴ Elaine Davies, *Welsh Speakers' Experiences of Health and Social Care Services*, (May, 2011) p.16.

*own opinion and ideas. Being a child with disabilities, he has to receive a lot of help with day to day things, so anything he can do for himself, such as communicating, is a real boost for his self-confidence.*¹⁵

- 3.21. The same is true for adults. One carer stated that when his mother was asked to sing *God Save the Queen* as part of her memory assessment she struggled. Yet if she had been asked to recite the words of *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau*, her response would have been quite different.¹⁶ This casts doubt on the suitability of the assessment for the user and shows that the service was incompatible with her language and cultural needs.
- 3.22. These examples provide evidence of the responsibility of services to respond to user choice and need for a Welsh language service. It must become an integral part of assessment and care. This will help to ensure best outcomes for users of health, social services and social care services in Wales.

(iv) Meeting Statutory Requirements

1993 Welsh Language Act

- 3.23. The 1993 Welsh Language Act established the principle that: *when providing services and administering justice for the people in Wales, that Welsh and English should be treated on an equal basis.*¹⁷
- 3.24. In Wales, each public organisation has a Welsh Language Scheme. The Welsh Language Board was responsible for regulating the requirements of the act but this has now transferred to the Welsh Language Commissioner. Over the years the Board became aware of the extent to which Welsh language schemes were implemented by health and social services bodies in Wales.
- 3.25. Having examined evidence, the Welsh Language Board became concerned about the inability of some bodies to report on their Welsh language indicators as part of their monitoring reports. The complaints received by the Board regarding the failure of some bodies to implement their language schemes served to reinforce these shortcomings.
- 3.26. During 2008-09, the Board conducted three formal investigations into the failure of NHS Trusts to provide services in Welsh according to their commitments. In the three cases, the Board found that these bodies had failed to fulfil the requirements of their Language Scheme to individuals in vulnerable groups.

¹⁵ Elaine, Davies, *Welsh Speakers' Experiences of Health and Social Care Services*, (May, 2011) p.13.

¹⁶ Elaine, Davies, *Welsh Speakers' Experiences of Health and Social Care Services*, (May, 2011) p.38.

¹⁷ The United Kingdom (1993), *Welsh Language Act*, p.1.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

- 3.27. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 created the post of Welsh Language Commissioner with functions that include:
- Promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language
 - Working towards ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language
 - Conducting inquiries into matters relating to the Commissioner's functions
 - Investigating interference with the freedom to use the Welsh language.¹⁸
- 3.28. The Welsh Language Schemes became the responsibility of the Commissioner from April 2012.
- 3.29. Over a period of time, Welsh language schemes will be replaced by statutory standards which will clarify which services people can expect to receive in Welsh, and ensure consistency.
- 3.30. Standards will be created in the following areas:
- service delivery
 - policy making
 - operational
 - promotion
 - record keeping.

The standards will place a duty on organisations to ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language, and will provide guidance on how organisations are expected to treat and use the Welsh language.¹⁹

European Regional or Minority Languages Charter

- 3.31. European legislation and compliance with the European Regional or Minority Languages Charter, establishes the principle that: *the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right.*²⁰

¹⁸ An introduction to the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner, (April 2012), p.4.

¹⁹ An introduction to the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner, (April 2012), pp.14-15.

²⁰ Council of Europe (1992), European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, p.1.

3.32. Article 13 of the Charter is concerned with 'Economic and Social Life' and is binding upon the UK Government:

*to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.*²¹

3.33. However, the most recent monitoring report from COMEX (Council of Europe's Committee of Experts) in 2010 showed that there is still much to be achieved:

*The committee of Ministers...recommends that the authorities of the United Kingdom...as a matter of priority...ensure that health and social care facilities offer services in Welsh.*²²

The Relationship between the Strategic Framework and other Welsh Government Policies

4.1. There is policy consensus that language is one of the key fundamentals of a high quality health and care service. The challenge now is to turn commitment into reality for the user. This Framework is aligned with public sector focus on providing services that are centred on the user and on outcomes.

4.2. In the context of health and social care, providing linguistically sensitive services can lead to improved outcomes and greater satisfaction for the user. This focus on the individual correlates to the objectives of this Framework.

