



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

More *than just* words....

Action Plan 2019–2020

Gofal da, gofal dwyieithog
Good care, bilingual care

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Mwy na geiriau / More than just words



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Ministerial Foreword

Every day health and social care professionals across Wales work hard to provide high quality services. For many families and individuals high quality care means the ability to use services through the medium of Welsh, because they feel more at ease in their own language. Many people feel very vulnerable when they come into contact with the sector and don't feel confident to ask for services in Welsh. Actively asking people's language preference and offering services in Welsh has been a key principle of *More than just words*. It means creating a change of culture that places the 'Active Offer' at the heart of health and care services and placing responsibility on service providers and not with the user.

Progress reports on implementing the *More than just words* follow-on strategic framework have indicated progress has been achieved and there are pockets of good practice but more work is needed to develop a more consistent approach across services. What has been evident is the increase in awareness and understanding of the need to offer services in Welsh. The main question now being asked by health and social services providers across Wales is not 'why' in relation to the value and need to deliver services in Welsh but on the 'how' they can plan and develop the infrastructure, capacity and capability to deliver care in Welsh.

In order to further assess impact we have commissioned an independent evaluation of *More than just words* which will report back on its final findings in 2020. We are on a journey to strengthen Welsh language provision in health and social care services and are committed to maintaining momentum and delivering further

progress. Until the findings of the evaluation are known, this interim action plan for 2019 and 2020 will contribute to the overarching vision set out in our Cymraeg 2050 strategy and increase the use of Welsh in delivering health and social care services.

To achieve the objectives set out in this action plan leadership must be demonstrated across every level of all organisations. Senior members of staff have a responsibility to establish a supportive culture to ensure that services are accessible to Welsh speakers and service managers have a responsibility to ensure that this is implemented in day-to-day services.

The enabling actions outlined in the interim action plan sits alongside the Welsh language standards and together they aim to deliver further improvements in Welsh language services that are patient centred and build on what has already been achieved.



Vaughan Gething AM
Minister for Health
and Social Services



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Introduction

The Welsh Government launched the successor strategic framework for Welsh language services in health and social care – *More than just words* in March 2016. The 3-year action plan included actions to be delivered during 2016–2019.

People choose to receive health and social care services in Welsh because that is what they prefer and right for them. For others, however, it is more than a matter of choice-it is a matter of need.

This is particularly true of the elderly, people with dementia or people who have had a stroke, or young children who speak only Welsh. It is also important to recognise that the individual is not always in a position to express their preference. People are often vulnerable when accessing health and social care services and lack confidence to ask for services in Welsh. The 'Active Offer' of a Welsh language choice to patients, i.e. without patients having to ask, must therefore be an integral part of the care provided.

An independent evaluation of *More than just words* was commissioned in October 2018 to assess progress and its impact. The evaluation will report back on its initial findings in summer 2019 with a final report to be received in May 2020. In order to maintain the momentum the Welsh Language Partnership Board in Health and Social Care has agreed to produce an interim action plan for 2019 and 2020 that takes on board recent developments including the passing of the Regulations on the Welsh language standards for the health sector and publication of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy that centres action under three key themes:

**Theme 1:
Increasing the number of Welsh speakers**

**Theme 2:
Increasing the use of the Welsh language**

**Theme 3:
Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context**

In Wales nearly 200,000 members of staff provide services in health and social care, with patients interacting with the service over 20 million times a year. Given the number of staff and the high level of interaction with the public, this sector has the potential to make a valuable contribution to Cymraeg 2050.

Language standards for local authorities (and therefore its social services function) came into force on 30 March 2016 and standards for the health sector will come into force on 30 May 2019. The standards require organisations to develop the Welsh language skills of their staff, to provide language awareness training and to assess the need for Welsh skills when advertising posts. The standards for the health sector also includes publishing a 5-year-plan setting out the extent to which they will be able to increase their ability to offer clinical consultations in Welsh.

The standards are an important step forward in delivering services in Welsh in health and social care. Actions in future *More than just words* frameworks need to sit alongside the standards regime and focus on enabling actions to improve Welsh language provision. Some of the actions included in the 2016-2019 framework now fall under the standards and will be monitored for compliance by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Further information about how the standards work alongside *More than just words* can be found in Annex 1.

