

Draft Welsh Language Skills Strategy 2019 - 2023

Introduction

The Welsh Language Act 1993 legislates for the Welsh and English languages to be given equal status in the conduct of public business within Wales. Gwent Police (the Force) recognises its legal duty to provide non-emergency services to the public in Welsh and English, and is committed to ensuring that those services are of an equally high standard, irrespective of the language in which they are provided.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016 place a legal duty upon the Force and the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner (the PCC) to comply with Welsh language standards relating to planning and managing a bilingual workforce. The purpose of this Welsh Language Skills Strategy is to ensure that the Force and the PCC have a holistic, co-ordinated approach to planning and utilising their linguistic resources to ensure maximum benefit for the differing requirements of the citizens it serves. It brings together, in one strategy, the various aspects of equality of language choice in service provision, customer care, staff development and recruitment and selection that will take the Force and the PCC forward in a positive and realistic way, given the linguistic background of the five unitary authorities that fall under their protection.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Force, and the PCC, is to deal with the Welsh speaking public in the language of their choice and in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016, i.e. except for in emergency situations where offering language choice is not always possible. The objectives of this Welsh language skills strategy are to ensure that bilingual Welsh and English services to the public are adequately planned, funded, resourced and delivered, in terms of human resources. The strategy also gives clarity to how the Force and the PCC will seek to increase the number of staff who have bilingual skills, in order to continue the sustainable development of Welsh language services.

By implementing the Welsh Language Skills Strategy, the Force and the PCC will:-

- (i) Ensure that residents within the geographical boundaries of Gwent receive non-emergency services in their chosen language and in line with the requirements of the Force and PCC's Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notices 2016;

- (ii) Ensure that service users are treated equally, whatever their language needs and however they interact with the Force or the PCC;
- (iii) Ensure that officers and staff receive appropriate training so that they are able to deal effectively with service users who prefer or need to use the Welsh language when communicating;
- (iv) Ensure that recruitment and selection practices are aligned with the requirements of the Service's Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice 2016;
- (v) Ensure that the Welsh Language Skills Support Team is maintained and developed in order to enhance the work undertaken in points (i) to (iv) above and to demonstrate the ongoing commitment to improving Welsh language services;
- (vi) Ensure that all employees have access to the appropriate advice, guidance and support to enable them to correctly implement the Welsh language standards relevant to workforce planning;
- (vii) Where possible, work with appropriate partnership and community agencies to improve the range of Welsh language skills available to the Force and PCC;
- (viii) Ensure that internal monitoring is undertaken to provide accurate and meaningful statistical information to enable the Force and the PCC to report on the skills base and planned development of their bilingual workforces.

The Force and the PCC will continue to gather and maintain accurate information concerning the linguistic ability of its staff by requiring all officers and staff to state their level of Welsh language skills (0 – 5) within their personal record file on the GRS system.

This strategy to develop a bilingual workforce is one of proportionality which reflects the percentage of Welsh speakers in the five constituent unitary authorities. Therefore, a target of 10% has been set for the number of Welsh speaking staff employed (at varying levels of fluency), based on the figures from the 2011 Census..

Corporate Commitment

The sincere corporate commitment to providing comprehensive Welsh language skills training to its workforce is evidenced by the financial resources made available to support the ongoing training programme. The Force and the PCC recognise that the ability to understand and use the Welsh language to a good standard in the workplace from day to day is a very valuable skill. Line managers have been made aware that increasing the number of Welsh speakers employed by the organisation is a strategic objective, and

subsequently line managers are required to make every effort to support and encourage members of staff who are learning Welsh. All officers and staff are required to complete mandatory Level 1 Welsh language skills training as well as a refresher session every three years following the initial training.

Service Planning and Delivery

Managers are required to consider the human resource aspect of planning and delivering services in Welsh. For example, when planning a new initiative aimed at the public, managers should consult with the Welsh Language Policy Officer to identify any implications for Welsh delivery arising from the proposed initiative. Managers must consider how the initiative will be delivered in both Welsh and English to the same standard and identify the staff that have the Welsh language skills for the task. If a department/team is regularly engaging with the public, then there is clearly a need for a sufficient number of Welsh essential posts within that department/team to deliver any public facing initiatives in both Welsh and English.

When a line manager is evaluating a new or existing post, they must utilise the flow chart (Appendix 1) designed to determine whether or not Welsh language skills are essential or desirable for the role.