4.3. The Government has shown commitment to improving Welsh language services in health and care since 2003 and in the 2012 document *A Living Language: A Language for Living* it states:
*it is evident that the provision of Welsh-language services remains piecemeal and too often it is a matter of chance whether people receive Welsh-language health and social care services.*²³

²¹ Council of Europe (1992), *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, pp.10-11.

²² Council of Europe, (2010), *ECRML (2010)4: Application of the Charter in the United Kingdom*, p.69.

²³ *A Living Language: A Language for Living*, Welsh Government, (2012), p.42.

“ Every social worker we’ve had over the years has been a Welsh speaker. That’s crucial for us. As a mother I’m the one who speaks for X, and I’m more comfortable in Welsh. But all the health clinics are in English; we have difficulty understanding sometimes. When you have someone who speaks Welsh, it makes such a difference. ”

~ user experience

4.4. There are many other examples of policies and strategies in health and social care which also refer to the Welsh language. All these documents acknowledge the need to improve Welsh medium provision²⁴; for instance the Independent Commission on Social Services and the Government’s ten year strategy for social services in Wales:

*The Welsh language is an essential part of Welsh culture and life. It must be reflected in developing effective local social care strategies as well as in planning, delivering and improving services for individuals whose language of preference is Welsh.*²⁵

4.5. Additionally, in 2011, the Strategic Framework for Social Services in Wales also acknowledged: “...the diversity of Wales and its status as a bilingual nation.”²⁶

²⁴ Healthcare Standards (2009), Making the Connections, Designed for Life (2005), states: “it is essential to have effective bilingual services in Welsh and in English in order to provide a high standard of care...”, Community Nursing Strategy for Wales states: “Teams will need to take account of the linguistic and cultural needs of their communities and be able to provide bilingual services in line with the Welsh Language Act and local needs.”

²⁵ *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities - A Strategy for Social Services in Wales over the next decade*, Welsh Assembly Government, (2007), p.20.

²⁶ *Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action*, Welsh Assembly Government, (2011), p.16.

- 4.6. The recently published *Together for Health – a Five Year Vision for the NHS in Wales* also provides clear direction to health organisations on the need to strengthen Welsh language services, stating: *The NHS...will enthusiastically implement the new Welsh Language Strategy.*²⁷
- 4.7. The Welsh Government's vision of seeing the Welsh language flourish is outlined in the new strategy *A Living Language: A Language for Living* which focuses on: "strengthening the use of the Welsh language in everyday life."²⁸ A key action in this strategy is the further development of Twf, which supports families to use Welsh at home. The initiative is implemented with the support of nurses and health visitors.
- 4.8. This Strategic Framework builds on foundations already in place such as: the Ministerial Task Group on Welsh Language Services in health and social services, and Welsh Language Schemes. Particularly noteworthy was the appointment of Welsh Language Officers within all NHS organisations, which has brought a real focus to this work. In the social services sector, the Care Council for Wales has highlighted the importance of Welsh in its work to promote standards of practice and training.
- 4.9. This Strategic Framework also aligns with a number of other Welsh Government policies and initiatives such as Health Care Standards, NHS Annual Quality Framework, Dignity in Care Toolkit, and the Health Literacy initiative.

The Present Situation

5.1 Examples of good practice

- 5.1.1. There are some examples of good practice in providing services to Welsh speakers in health, social services and social care. However, these examples often occur as a result of leadership, or the vision and commitment of individuals and teams within the workforce. The challenge now is to spread good practice in a systematic way to ensure that more high quality services are provided for Welsh speakers.

²⁷ *Together for Health – a Five Year Vision for the NHS in Wales*, Welsh Government, (October, 2011), p.11. See for further information.

²⁸ *A Living Language: A Language for Living*, Welsh Government, (2012), p.14.

“Everyone spoke Welsh.
I could speak to them
as if I was speaking
with my family at
home ... For me, being
able to speak Welsh
helps me get better.”
~ user experience

5.1.2. The examples of good practice, which can be found in Annex One of this Strategic Framework, show the strengthening of Welsh language services through:

- being a natural part of daily business
- individual and team initiatives
- information technology systems
- national leadership
- challenging perceptions
- workforce planning.

5.2 Welsh language services may be available on request, but are not integral to the service

5.2.1. While there are examples of a systematic approach to mainstreaming Welsh language services into the planning and delivery of services, this is not the norm across Wales. There are also differing levels of understanding among the workforce regarding the importance of the Welsh language as an essential component of care. This leads to inconsistency in the workforce's approach to the language and inconsistent services.