To supervise, encourage and support delivery of the *More than just words* framework, the Welsh Government established the Welsh Language in health and social care Partnership Board.

The board and its members will continue to have a key role to play in monitoring how this action plan will be implemented. The Welsh Government is also mindful of the importance of the ownership, commitment and accountability of its key stakeholders to achieve the actions set out in the plan and the importance that leadership is demonstrated across all levels in each organisation named as a delivery lead and partner.

The 'Active Offer'¹ continues to be a key principle of *More than just words* and remains a central plank of this action plan. It is positive to note that there is a growing awareness of the 'Active Offer' in the health and social care sectors. The priority has been on providing the 'Active Offer' on the front line but more needs to be done in enabling this on a whole system basis.

Healthier Wales: our plan for health and social care was published in October 2018 in response to the *Parliamentary Review* report. The plan sets out a whole system approach to health and social care, in which services are only one element of supporting people to have better health and wellbeing throughout their whole lives. It will be a 'wellness' system, which aims to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and to reduce the impact of poor health. Both *A Healthier Wales* and the guidance for the *Transformation Fund* to support implementation of the plan, particularly new models of seamless health and social care promoted by Regional Partnership Boards, have a particular focus on Welsh language provision.

1. The 'active offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it.

In addition to the 'Active Offer' a focus on the following will be required, linked to themes two and three of Cymraeg 2050, in the action plan for *More than just words* for 2019–2020:

Theme 2: Increasing the use of the Welsh language

Workforce planning including recruitment of staff with Welsh language skills.
Ensure that staff take advantage of the language training available.
Building the confidence of staff with some Welsh language skills to use the language.
Make greater use of information and analysis including population profiles to inform service planning and commissioning.

Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context

Ensure that the Welsh language is mainstreamed into technology/terminology.
Organisations to demonstrate leadership and take ownership.

The actions in the plan are structured around the two themes above and build on the work to date of the 2016–2019 framework objectives and actions.

Action Plan 2019–2020

Theme: Increasing the use of the Welsh language

Objective 1 – people to be assured that their Welsh language needs and choices influence and are rooted in the **planning, commissioning and contracting** of health and social care services and are regularly reviewed.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
I.1	NHS Wales and Social Services departments use Welsh language population and community profiles to assess current and future workforce skills in respect of service planning/ contract specifications/ service level agreements. In the case of the NHS this will be a requirement of their IMTP / annual plans. (Social Services Directors have committed to work towards the Welsh language skills of the workforce to reflect the community they serve.)	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services	Report on progress in April 2020
I.2	Baseline survey on Welsh language provision in GP practices to be undertaken to support work within clusters to identify steps to improve Welsh language service provision.	Welsh Government Directors of Primary Care Primary Care Clusters	October 2019
I.3	Changes made to the Regulations for Welsh language duties to be placed on independent primary care contractors.	Welsh Government	June 2019
I.4	Introduction of the National Workforce Reporting System in Wales and single platform for primary care workforce advertising. The reporting system will enable the collection of Welsh language skills of GPs and practice staff as part of the data collection.	Welsh Government NHS Wales Shared Services (NWSSP)	March 2020

Objective 2 – people are aware of the ‘Active Offer’ and there is a visible commitment and active engagement in providing care centred on their language preference.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
2.1	Communicate the ‘Active Offer’ to all staff within NHS Wales, local authorities and commissioned services.	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services	Reports on progress from leads in July 2020
2.2	Progress on implementation of language awareness and the ‘Active Offer’ in the agreed shared induction framework and the vocational qualification reform programme.	Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) Social Care Wales (SCW)	Report on progress in March 2020
2.3	Best practice to be shared and rolled out to staff involved in delivering health and social care. The three regional <i>More than just words</i> regional forums will provide a report on progress in sharing best practice to the Welsh Language in Health & Social Care Partnership Board.	Welsh Government NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services SCW Welsh Language Partnership Board <i>More than just words</i> regional forums	April 2020 and ongoing
2.4	Promote the importance of Welsh language skills in health and social care careers including further development of Careers Wales information portal and roadshows/engagement sessions with schools and colleges to include webinars/online tools.	Welsh Government Careers Wales Social Care Wales NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services	Ongoing
2.5	The Cymraeg Byd Busnes pilots in primary care to be developed to support sharing of best practice. A toolkit for primary care to be produced as part of this work.	Welsh Government Cymraeg Byd Busnes NHS Wales Chief Executives	March 2020

