



AGENDA ITEM: 10

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

19th July 2010

WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD MONITORING REPORT

Report by Colin Hanks, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek approval for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report for 2009-10 prior to formal submission to the Welsh Language Board.

Background

- 2 Each year, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is required to produce a detailed report on its Welsh Language Scheme to the Welsh Language Board. This details progress made towards meeting the targets outlined in the Service's Welsh Language Scheme 2006-2009, recently revised this year for 2010-13.

Information

- 3 Last year, the Welsh Language Board commended the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority on the submission of a comprehensive report that showed progress in the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme during 2008-09.
- 4 This year's report again outlines the work that has been achieved during the past financial year in ensuring that we provide bilingual services to the people of North Wales.
- 5 The period from 2009-10 has been particularly successful. Our Welsh Language Scheme was revised for 2010-13 and stipulated the requirement from January 2010 for all new members of staff

and those successful in promotion to learn basic Welsh to level 2 standard in our CD programme. In addition and for the first time, the Scheme included the importance of promoting Welsh within our workplace as well as of providing a bilingual service to the public.

- 6 As part of the Welsh Language Scheme every member of staff within the Service has now received Welsh Language Awareness training to highlight our commitment to bilingualism.
- 7 The Monitoring Report also highlights that we were successful in our application for a grant from the Welsh Language Board towards promoting Welsh within our workforce. This project included establishing Welsh Language Champions across our region and promoting bilingual meetings internally. This work continues into 2010/11 during which period we hope to develop this into a long term project.

Recommendation

- 8 That Members:
 - (i) note the progress made in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme; and
 - (ii) approve the 2009-10 Monitoring Report prior to formal submission to the Welsh Language Board.



**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Monitoring Report
for the
Welsh Language Board
relating to the period
1st April 2009 – 1st April 2010**

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Managing and Administering the Scheme	7
3. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme	9
5. The Service's Performance Indicators relating to the Welsh Language	14
Appendix 1 – North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13	
Appendix 2 – SAPPO policies	
Appendix 3 – Press releases	
Appendix 4 – New Performance Indicators in relation to the Welsh language	
Appendix 5 – End of project report on Promoting Welsh in the Workplace project	

1. Introduction

The revised North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 received the approval of the Welsh Language Board under Section 16 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 on 21st January 2010. (Appendix 1).

This is our third Welsh Language Scheme, which builds on our first two schemes which we published in 1999 and 2006.

This Annual Monitoring Report relates to the period from 1 April 2009 to 1 April 2010.

This has been a most rewarding period for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in relation to the Welsh Language during which considerable progress and development has been made. Significant milestones have been achieved in our objective of re-energising and adding new vigour to our activities and the profile of the Welsh language within the Service has been well and truly raised.

For the first time within our Welsh Language Scheme, we have declared our commitment to enhancing our positive attitude towards the use of Welsh in our workplace - as well as in the community and the services we provide to the people of North Wales. Numerous activities have been progressed in the last year in pursuit of this aim. In addition, the Welsh Language Scheme now incorporates our Linguistic Skills Strategy which was officially launched in January 2008.

Detailed below is an outline of activities during this specific reporting period;

- The Service's policy relating to the Welsh Language Scheme was amended to reflect the revised Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13, together with the policy relating to the Linguistic Skills Strategy. These were sent for approval to the Executive Group with the intention to circulate to all staff at the earliest opportunity (see Appendix 2).
- The Fire and Rescue Service's bilingual intranet which was launched in April 2008 has now been accepted as a valuable day to day communication tool for all staff and it continues to be developed, providing a bilingual image internally and offering language choice to staff. The section on Welsh Language resources contained on the intranet has been extended and improved and is now a valuable information resource.
- The Service decided to extend last year's award for commitment to the Welsh Language to two awards for 2009 – for 'Contribution to the Welsh Language' and for 'Learner of the Year'. These awards for 2009

were presented during the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Bala in August. Both awards followed on from the decision last year to recognise members of staff who have made a valuable contribution to the Welsh Language. Staff were asked to nominate members of staff they believed were deserving of the awards and the winners were chosen by the Gweithgor Iaith. Both winners received a trophy as a sign of appreciation as well as a family ticket to the Eisteddfod and a voucher to eat out (details in Appendix 3).