5.2.2. The research report by Roberts et Al (2004) provides empirical evidence that many factors influence language choice in healthcare including organisational attitude, internal systems and strategies. Users' personal attitudes and language skills also need to be taken into consideration.²⁹

²⁹ Roberts G, Irvine F, Jones P, Spencer L, Baker C and Williams C (2004) Report of a Study of Welsh Language Awareness in Healthcare Provision in Wales

- 5.2.3. The need to provide services in Welsh is often regarded as a matter for traditional Welsh language strongholds. However, demographic patterns reveal that a substantial number of Welsh speakers now live in south and east Wales. This reinforces the need to provide Welsh language services throughout the country.
- 5.2.4. Currently, it seems that the responsibility for articulating “language choice” rests mainly with the service user. Examples of service providers accepting responsibility for ensuring linguistically sensitive services are available are few and far between.

5.3 Lack of Welsh language capacity in the workforce and inadequate use of hidden Welsh skills

- 5.3.1. Planning and developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce is crucial to satisfy the needs of Welsh speaking users. In the past, there were some barriers preventing health, social services and social care organisations from recording language skills effectively. As a result, many organisations have developed their own systems to record the number and proficiency of staff able to speak Welsh.
- 5.3.2. More recently, information regarding the linguistic skills of NHS staff has been recorded as part of the Electronic Staff Record (ESR). Likewise, some work has been undertaken to collect data on the social service workforce.³⁰ However, data remains incomplete, and there is still some doubt about how effectively it is used for workforce planning.
- 5.3.3. The Welsh Language Board warned that without meaningful and up to date information regarding workforce language skills, there was a: *high risk that bodies may not be able to provide services in compliance with their statutory language schemes and leave themselves open to complaints and serious challenges.*³¹
- 5.3.4. It is worth noting that there are examples of good practice in some teams where language skills and workforce planning are recorded so Welsh speakers may be provided with suitable services. However, such examples are comparatively limited.
- 5.3.5. NLIH (National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare) is part of NHS Wales and supports its efforts to provide a first class health service. In 2008, a new national system for workforce planning was developed based on integrating service and workforce planning. The basic principle is that the process of service and workforce planning should meet the needs of the community that the health body serves.

³⁰ Overview of the work of the Ministerial Task Force since it was re-established in 2007, 5.12.4.

³¹ Overview of Annual Monitoring Reports 2009/10: Health Boards and NHS Trusts (Welsh Language Board, 2010), p. 12-13.

5.3.6. NLIH's latest guidelines state, for the first time, that health organisations are expected to: Demonstrate that sufficient consideration has been given to the *Organisations Welsh Language Scheme and language choice as a factor of healthcare*.³²

5.3.7. Without a sensible and mandatory process of collecting meaningful and up-to-date data on workforce language skills within both sectors, it is very difficult for organisations to plan their workforce in a way that meets the needs of the users and communities they serve. Also, a lack of data on Welsh speakers within the workforce impedes not just workforce planning, but also restricts the process of providing appropriate training and support to enable the workforce to develop their Welsh language skills.

5.3.8. The health service in Canada provides an excellent example of support and training given to staff to enable them to become bilingual.

*Language training is a key factor in ensuring that public servants achieve the language skills required by their positions. If bilingualism is acknowledged to be a basic skill, language training must be regarded as an essential component of learning and career development plans.*³³

5.3.9. Planning and reviewing the workforce in a meaningful, evidence-based way is a central factor to improve provision. The Welsh Language Board published a document: *Advice on Welsh Language Schemes for Health Boards and Trusts* in an attempt to achieve consistency and to create a programme that would improve services across Wales by placing Welsh speaking users at the heart of provision.

5.3.10. However, it appears that this statutory responsibility has yet to establish itself so that high quality services that meet the needs of Welsh speaking users become the norm in every health and social care organisation in Wales.

5.4 Lack of strong leadership and ownership of Welsh language services

(i) Leadership

5.4.1. Strong leadership and ownership of Welsh language services is vital. Frequently, Welsh is regarded as entirely the responsibility of the Language Officer and is not mainstreamed into key systems, such as workforce and service planning, education and training programmes, and Quality Frameworks.

³² *Workforce Planning Guidance 2011-2017*, (NLIH) p.1.