Objective 3 – people can be assured that **education** and professional bodies understand the importance of and have Welsh language needs embedded in curriculums, training programmes and policies.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
3.1	The importance of Welsh language is embedded within the Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Wales.	HEIW SCW	SCW/HEIW to report progress to Partnership Board in July 2019
3.2	All resources which have been developed by FEIs, HEIs and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol which could help health and social care staff to provide Welsh language services to be made available where feasible to all staff, regardless of whether or not they are current students.	Higher Education Institutions Further Education Institutions Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol NWIS Welsh Government SCW	Report on progress in July 2020
3.3	The Welsh Government together with higher education and further education institutions to build on the work to further improve provision of Welsh medium courses in health and social care, and identify additional opportunities to progress the agenda.	Welsh Government HEIW HEFCW Higher Education Institutions Further Education Institutions Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol SCW	Report on progress in July 2020
3.4	Colegau Cymru and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to work together in order to identify Welsh language pathways within the health sector to progress from further education to higher education.	Colegau Cymru/ Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	Report on progress in July 2020
3.5	Map the current situation in terms of bilingual trainees and bilingual provision in education and training programmes and establish clear plans when commissioning to address areas identified by the mapping as needing strengthening.	Welsh Government HEIW	Report on progress in March 2020
3.6	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the NHS and social care providers to further work together to enable Welsh speaking students to be paired/mentored with Welsh speaking staff.	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services Colegau Cymru	Report on progress in March 2020

Objective 4 – to increase the **use of Welsh** across health and social care workplaces.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
4.1	Support to be given to staff to deliver services in Welsh, focusing in particular on encouraging and empowering Welsh speakers to use and develop their Welsh language skills.	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services SCW	Report on progress in April 2020
4.2	Raise awareness and encourage staff to register and complete the on-line Work Welsh learning courses for the health and care sector produced by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. (Expectation is for all staff with level 1 skills to complete the course as part of their induction training/continuing professional development).	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services SCW National Centre for Learning Welsh	March 2020 and ongoing
4.3	To further promote best practice, including use of tutors to develop the Welsh language skills of staff and promotion of relevant resources and provision including relevant Work Welsh programmes.	National Centre for Learning Welsh NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services SCW	March 2020

Theme: Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context

Objective 5 – people are assured that health and social care **inspectors** are reviewing and reporting on their experiences of services.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
5.1	Care Inspectorate Wales and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales to continue to inspect and report on the 'Active Offer' and experience of Welsh language services.	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)	HIW and CIW to report on progress by July 2019 and ongoing
5.2	The evaluation work to assess progress and impact of <i>More than just words</i> will include the gathering and views of service providers and service users.	Welsh Government	May 2020

Objective 6 – people are assured of the commitment of those in **leadership** roles across health and social care on providing and developing Welsh language services according to choice and need.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
6.1	Delivery of a Healthier Wales to further embed Welsh language needs and requirements. The Long Term Plan will include a commitment to commission the development of a long-term workforce strategy for HEIW and SCW. This will happen through making best use of Welsh speaking employees within the current workforce, providing Welsh language learning/using opportunities for all staff, and through the recruitment of more practitioners with Welsh language skills.	Welsh Government NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services SCW Welsh Language Partnership Board	Ongoing in line with the delivery framework for a Healthier Wales.
6.2	Further support the development of the regional <i>More than just words</i> forums across Wales which draw together representatives from a number of health and care organisations in order to promote joint working, share best practice and support progress on a regional level.	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services Higher Education Institutions Further Education Institutions SCW	Ongoing
6.3	The 'Active Offer' and the need to provide services in Welsh to be further incorporated into national guidance on assessment, both statutory and non-statutory. This includes professional clinical assessment in health and social care.	Welsh Government	March 2020
6.4	Senior leaders demonstrate commitment to progress in Welsh language services including ensuring they have Welsh language officers and resources in place to deliver and support the work within their own organisations.	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services	Ongoing

Objective 7 – people are assured that the Welsh language is mainstreamed into health and social care technology/terminology systems.

