

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING GROUP

10TH OCTOBER 2016

Tackling Poverty: A report into Welsh language services within tackling poverty programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taf: A research report completed by Menter Iaith.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Welsh Language Steering Committee with a summary of findings and recommendations following a research report into Welsh Language and bilingual services delivered as part of the Council's tackling poverty programmes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the review into Rhondda Cynon Taf's approach to tackling poverty and the need to plan proactively for the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, Menter Iaith were commissioned to undertake a research report. The aims of the research was to:

- Examine existing Welsh language and bilingual services provided by the three tackling poverty programmes: Communities First, Flying Start and Families First;
- Identify opportunities to build on Welsh language and bilingual services through these programmes, taking into account the requirements introduced by the Welsh Language Standards;
- Provide recommendations that can help inform the authority's strategic planning and delivery processes as the Standards are implemented.

3. SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS

- 3.1 The report commends the Council for undertaking this research as it demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting the implementation of the Standards at programme level.
- 3.2 However, whilst the report commends the Council for undertaking this piece of work and there is evidence of good individual Welsh language services being delivered across all programmes, the overarching message emerging from the report is that provision is inconsistent and under-developed.

- 3.3 For each of the programmes under consideration in this research there are two distinct elements. Firstly, ensuring compliance with the Standards in terms of service delivery, staffing and administrative arrangements. This involves ensuring that operational practices, policies and procedures comply with the requirements set out and that staff are able to access appropriate support and/or training.
- 3.4 The second element relates to more forward-looking promotion of the Welsh language, which also forms part of the Standards. In seeking to support the promotion of the language, the findings of the research underline **the need for activity to be strategic and targeted.**

4. **RECOMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 In relation to the findings, the report recommended that:

R1: A strategic approach to planning and delivering provision is implemented to ensure the standards are implemented across all programmes.

R2: Programme managers and teams should continue to be proactive in identifying the needs arising as a result of implementing the Welsh language Standards. This includes identifying the services and administrative arrangements where Welsh language skills will be required.

R3: There is a need for clear protocols and practical tools to enable staff to implement the standards. These could include examples of:

- Bilingual signage and promotional/publicity materials;
- Good practice guides in addressing members of the public and service users by telephone;
- Written correspondence;
- Websites and social media.

R4: The three programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taff should ensure that they have a current and comprehensive audit of Welsh language skills.

R5: The Council should provide training opportunities to meet the different needs of programme staff.

R6: Programmes should ensure that all commissioned providers are aware of the need to provide services that comply with the requirements of the Welsh language Standards. Additionally, programmes should consider the need to use the commissioning programme to commission projects or activities designed specifically to support and promote the Welsh language.

5. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 5.1 To support the implementation of a strategic approach to planning and delivery of Welsh language provision, Families First, Communities First and the Commissioning aspects of Flying start have been brought together under the Communities and Prosperity Service.

- 5.2 Welsh language delivery is a clear priority for the service with a designated officer now responsible for overseeing this area of work. The officer sits on the fforwm iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf and feeds back relevant information to service managers.
- 5.3 To support this role, an action plan has been developed to identify and implement the recommendations in the report. Of the recommendations in the report the following is an update on progress so far:
- Bilingual signage and promotional/publicity materials – all offices now have bi-lingual signage.
 - Good practice guides in addressing members of the public and service users by telephone – during August and September 2016 all staff have attended Hyfforddiant i Dderbynwyr/Receptionist training.
 - All staff now have a corporate bi-lingual email signature and access to the ‘Welsh what’s changed’ documentation.
 - The creation of a **single commissioning team** as part of the Communities and Prosperity service ensures that the requirements of the Welsh Language standards are embedded into contracts commissioned by service. Compliance and Monitoring Officers have been recruited to the team to ensure partners delivery against this requirement.
 - A review into all commissioned activity is currently taking place with the Welsh Language requirements a key focus of this work. The findings from this work will be used to inform future commissioning decisions.