³³ *French to Follow: Revitalising the Official Languages in the Workplace*, Canadian Centre for Management Development, (2003), p.17.

- 5.4.2. Ownership and leadership of Welsh language services as a means of ensuring respect and dignity for users varies considerably within both sectors. This leads to inconsistency in the standard and quality of the service provided, and a lack of confidence amongst Welsh speaking users. This, in turn, leads to the credibility of Welsh medium services and user confidence in such services.
- 5.4.3. To create a positive corporate culture towards Welsh language services and to enable staff to become sufficiently confident to use Welsh, the language dimension needs to be mainstreamed into all levels within organisations. This will lead to the development of an ethos where all staff are aware that meeting the language needs of users is a core component in duty of care. It will also help to ensure that language is an integral part of planning and delivery of services.

(ii) Commissioning

- 5.4.4. The Welsh Language Scheme of every local authority and NHS organisation requires contractors providing public services on their behalf to comply with Welsh language legislation, which means they have to deliver services in Welsh and English.³⁴ Despite this expectation, services are not commissioned in a uniform way and as a result the expectation on contractors varies.
- 5.4.5. Examples of contracts and tendering processes that incorporate a linguistic requirement do exist, but these need to be refined, standardised and strengthened across all commissioned services to ensure consistent provision and high quality services for Welsh speakers.
- 5.4.6. With a high percentage of care services being commissioned by local government, or indeed directly by individuals, it is essential that the importance of language sensitivity is clear and explicit.
- 5.4.7. The process of procuring primary care services is very different. There are national agreements for providing primary care services often agreed at a UK level. To try and cater for the need for primary care services in Welsh, a few NHS organisations have added some local conditions to these national agreements.
- 5.4.8. Setting additional conditions is a way of overcoming national obstacles so suitable services can be provided for Welsh speakers. However, this process leads to inconsistent provision across Wales, with Welsh language services not being systematically mainstreamed within the contracting process.

³⁴ *Contracting Out Public Service Contracts and the Welsh Language: Advice under Section 3 Welsh Language Act 1993*, Welsh Language Board (2011), p. 9.

- 5.4.9. The Welsh Language Commissioner has published statutory advice on *Contracting Out Public Service Contracts and the Welsh Language*. This aims to assist public bodies to commission services that operate a principle of equality for Welsh speaking users. There is an urgent need to mainstream and standardise public body contract requirements across Wales, ensuring that the linguistic dimension is mainstreamed in a systematic manner, within the commissioning and contracting process.
- 5.4.10. The process of monitoring the requirements of public sector contracts is very important to ensure compliance. It is equally important to address the issue of non-compliance and to take action to address it.

5.5 Education, learning and development programmes that do not always acknowledge the link between Welsh language services and effective care

- 5.5.1. Language and effective communication are at the heart of high quality services. However, examples of education and training programmes in health, social services and social care that are available in Welsh, and that raise awareness of the importance of the Welsh language when providing services, are few and far between. This leads to a workforce that has no intellectual awareness of the Welsh language, and its importance as a crucial element of care. The concept of language need must be mainstreamed into education and training courses to ensure the workforce understands its importance in improving the quality of care.
- 5.5.2. The Care Council for Wales, as the regulator, sets expectations on providers of professional social work training courses and expects all programmes to include training on the Welsh language dimension. Providers are also expected to report annually on the language skills of their students.
- 5.5.3. Although data on the language skills of health, social services and social care workforces is incomplete, the Welsh language skills available within these staff must be put to best use and confidence to use Welsh at work developed. There are six centres across Wales that provide language courses for adults and it is vital that the relationship between these and health and care services is strengthened, so tailored programmes can be developed to meet the needs of the workforce.
- 5.5.4. The further education sector also needs to encourage more students to study their courses through the medium of Welsh. There is also a lack of provision within higher education and more should be done to encourage health and social care students to study through the medium of Welsh, or

bilingually. This situation creates the impression amongst students that the use of Welsh within health and care is an optional extra, instead of it being a core component.

5.5.5. The Care Council for Wales is also leading the way by ensuring that applicants to its social care programmes can undertake their studies and be assessed through the medium of Welsh. Students are also expected to show that they are proficient working in a bilingual context and are asked to provide evidence about delivering language sensitive services as part of their portfolios.