Action Number	Action	Lead Responsibility	Completed by:
7.1	The reporting template to evidence the planning and provision of Welsh language services in the NHS Outcomes and Delivery Framework to be revised for 2019/20 and feedback on reports to be shared.	Welsh Government	April 2020
7.2	Ensure future creation of on-line digital platforms and systems in health, social services and social care services consider Welsh language considerations from the outset. Wherever possible improvements of Welsh language capacity of current systems to be undertaken, especially those capturing workforce skills information, language preference, when an 'Active Offer' is made and share information across both health and social care.	NHS Wales Chief Executives Directors of Social Services NWIS Welsh Government	Ongoing
7.3	Guidance and practice is developed and agreed on standardised means for Welsh language preference tracking on patient records for staff in health and social care.	Welsh Government with members of the task and finish group	March 2020
7.4	Questions, scripts and standards for Welsh language preference tracking are agreed, thoroughly tested prior to rollout and built consistently into health and social care systems.	Welsh Government NWIS	March 2020
7.5	Support the development of further dictionary resources, a high standard terminological corpus to support learners and fluent Welsh speakers in health, social services and social care.	Welsh Government	Ongoing

Annex I: Welsh language standards

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gives the Welsh language official status in Wales and also provides for Welsh language standards which can be imposed on a range of bodies across the public and private sector. The standards replace and build on the Welsh Language Schemes. They will make it easier for people to access Welsh language services, and use Welsh in their everyday lives. The purpose of the Welsh language standards is to:

- improve the services Welsh speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh and increase the use people make of Welsh language services
- ensure clarity to Welsh speakers on what services they can expect to receive in Welsh
- make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations came into force on 30 March 2016 and allows the Welsh Language Commissioner to impose standards on local authorities (and therefore social services). Regulations making Welsh language standards applicable to Health Boards and Trusts were made by the Welsh Assembly in March 2018 (The Welsh Language Standards No.7 Regulations 2018) and they came into force at the end of June 2018. The Welsh Language Commissioner has since issued compliance notices to those bodies and they will begin complying with standards from 30 May 2019. As well as dealing with services they provide to the public, standards in the regulations include the requirement for bodies to develop the Welsh language skills of their staff; provide Welsh language awareness training and assess the need for Welsh language skills when advertising posts. For the health sector there is also a standard requiring NHS bodies to publish a five year plan setting out the extent to which they are able to carry out

clinical consultations in Welsh and the actions they intend to take to increase their ability to do so. All bodies must also develop the Welsh language skills of their staff and keep a record of those skills as well as showing in their service change and improvement plans that they have paid due regard to the need to actively offer services through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh language standards do not apply to primary care providers, including GP surgeries, apart from a small number managed directly by health boards. To coincide with the introduction of the Welsh language standards for the health sector the Welsh Government has agreed with all four representative bodies to include Welsh language duties in the contracts/terms of service for independent primary care contractors. These relate into the relevant standards for health boards and focus on promotion of services, developing Welsh language skills and recording the 'Active Offer'.

With the health bodies having to comply with Welsh language standards from 30 May onwards, the future actions set out in the *More than just words* interim action plan for 2019 and 2020 need to work hand in hand and reinforce, not duplicate the requirements under the standards. The standards set the framework for providing Welsh language services to the public in Wales, and also place some duties on bodies regarding their internal use of Welsh. Meanwhile, actions in the *More than just words* action plan have a greater focus on enabling actions to further improve Welsh language services in the care provided to patients. They both contribute to the overarching vision set out in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, and are different parts of the same jigsaw which together will help improve the quality of health and care services for Welsh speakers.