

## Welsh Language Strategy Inquiry

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the inquiry which has an emphasis on creating a workforce with the appropriate skills to educate and provide services through the medium of Welsh.

### Our remit

We have a leading role in supporting social care employers and workers to deliver care to a high standard. This includes developing a confident and competent workforce in social care, social work and childcare who can work effectively with the individuals and families.

### Background

Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, 2014 care providers are required to consider individuals' needs. An individual's language choice is essential in delivering this vision. Therefore, the Care Council believes that linguistic needs must be considered as an integral part of the standard of care that a person receives.

The Care Council has provided a range of practical resources to support and develop the use of the Welsh language in providing care and support.

We have delivered workshops, engaging with approximately 2,000 further education students on the importance of Welsh as a skill in the workplace. 'Working in Welsh' practice-exchange workshops have also been delivered to approximately 200 registered managers, in response to demand. There is an established 'Working in Welsh' webpage to reflect the Welsh language

resources produced by or in partnership with the Care Council, along with links to the resources of other organisations<sup>1</sup>.

We have aimed to raise awareness with practitioners of the benefits of learning and using Welsh. We have supported employers in considering how they develop workplaces with an open, inclusive and flexible ethos towards the Welsh language.

The Care Council is responsible for setting standards for training and for regulating professional social work education. In relation to social work we have required programmes to provide opportunities for learners to learn and be assessed through the medium of Welsh and we have provided information on the numbers of Welsh speakers involved in qualifying training. To further support them we have published a range of resources to raise the profile of language awareness.

## Social work training

In terms of social work education, the Care Council has set a requirement that programmes prepare students to identify, understand, and respond to issues which are specific to or characteristic of the needs of citizens in Wales, and ensure that there is provision for students to learn and be assessed through the medium of the Welsh language. Many programmes also provide students with opportunities to learn or improve their Welsh while studying for a Degree in Social Work. All our resources, in terms of careers information, induction and professional development resources are bilingual.

The Care Council is responsible for regulating social work education. We have used our powers to work with the universities to ensure that all social work degree courses provide opportunities to train through the medium of Welsh. In 2015–16 34 students pursued their degree course entirely through

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<sup>1</sup> [Working in Welsh](#), Care Council for Wales

the medium of Welsh and another 40 pursued their course partially through the medium of Welsh. There are Welsh-medium lecturers in the Open University, Swansea University, Bangor University and Cardiff Metropolitan. The decision by the Coleg Cymraeg to develop an academic programme for social work has provided an important boost to the work. In 2015, a massive open online course in language awareness for social workers was announced, and is being delivered jointly between the Coleg Cymraeg, the Care Council and the Open University.

Social Work education needs to prepare the social workers of the future and others to meet the linguistic needs of Welsh speakers, and the Care Council consistently scrutinises Welsh language issues in its annual monitoring work. All programmes offer course materials in both English and Welsh, and one programme is able to offer all teaching through the medium of Welsh. Others offer some teaching in Welsh and provide bilingual course materials.

The Care Council's Continuing Professional Education and Learning Framework for Social Workers takes linguistic requirements into account. Delivery is mainly via distance and online learning. An alliance between Cardiff, Bangor, Glyndŵr and Swansea Universities has committed to ensure that all programme materials and assessments are available in both English and Welsh. All materials are published simultaneously in both languages. Bangor University, through a Memorandum of Understanding, has a leading role in advising and driving Welsh language matters. Bangor also has a key role in assessing work submitted in Welsh.

Since their introduction, degree programmes in social work have been required to develop their provision for social work students to be able to learn and be assessed through the medium of Welsh. The latter includes the need for all programmes to audit the Welsh language skills of students, which has enabled us to identify their learning and assessment needs.

The Care Council is working with the Coleg Cymraeg and providers of degree programmes in social work to increase the number of learners who choose to learn and be assessed through the medium of Welsh. There are agreed targets for this increase and resources that help learners to work effectively and confidently in a bilingual environment. The Coleg Cymraeg, supported by the Care Council, has commissioned the development of a massive open online course on language awareness.

## Care worker training

Care workers form the majority of the care workforce in Wales. They provide care and support in residential settings and in people's own homes. The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 provides for the registration of the two largest groups of care workers<sup>2</sup>. It also provides some powers to our successor body, Social Care Wales to regulate their training.

The Care Council is already undertaking significant work in this area. By collaborating with the sector we have developed general qualifications in care. The Award and Diploma in Social Care make clear reference to the importance of the Welsh language.

We recognise communication skills are extremely important skills for care staff. Good communication enables a true understanding of an individual's needs, and can therefore provide high quality, person centred care and support. Communicating in the individual's language of choice is an important factor to consider when planning and providing excellent care.

Recognising that the ability to speak Welsh is a skill to be valued and utilised in a positive manner in the workplace will ensure that it is seen as a professional skill. In the care sector it is a communication skill that is

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<sup>2</sup> Domiciliary care workers and adult residential care workers will the Social Care Wales register in the coming years. Care managers and children's residential care workers are already registered.

essential for some jobs and desirable for others. In many instances, as referenced in Mwy Na Geiriau, it is a vital skill for working with individuals and families.

If you require any further information or clarification please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McCarty

Director of Workforce Learning and Development / Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu a Datblygu'r Gweithlu