Emergency Services

With regard to the Control Room, although the Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016 does not place a legal requirement upon the Force to answer 999 calls in Welsh, however due to the legal requirement to be able to deal with calls to 101 in Welsh the Force will continue to use positive recruitment initiatives aimed at Welsh speakers.

Non-emergency services

Besides providing emergency response, the Force has a number of public safety functions to discharge, primarily educating communities about crime prevention and minimising the risk of road traffic collisions. The Force has a number of education programmes that are targeted specifically at disaffected young people with the aim of trying to eliminate anti-social behaviour. These educational programmes must be offered in both Welsh and English, therefore the capacity to deliver in either language must be built-in to the staffing structure of the relevant teams.

Other services provided to the public include recruitment awareness days, ride along opportunities, open days etc. Managers and event organisers must ensure that they have accounted for the Welsh language human resource needs in the planning and delivery of these events.

Designation of Welsh Essential and Welsh Desirable Posts

An audit of posts will be conducted during 2019 and a number of specific roles will be identified as Welsh essential. The term “Welsh essential” may apply to an individual post where the ability to speak, read and write Welsh at a specific level is a clear necessity, e.g. Welsh Language Officer, Welsh Translator. It may also apply to a team or function as the essential requirement to deliver public facing services bilingually and having the skills set available to do so, on a continuous basis. Welsh essential roles within the Force will carry the proviso that Welsh is essential to the level required of that individual post.

All posts not designated as “Welsh essential” will be designated as “Welsh desirable”. The “desirable” element will come into play **only when** two candidates have scored equally in the selection process. Where a candidate is a Welsh speaker they will be awarded an additional mark if they have demonstrable Welsh language skills as a learner (levels 1 – 3 speaking) or 2 marks if they can demonstrate level 4 or 5 Welsh language skills (speaking). It is hoped that this strategy of awarding a tangible value to Welsh language skills will enable Gwent Police to recruit more Welsh speakers and learners.

Attached as Appendix A is a flow chart that will assist line managers and HR colleagues in deciding if a post needs to be tagged as Welsh essential or Welsh desirable. If a post is determined to be “Welsh essential”, then the levels of Welsh on the nationally agreed framework (originated by NWP) will be used to decide upon the correct level of Welsh language skills which are essential for that role. It is our intention to make the skills framework available to the public via our website so that our definitions of skill levels become more widely known and potential applicants can see these in advance and prepare accordingly.

Where a Welsh essential post becomes vacant, every effort will be made to recruit an individual who has the linguistic skills relevant to the job description. In addition, the Force will undertake positive action initiatives to encourage applications from Welsh speakers as part of its recruitment policy.

Failure to recruit a Welsh speaker to a Welsh essential post

Where the Force has advertised a Welsh essential post but no suitable candidates have applied, the post will be advertised for a second time ensuring that the advert is placed in publications targeted at Welsh speakers, e.g. Golwg 360 and Saffle Swyddi. Depending on the timescale for recruitment to a particular post, adverts may also be placed in the Papurau Bro.

If the post remains unfilled by a Welsh speaker after having been advertised a second time, then an appointment will be made. Documentary evidence detailing the methodology and advertising techniques that have been used in the efforts to recruit a Welsh speaker to a Welsh essential post must be retained for scrutiny and audit purposes.

Reception Services

Staff who provide cover for the Reception at Headquarters, and Station Enquiry Officers, receive call handling training to enable them to progress telephone calls through the medium of Welsh to a basic standard. They also receive training to meet and greet Welsh speaking visitors. If it should be necessary to use agency staff on Reception, then these staff will be bilingual.

Training and Development

The Force recognises that in order to continually improve the range of bilingual services it can offer, training existing staff will play an important role alongside recruitment of new staff who already have bilingual skills. The Force has chosen to seek volunteers amongst existing staff who are willing and able to learn Welsh and a flexible approach has been adopted to offer a choice of routes for these volunteers.

Additionally, colleagues who have latent Welsh language skills (perhaps as a result of attending Welsh medium schools) will be offered the opportunity to refresh their skills. Refresher training will be paid for by the Force.

Further information concerning the details of the Force's Welsh language training package, see the Force's Welsh Language Training Strategy.

Where an individual has indicated that wish to enrol on a Welsh language skills course, this should be noted in their Personal Development Review and progress against the learning objectives will be monitored by the Welsh Language Policy Officer in conjunction with the individual and their line manager.

Welsh Language Skills Support Team

A Welsh Language Skills Support Team is to be formed from Welsh speakers and learners amongst the staff. The purpose of this Team is to assist the Force in delivering Welsh language services. Each member of the Team will assist by providing agreed Welsh language services where there are not currently bilingual staff in a particular department or station.