5.5.6. The recent establishment of the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* provides an excellent opportunity to develop and extend the provision available through the medium of Welsh in health and social care. The aim of the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* is to increase, develop, and broaden the range of Welsh medium study opportunities at universities in Wales. The Coleg works in partnership with universities to extend the range of academic provision, and train a new generation of bilingual lecturers.³⁵

5.5.7. The Care Council for Wales and NLIH have an opportunity to develop a strong relationship with the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*, and it is hoped that the *Coleg* will see health, social services and social care as priority areas in which to develop Welsh medium education.

5.6 Inadequate understanding of the need to mainstream Welsh language services within national policies, strategies and guidelines varies

5.6.1. In many policy documents it seems that the language dimension is not considered as a core element, leading to inequality for many users.

5.6.2. It is vital that organisations follow the Welsh Government's definition of mainstreaming which is:

to consider the Welsh language in all aspects of your work and in everything that you do, with the aim of ensuring that every opportunity is taken to:

- *promote and support the Welsh language*
- *contribute to the Government's vision of a truly bilingual Wales*
- *plan, provide and evaluate services in Welsh and English.*³⁶

³⁵ For further information about the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* go to <http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/>

³⁶ *Advice on Mainstreaming the Welsh Language*, (Welsh Language Board), p.4.

5.6.3. There are some strategies that highlight the need to mainstream Welsh language services for example, in *From Vision to Action: Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales*, the importance of ensuring that Welsh language services are included as a core element of planning social services for the future is highlighted:

*The diverse nature of Wales and the implications of language needs, religion, culture, ethnicity, age, disability, gender and sexual orientation have to be addressed in the planning and commissioning of services which are person centred and which maximise the community resources available.*³⁷

*One particular consideration which needs to be addressed is the matter of service users exercising voice and control in relation to the Welsh language. Language needs must be embodied in service and workforce planning, commissioning and delivery.*³⁸

5.6.4. The *Rural Health Plan* also provides a good example of how to mainstream Welsh language services into policy development noting:

*The Welsh Language plays an important part in rural life and in particular in health and social care. Data from the most recent census in 2001 identifies that the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in Wales reside predominantly in the rural communities...Workforce strategies need to consider the specific requirements of communities in terms of both clinical and language skills if true equality of provision is to be achieved.*³⁹

5.6.5. Good practice does exist across Wales but now we need to mainstream this systematically through the systems that shape the services. These are reflected in the six strategic objectives set out in this Framework.

³⁷ *From Vision to Action: Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales*, (November, 2010), p.20.

³⁸ *From Vision to Action: Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales*, (November, 2010), p.29.

³⁹ *Rural Health Plan: Improving Integrated Service Delivery Across Wales*, Welsh Assembly Government, (2009), p.15.

Strategic Objectives to Strengthen Services

To improve users' experience of health, social services and social care, the Welsh Government will work with its partners to strengthen Welsh language services by implementing the following strategic objectives:

6.1 Organisations to implement a systematic approach to Welsh language services as an integral element of service planning and delivery

- 6.1.1. Service providers have a responsibility to meet the needs of the users and communities that they serve. Providers need to collect, understand and analyse the linguistic needs of the communities that they serve to ensure services are designed and commissioned to meet users' needs.
- 6.1.2. To many Welsh speakers being able to communicate in their first language improves their experience of care services. IT systems need to be developed and implemented to record the language skills of staff, and to support front line staff to provide services for users who speak Welsh.
- 6.1.3. NHS organisations, social services, social care and all the services they commission need to ensure that people receive a person centred service that meets the needs of users who can speak Welsh.
- 6.1.4. Action is needed to:
 - mainstream Welsh language services into all aspects of planning, commissioning and delivery
 - ensure ICT systems support front line staff to provide appropriate services for users
 - ensure commissioned and contracted services provide a language sensitive service to users

6.2 Build on current best practice and plan, commission and provide care based on the 'Active Offer'

- 6.2.1. The vision, objectives and concepts noted in this Strategic Framework are not new to health, social services and social care. Examples can be found across both sectors that meet the language needs of users as a core element of their care.

“We’re not going to be able to have an ideal world where everyone speaks Welsh, but if the medical team has someone who’s a Welsh speaker, that’s a help.”

~ user experience

6.2.2. However, a more proactive approach to language need and choice is needed, with the responsibility for ensuring appropriate services transferred from the user to the provider. We recognise that this will take time but priority areas should be: dementia, stroke, mental health services and services for children under the age of five.