In March, the decision was taken to make one of these annual awards part of the Service's Annual Community Awards Ball and the 2010 award for 'Outstanding Contribution to the Welsh Language' was presented to a member of staff who had been nominated by his peers and chosen from a shortlist by the team of Principal Officers.

The 2010 'Learner of the year' will be presented once again at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in August.

- In June 2009, 5 members of staff received Media Training through the medium of Welsh. This was the second time such training was carried out through the medium of Welsh following successful introduction last year, and the session, lasting a day, prepared current members of staff for conducting television and radio interviews in Welsh.
- September 2008 saw the introduction of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Welsh CD programme for Level 1 and 2 linguistic courtesy skills (similar to that adopted by North Wales Police in conjunction with Coleg Llysfasi) and this programme has continued to be promoted amongst staff during 2009-10. In January 2010, the policy was extended as part of the Welsh Language Scheme such that all new staff and those seeking promotion were required to achieve level 2 in the CD learning programme. Existing staff are also encouraged to improve their skills through the programme.

A further delivery of CDs was made to continue this programme into the future.

- Between April and July members of staff received their annual Individual Development Review by their Managers, and this process has now adopted as standard a question regarding staff skills in Welsh Language providing an effective way of recording this data and of measuring progress of staff and identifying any necessary training requirements. Adopted initially last year, this information is now being recorded and collated as a matter of routine.
- All data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce.

This is currently being developed and fine tuned to include staff information on self assessed skills in Welsh, achievement in Level 1 and 2 courtesy skills, Welsh language training accreditation as well as the skills required by posts and defined in job descriptions.

- Following the Welsh Language Board's publication of guidelines in relation to the Welsh language and recruitment, a comprehensive pack of specific guidelines for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service was developed for the HR department to use in relation to recruitment and this is now being trialled and progress will be reviewed regularly.
- A new group to help progress and monitor the Welsh Language Scheme within the Service was established – the Strategic Welsh Language Group, comprising principal officers responsible for the Welsh language, HR and people development as well as managers responsible for communications, training and HR. This group now meets on a bimonthly basis and has proved to be successful in ensuring progress with the language is driven forward.
- The seconded operational member of staff who was appointed as Welsh Language Awareness Facilitator completed the delivery of Welsh Language Awareness Sessions to all 1110 staff in a total of 97 sessions by the end of December 2009 and the secondment came to an end. The sessions were very popular, with positive feedback from staff and increased support towards the Welsh Language as a result. These sessions will be continued in future on a quarterly basis to capture new staff joining the Service.
- Tanwen the cartoon character designed to help promote the Welsh language internally continues to be used as a popular emblem and mascot and in branding information material and promotion items linked to the Welsh Language Scheme.
- In January a new set of Performance Indicators for the Service in relation to the Welsh Language were agreed by heads of various departments. Data will be collected for these during 2010/11 and reported at the end of the financial year, beginning on 1 April 2011. A list of the indicators is contained in Appendix 4.
- In October, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service was successful in its bid to the Welsh Language Board for a grant to help to promote the language within the workforce. This project focussed on introducing and developing two new initiatives – firstly to establish Welsh Language Champions to help promote and support learning amongst staff and secondly to help introduce language choice in internal meetings. The work carried out as part of this project was most successful, helping to kick start and boost progress in these areas, and it is hoped to continue

and further develop this work. Appendix 5 details the work carried out and achievements made in relation to this project.