Membership of this Team is voluntary. No Welsh speaker will be obligated to use Welsh in their role unless this is stated in their contract of employment or they volunteer to become a Team member.

Members of the Team will use their skills to assist in the provision of Welsh language services in the following ways:

- Respond to telephone enquiries
- Engage in face-to-face conversations/meetings with service users
- Represent the Force at meetings with Welsh language organisations, e.g. Mentrau Iaith, the Urdd
- Give media interviews
- Act as mentors for staff who are learning Welsh
- Travel from one location to another to provide a service in Welsh
- Attend meetings of the Welsh Speakers and Learners Network at least once a year
- Foster a supportive and constructive attitude towards the provision of services in Welsh amongst all staff.

These duties will be undertaken in addition to a member's own specific workload. Team members are able to claim time off in lieu (TOIL) which will be accrued in respect of any over time worked to provide a Welsh service and to attend vocational training update sessions.

Team members are not restricted to undertaking duties related to their usual role, although they can choose that option. Where Team members indicate a desire to receive vocational training to enable them to perform Welsh language duties normally outside their substantive role, every effort will be made to provide the necessary training and experience.

A directory of those members of the Welsh Language Skills Support Team will be made available on the Intranet.

Recruitment and Selection

All officers and staff responsible for writing or evaluating job descriptions and departmental managers must ensure that the Welsh Language Skills Strategy is adhered to when advertising for or appointing new staff, or when re-evaluating a job description or staff appraisal is undertaken.

When a new post is created, or when an existing post becomes vacant and is reviewed, the line manager responsible for that post will evaluate the linguistic requirements of that role/team.

Any Welsh language skills deemed essential or desirable for a role must be noted within the person specification for that post. The level of Welsh deemed necessary for any given role must be appropriate to the tasks and responsibilities associated with that post, e.g. it is not necessary to ask for

high level written Welsh skills if the post under consideration is a receptionist. On the other hand, it is reasonable to require a Communications Officer to have an advanced level of written Welsh proficiency. The definitions of the five levels of Welsh language skills are attached as Appendix B. Job Descriptions must clearly indicate any tasks that are required to be performed in Welsh..

Application for Posts

Application forms used by the Service are available as separate Welsh and English versions. If an applicant completes the application form in Welsh, this may be taken as a preference to communicate with the Force in Welsh and any subsequent correspondence or telephone conversations should be in Welsh.

Where the Force offers the facility to apply for posts on-line, then the electronic application process and supporting computer software will be available and accessible in Welsh and English. When the Force issues application forms, language choice of the applicant is to be ascertained and recorded. All future correspondence with that individual will be in the language of their choice.

Applicants may choose to be interviewed in Welsh or English, even if the post they are applying for is not Welsh essential.

Deployment of Resources

Managers are expected to be aware of the linguistic abilities of staff for whom they are responsible and to allocate those skills in order to facilitate or improve upon the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Skills Strategy.

No member of staff shall suffer detriment by agreeing to take on additional linguistic responsibilities. Staff who have agreed to use their skills for the benefit of the Service shall be fully consulted as to how their skills will be best utilised by their department or team, or by the organisation as a whole.

Welsh Language Skills Audit

Colleagues will be required to check annually and, if necessary, update their Welsh language skills and qualifications on GRS.

Information concerning the Welsh language skills of new entrants will be extracted from application forms, uploaded onto the HR database and notified to the Welsh Language Policy Officer who will then make contact with the

individual to appraise their current level of skill and provide advice on any training needs.

The results of Welsh language skills audits will be used to:

- update the Welsh Language Skills Strategy
- inform future planning with regard to human resource management
- improve the range and quality of Welsh language services to the public
assess the impact of the Welsh language skills training programme
- record statistical information for use in reporting to the Welsh Language Commissioner

Monitoring

The following aspects of the Welsh Language Skills Strategy will be monitored to evaluate its effectiveness through Local Performance Indicators (LPis):

What	How	Frequency
Welsh language skills training	Learning & Development Department LPI	Quarterly
Level 1 Welsh language skills training	Learning & Development Department LPI	Quarterly
Recruitment to Welsh essential posts	HR Department LPI	Quarterly
Activity of Welsh Language Skills Support Team	Diversity & Inclusion Department LPI	Quarterly
Number of application forms completed and returned in Welsh	HR Department LPI	Quarterly

Appendix A



Welsh Essential -
Desirable Flow Char

Appendix B



Welsh Language
Skills Levels Descript