6.2.3. Action is needed to:

- raise awareness of the “Active Offer” principle
- mainstream the “Active Offer” principle into integrated dementia services as they are implemented
- map organisations’ ability to mainstream the “Active Offer” principle into other key service areas

6.3 Increase the capability of the workforce to provide Welsh language services in priority areas and language awareness among all staff

6.3.1. Increasing the ability of the workforce to speak Welsh in key service areas and ensuring language awareness amongst all staff, is essential. Workforce plans need to be informed by an analysis of community language needs and data on the Welsh language skills of the workforce, to ensure that service providers meet the needs of Welsh speaking users.

6.3.2. The challenge of addressing the shortage of Welsh speaking staff must also be overcome. It is no easy task and requires strong leadership from Human Resources departments. It is worth considering whether language skills could be identified in the same way as gender balance is considered within staff teams in service areas such as home care, stroke and dementia services.

6.3.3 Professional bodies and education and training providers need to respond appropriately to the shortage of Welsh speakers within the health and care sectors by promoting career opportunities among Welsh speakers.

6.3.4. Action is needed to:

- ensure workforce plans are informed by community language profiles and accurate data on the Welsh language skills of staff
- adopt a planned approach to tackle the shortage of Welsh speaking staff

6.4 Create leaders who will foster a supportive ethos within organisations so that Welsh speakers receive language sensitive services as a natural part of their care

6.4.1. Fostering a supportive ethos within organisations is vital because this will enable Welsh speakers to use the language and receive services through the medium of Welsh as a natural part of their care. Looking at existing good practice, the influence of front line individuals and teams is apparent.

6.4.2. However, we need a more consistent approach and leadership from every tier of the service. Senior officers have a responsibility to establish a supportive culture that ensures services are accessible to Welsh speakers through policy direction, recruitment processes, workforce planning, training programmes and continuing professional development. Service managers have a responsibility to ensure that this is implemented in day to day services.

6.4.3. Action is needed to demonstrate visible leadership from the top to help create an environment that respects the cultural identity of users.

6.5 Design and provide education, learning and development programmes that reflect the responsibility of the service to plan and provide Welsh language services

6.5.1. Education, learning and development programmes need to be developed as soon as possible for key service areas where failing to meet users' needs affect their care and outcomes.

6.5.2. The further and higher education sectors need to include the linguistic dimension as part of their education and training courses in health and care. The impact of language on the quality of care should also be a core element of all training programmes. NLIAH and the Care Council for Wales have important roles to ensure that progress is made in this area.

6.5.3. Action is needed in both the context of the current workforce and the needs of the future workforce to:

- mainstream the Welsh language dimension into education, training and professional development
- build capacity, language awareness and sensitivity among staff

6.6 Ensure that all national strategies, policies and leadership programmes mainstream Welsh language services

6.6.1. Ensuring Welsh language services are a core element of national policies and strategies is important because it will lead to greater consistency in service provision. To this end, all policies and strategies need to pass through the Welsh language gateway.

6.6.2. There is a body of international evidence that identifies the effect of language on users' outcomes and their safety. In Wales, research into how language sensitive services can be provided is somewhat limited. NISCHR (National Institute of Social Care and Health Research), who commission research into health, should invest in this field as a matter of priority.

6.6.3. It will also be important to ensure that the Welsh language dimension of care is mainstreamed into the implementation of both *Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action* and *Together for Health – a Five Year Vision for the NHS in Wales*. Both make clear statements on the importance of strengthening Welsh language services. The test will be how that is mainstreamed into services and reflected in people's experiences.

6.6.4. It will also be important to ensure that the Welsh language dimension is mainstreamed into the core functions of the health and social care inspectorates to ensure that service users receive services in Welsh.