- In February 2010, the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales agreed the principle and draft content of a framework for adopting a Generic Welsh Language Scheme detailing common aims in relation to the Welsh Language, to be achieved within the next three years. This will now be finalised and adopted officially.
- To help promote and communicate activities and progress made in relation to the Welsh language internally, the Service continues to inform staff members of the recent activities in regular articles, as well as in Y Golofn Gymraeg (the Welsh column), which appear in every issue of Y Fflam, the internal magazine for staff. We also continue our 'Ymadrodd Gymraeg yr Wythnos' (Welsh Phrase of the Week) which is included in a weekly newsletter sent to staff regarding the week's events.
- We have also set up successful partnerships during the year with other organisations including Coleg Llysfasi and Coleg Llandrillo, and we have strengthened other partnerships such as with North Wales Police, Her Majesty's Courts Service, Countryside Council for Wales and the Probation Service. Staff attended new courses offered through Coleg Llysfasi to help to promote the Welsh language in the workplace (see Appendix 5).

2. Managing and Administering the Scheme

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Colin Hanks, is responsible for the Welsh Language portfolio within the Fire and Rescue Service. He is chair of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) Welsh Language Group which meets quarterly. The Welsh Language Board is represented at these meetings and representatives of South Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services are on the committee. The main aim of the Group is to monitor what is happening in terms of the Welsh Language within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The Corporate Communications Manager is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Welsh Language Scheme.

In the summer of 2009, the Translator post was vacated and the opportunity was taken to re-evaluate and redefine this post. As a result, the post was re-titled Translator and Welsh Language Liaison Officer, introducing a new emphasis on language promotion and an amended job description. This new post was advertised and interviews held and the new post holder took up her new role in May 2010.

Decisions such as the approval of the Welsh Language Scheme, which incorporates the Linguistic Skills Strategy, go before the Executive Group and then before the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Fire and Rescue Service continues to attend committees and working groups involved in promoting bilingualism.

The Gweithgor Iaith, which includes members of staff from various departments such as Human Resources, Corporate Communications, training (SLDC) and information technology (ICT), are involved in decisions made regarding the Welsh Language Scheme, and the Gweithgor Iaith met on the following dates during the monitoring year:

- May 2009
- 9 July 2009
- 18 September 2009
- 16 December 2009
- 25 January 2010
- 31 March 2010

The CFOA – Cymru Welsh Language Group includes staff who deal with matters relating to the Welsh Language from North Wales, South Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services. The meeting is chaired by Colin Hanks, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Dylan Jones from the Welsh Language Board is also a representative at the meeting. Meetings were held on the following dates during the monitoring year and copies of minutes are available on request:

- 2 April 2009
- 24 July 2009
- 13 October 2009
- 1 December 2009
- 9 February 2010

Also, the recently established Strategic Welsh Language Group comprising senior staff responsible for Training and Development, Human Resources and Communications meets regularly to discuss and drive forward issues relating to the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme.

Staff also represent the Service at other meetings, including:

- Rhwydiaith
- North Wales Bilingualism Forum
- Gwynedd Welsh Language Charter

3. Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme

Task	Responsibility	Progress to date	Evidence
Promoting the Scheme internally			
Find ways of raising the profile of the Scheme by: awareness training; and access to advice and guidance.	Corporate Comms. Manager	<p>Significant progress made during the monitoring period. Welsh Language Awareness Sessions to all 1110 staff in a total of 97 sessions by the end of December 2009.</p> <p>Continuation of bilingual intranet with section on Welsh language with additional information fed to staff through Chief's Update and Y Fflam.</p> <p>New WLB project to promote Welsh internally using Champions and introducing more Welsh into internal meetings.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Scheme referred to in the Language Awareness Sessions.</p> <p>Intranet, Chief's Update and Y Fflam.</p> <p>See report on this project in Appendix 5.</p>
Promoting the Scheme externally			
Continue to seek ways of improving the effectiveness of our website in promoting our image as a bilingual organisation.	Corporate Comms. Officer	The website is fully bilingual and includes information on the Welsh Language Scheme. Information regarding the revised Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 has been added to our website.	See website http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/page.asp?page=114
Guidance was prepared for external agencies and contractors to bring their attention to the requirements of the Scheme. This to include strong encouragement for third parties who work on fire and rescue premises to erect bilingual signage.	Support Services Managers	The Service's Facilities Department is shared with the Police, and this is operated between both organisations.	The paragraph below is added to any documents/paperwork sent to contractors: <i>The Fire and Rescue Service has approved its Welsh Language Scheme which notes that all temporary or permanent signage on its premises must be in Welsh and English. Contractors are advised to</i>

