**Cardiff University - Welsh Linguistic Skills Strategy**

**Introduction**

Cardiff University, as a public sector employer in Wales, has developed its Welsh Language Scheme to actively promote the principle that the Welsh language will be treated no less favourably than the English language in the conduct of its business. The Scheme sets out how the University will work to embed the Welsh language within its culture and working practices.

One means by which the University can move towards meeting its commitments under its Welsh Language Scheme is through the development of a Welsh Linguistic Skills Strategy (WLSS). Although the primary aim of the WLSS is to ensure that that University staff, now and in the future, have the skills required to deliver services in Welsh and English, it will be a significant enabler in ensuring that

1. there is identification of those posts/teams that require bilingual staff in order to be able to provide a bilingual service, be it academic or in the professional services;
2. there is a clear understanding of existing linguistic skills and skills needs; and
3. learning, development and recruitment activities can be coordinated to meet the current and future requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme.

**Application**

The University has committed to be able to serve Welsh speakers and English speakers alike “on a basis of equality”. The University will make the staffing arrangements necessary to ensure that it has sufficient Welsh speakers who possess the appropriate communication skills to provide a service through the medium of Welsh in those departments and Schools where there is contact with the public in Wales. This requires a clear understanding – now and in the future - of existing skills, and a commitment to develop greater linguistic capacity in future if the need exists. The availability of Welsh language learning & development (across a range of levels) and a commitment to facilitate staff access to this learning will therefore, be a priority.

Actions:

1. Undertake an audit of the Welsh language skills held by current staff

Data held for existing staff skills in respect of Welsh language (spoken and written) fluency to be reviewed. Identification of where Welsh speakers are employed (roles) and their confidence levels in using the language. Initially this data might be captured by online questionnaire to ensure that something is in place for all staff. Longer term this on-going audit responsibility can become part of management review processes and employee skills records can be updated directly as part of these processes

For staff joining the University data concerning Welsh language capability will be captured as part of the application and/or appointment process.

Undertake to confirm where staff not currently using their Welsh in the workplace would be willing to and what, if any, support they would require to do so.

1. Undertake an audit of posts across the University to establish the requirement for bilingual skills (where Welsh language is essential, desirable or not currently required).

Cross reference role holders with language skills in posts to establish current areas of good bilingual provision and the priorities for addressing any bilingual skills deficits in roles/teams.

1. Ensure Welsh language proficiency is identified in roles to be recruited into on an on-going basis, and the requirement to recruit staff with appropriate levels of Welsh linguistic ability is included in the job description and person specification.

Ensure that a requirement (not willingness) to learn Welsh is part of job offers in those roles where Welsh language skills are deemed essential, but a Welsh speaker cannot be found. Language training to the appropriate level will be provided.

Where Welsh is non-essential, but relevant to the role, the requirement for Welsh should be listed under the desirable criteria.

1. Identify ‘meet & greet’ roles where standard bilingual responses are expected, provide appropriate training, and give encouragement to staff to use at least minimum responses and then, if appropriate, to refer enquiries to a more confident/skilled Welsh speaking colleague.

Identify back-up support/ability to refer within teams.

Appropriate learning/training to be provided in respect of language skill development.

1. Review and confirm existing learning opportunities/language training available through the Welsh for Adults Centre/Canolfan Cymraeg i Oedolion and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol suitable to address the various levels (e.g. from meet and greet to full transactional interaction, written or spoken only, technical discussion & education provision); identify where learning needs cannot be met by the open programme provided by the Centre/Coleg, and consider bespoke arrangements or the availability of alternative providers.

Develop a network of Welsh language mentors (via the University’s Welsh Language Staff Network) to provide support and encouragement to learners in practicing their language skills, and to build confidence. Training in mentoring skills to be made available.

1. Commit to a programme of awareness raising of the University’s Welsh Language Scheme to assist line managers in understanding the implications of the Scheme in practice, and specifically the need to support learning and development opportunities for staff.
2. The University recognises that the ability to understand and to use the Welsh language to a good standard in the workplace from day to day is a very valuable skill that can assist staff in providing a better service and ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, there is a requirement for active encouragement through the College and Professional Services structures and via the usual line management processes for staff who do not currently have Welsh language skills to engage with funded language learning.
3. Monitoring & evaluating of performance in respect of skill development and the return on investment to be undertaken annually.

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