6.6.5. Action is needed to:

- ensure strong leadership from government departments and the health and social care inspectorates to strengthen Welsh language services
- mainstream Welsh language services into the implementation of key policies such as *Sustainable Social Services for Wales – A Framework for Action* and *Together for Health*
- strengthen the evidence base and awareness of the importance of language as a care need

Turning Vision into Provision

Next Steps

- 7.1. The Welsh Government is aware that the objectives of this Strategic Framework will require a long term commitment, however much can be achieved by small changes which can be delivered quickly. Above all, it requires a culture change in health, social services and social care to both improve the experiences of Welsh speakers and ensure they receive services that meet their needs. Language need has to be seen as a core component of quality care.
- 7.2. Achieving progress in the first year (2013-2014) is crucial in order to:
- initiate immediate impact
 - ensure foundations are in place for future developments
 - reflect the determination of the Welsh Government to improve Welsh language services so they meet the needs of users.
 - help Welsh speaking users to feel their needs are being met and that the process of strengthening Welsh language services is being taken seriously.
- 7.3. Key expectations for this period will be on:
- strengthening leadership
 - mapping the workforce
 - increasing the focus on Welsh language skills and awareness in education, training and professional development
 - starting the process of accepting responsibility for meeting users language needs by implementing the "Active Offer" principle
 - mainstreaming Welsh language needs into key systems such as planning, commissioning and ICT
 - ensuring leadership from the Department for Health, Social Services and Children and other national bodies

“To help him understand, I’d translate what the doctor or nurse had said and would then translate for the doctor what X had said... It’s possible that they may not be able to pick up what they should if there was something really wrong, or even worse for us, they could pick up something which doesn’t exist.”

~ user experience

Making Progress

- 7.4. The Welsh Government has developed two Action Plans that identify the steps needed to strengthen Welsh language services to provide appropriate, quality care for those who need it. The experience of users speaks volumes and re-affirms the Welsh Government's determination to meet the care needs of Welsh speakers.
- 7.5. Following the publication of this Strategic Framework and Action Plans, the Minister intends to establish an Implementation Group to be responsible for taking this work forward. The group will report to the Ministerial Task Group, who in turn will advise the Health and Social Services Minister and Deputy Minister on the second cycle of the action programme. This emphasises the importance of ownership, commitment and accountability for the programme by its main stakeholders; the Welsh Government, NHS organisations and local authorities.
- 7.6. Progress will also be reviewed by COMEX (Council of Europe Committee of Experts) under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. Their next report will be published in 2014 when it is hoped that progress in strengthening Welsh language services will have been made.
- 7.7. The health and social care inspectorates have a particular role to set standards. It will be vital for them to report on Welsh language services during the next three years to provide baseline information that will inform future work.
- 7.8. Likewise, Chief Executives and Chairs of NHS organisations, Local Authority Leaders and Social Services Directors, are expected to show a robust commitment to improving services and ensuring Welsh language need is a key component of care.
- 7.9. This Framework sets out the action needed to ensure equality for people who use health, social services and social care services in Wales, giving them a much stronger voice and a citizen centred service.
- 7.10. We all have a responsibility to make this happen and ensure users across Wales are receiving quality services which meet their needs.

Monitoring

- 8.1. The monitoring systems for the strategic framework will be based on a set of principles which will:
- focus on users' experience of the service, not on creating a paper process
 - be mainstreamed into existing monitoring systems
 - be standardised to provide meaningful information on progress made in delivering the Action Plans
 - be mainstreamed into the two major policies which drive services – the Social Services Modernisation Programme and Together for Health
 - will report on the actions in the Action Plan
 - operate at national and local level, and report annually
 - dovetail with the Welsh Language Commissioner's reporting mechanisms for both existing Welsh Language Schemes and emerging Service Standards
 - reflect the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services' wish that accountability lies with her and the Ministerial Task-group.

“ Many of the staff had no idea about the need to understand the emotional needs of a Welsh speaking patient who was confused. ”

~ user experience

Annex One: Examples of Good Practice in Health, Social Services and Social Care

(1) A natural part of daily business

Careline+

Careline+ was established by Carmarthenshire County Council and deals with all calls from the public and professionals that involve social services. Around 93% of Careline staff are fluent Welsh speakers, and every job advert stipulates that Welsh is essential. Consequently, the service is available in the user's language of choice at all times and is a natural part of daily work.

Ceredigion Memory Clinic

The Clinic was established to provide support in Welsh for people with memory defects after a research project revealed that failing to consider linguistic needs when providing assessment can have an adverse effect on clients. A decision was made to record the workforce's language skills and offer training to staff on formal assessments in Welsh. This has enabled the clinic to provide users with a real language choice.

Ceredigion Acute Response Team

The Acute Response Team comprises of nurses and qualified healthcare support workers who provide a service for patients in their homes. As Welsh is commonly used in Ceredigion, all correspondence is available bilingually and, where practicable, the user is paired with a qualified nurse who speaks Welsh.

Drws y Nant Residential Care

Drws y Nant residential care provides care for young people aged 11-17 in Gwynedd. Every member of staff at Drws y Nant is bilingual, and communicating in Welsh with each other, and with service users, is a natural part of daily work.

(2) Individual and Team Initiatives

Welsh Rate of Reading Test

The Orthoptic department at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend developed a Welsh language reading test for children after discovering that the English Reading test was placing children with first language Welsh at a disadvantage during assessment. This enables children with reading difficulties who speak Welsh to take the test in their first language which makes it easier to identify problems and decide on suitable treatment.

Nursing Cadet Scheme

The Nursing Cadet Scheme provides an opportunity for 16-24 year olds to acquire and gain practical nursing skills together with theoretical knowledge while preparing for the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) programme at Bangor University. The programme includes a combination of modules plus work experience placements under mentor supervision. The Scheme has been very successful in stimulating and attracting local young people in north west Wales and assists in the process of recruiting more Welsh speakers to qualify in the field.

Social Worker Trainee Scheme

Gwynedd Council has developed trainee schemes in response to difficulty in recruiting social workers. This scheme provides an opportunity for bilingual staff who are already employed by the Council to follow a sponsored career path in order to become social workers. Being already employed by the council it also guarantees more qualified and proficient bilingual social workers.

(3) Information Technology Systems

Bilingual Computer Software Pack, Gwynedd Council Community Services

Gwynedd Council's Community Services have developed an electronic monitoring system for frontline home care workers, which is available bilingually. This mobile device enables home care workers to receive information and messages from the planning office in Welsh.

(4) National leadership

Care Council for Wales

The Care Council for Wales has demonstrated strong commitment to the Welsh language from the outset and has mainstreamed the language as a core element within education, learning and professional development programmes in the field of care. This has established an expectation upon education and training providers to ensure that every student and worker is aware of the language dimension. Over the years, the Care Council has also created and published a number of resources that raise awareness of the importance of the language dimension in the care sector.

North Wales Practice Learning Centre

North Wales Practice Learning Centre ensures that everyone who trains to become a social worker receives language awareness training, focusing on the Welsh language context of providing care. This ensures that all north Wales social workers are aware of the language dimension and language sensitive practice.

(5) Challenging perceptions

Speech and Language Therapy Service, Hywel Dda Local Health Board

The Speech and Language Therapy service has been successful in recruiting Welsh speakers in Ceredigion for ten years. Due to the high level of Welsh used in the area, a need to employ Welsh speaking therapists was identified, and as a result, every job advertisement states that Welsh language is essential.

(6) Workforce planning

Crossroads Care North Wales

Crossroads Care North Wales provides language choice as a core element of providing high quality care by ensuring service users have access to staff who are able to speak Welsh if it is needed. Welsh speaking Community Care Workers are also available to provide services for Welsh speaking users, as well as a care manager who can conduct assessments and reviews in Welsh when required.

Bryn yr Eglwys Care Home, Pentrefoelas, Conwy

Bryn yr Eglwys care home in Conwy provides care for the elderly, the majority of whom are first language Welsh speakers. As a result of the difficulty in recruiting Welsh speakers, it was decided that key members of the workforce would be sponsored to attend intensive Welsh language courses to enable them to provide services that meet the needs of their service users. In addition, a tutor was funded to conduct a six week course to enable the rest of the care home staff to communicate a little with service users in Welsh, to ensure they feel comfortable.

Annex Two: Index of Acronyms

Acronym	In Full
ADSS	Association of Directors for Social Services
COMEX	The European Council's Committee of Experts
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales
DHSSC	Department for Health, Social Services and Children
ESR	Electronic Staff Record
FEI	Further Education Institutions
HEFCW	Hughes Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
GMC	General Medical Council
(L)HB	(Local) Health Board
HIW	Health Inspectorate Wales
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
KSF	Knowledge and Skills Framework
LA	Local Authority
NHS	National Health Service
NLIAH	National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Wales
NISCHR	National Institute for Social Care and Health Research
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
PSMW	Public Service Management Wales
QOF	Quality and Outcomes Framework
SCWDP	Social Care Workforce Development Programme
SS	Social Services
SSIA	Social Services Improvement Agency
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WfIS	Workforce Information Systems
WG	Welsh Government
WLB	Welsh Language Board
WOD	Workforce and Organisational Development