			<i>comply with this policy and to contact the FRS Corporate Communications Manager on 01745 535285 for advice and proofreading services for any signs before they are finally produced.</i>
Update information given to contractors and others to reiterate the importance of our bilingual public image.	Estates Manager	A bilingual leaflet has been produced to give to contractors.	See above
Develop a system whereby written guidance regarding our Welsh Language Scheme is given as a matter of course to external agencies and contractors.	Support Services Manager		See above
Providing the internal infrastructure			
Clarify the responsibility in relation to providing advice and guidance for matters relation to the Welsh language.	Translator	Plans are in place to produce a new Information leaflet to distribute to staff outlining the Welsh Language Scheme. In the meantime, information on the Scheme is contained on the intranet and in two SAPPO policies and opportunities are taken to highlight Welsh language matters in Chief's Update and Y Fflam.	Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies – see Appendix 1 & 2.
Determine which groups would oversee the various tasks relating to the Linguistic Skills Strategy most effectively in future, including maintaining a sufficient proportion of staff that have bilingual skills.	Gweithgor Iaith	The Linguistic Skills Strategy has been incorporated into the Welsh Language Scheme and accepted and agreed by the Executive Group, The Authority and the WLB. The actions are monitored by the Gweithgor Iaith and the Strategic Welsh Language Group.	Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies - see Appendix 1 & 2.
Making it happen			
Increase the use of appropriate advice	Translator	Sharing of information, ideas and advice with other	

and guidance in developing policies and work plans. This to include identifying ways of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh Language.		organisations. Promoting Welsh in the workplace project launched new ideas.	See Appendix 5.
Strengthened the guidance issued to staff regarding the promotion of our bilingual public image, in order to reinforce what the service expects of them.	Translator	Through delivery of Welsh Language Awareness Sessions and adoption of need to achieve Level 2 in linguistic courtesy on appointment/promotion from January 2010.	Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies – see Appendix 1& 2.
Introduce linguistic skills targets into the annual target-setting process. Develop a Linguistic Skills Strategy, linked in with the IPDS strategy in order to ensure that the necessary linguistic skills are available within the workforce to deliver services in the preferred language of the public.	Corporate Planning Manager	A report previously produced by Cwmni Iaith is now linked to the Workforce database being developed by HR together with all relevant data on Welsh language skills, training and skills required in post job descriptions.	Workforce data
This strategy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how desirable bilingual skills would be to fulfil individual roles effectively • Seek ways to increase the proportion of the workforce who can speak Welsh (including by suitable targets) • Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge of Welsh to provide at least some of our services through the medium of Welsh • Implement a suitable system which is consistent and objective to assess linguistic ability 	Development Manager and HR Managers	This is part of the Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13.	Work with HR Department to close the gap and to monitor in future using Workforce.

<p>Look at the possibility of introducing new requirements for at least some posts whereby non-Welsh speaking candidates for posts where Welsh skills are designated as 'desirable' would be required to commit to attaining a prescribed competency level in Welsh within an agreed period agreed.</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>Part of the Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies - see Appendix 1 & 2.</p>
<p>Achieve ways of ensuring that job descriptions are developed which reflect the bilingual skills requirements of specific posts (rather than generic roles)</p>	<p>HR Manager(s)</p>	<p>Part of the Welsh Language Scheme and the guidance on recruitment being trialled with HR.</p>	<p>Work with HR Dept.</p>
<p>Ensure that learning Welsh is included in the Service's development programme</p>	<p>Development Manager</p>	<p>Part of the Welsh Language Scheme - every new member of staff or those seeking promotion must achieve Level 2 in linguistic courtesy. A question on Welsh Language ability is now included in the Individual Development Review and recorded on Workforce.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies - see Appendix 1 & 2.</p>
<p>Introduce regular assessments of Welsh language skills of staff in priority posts</p>	<p>Translator</p>	<p>Part of the Welsh Language Scheme and monitored through Workforce.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Scheme and SAPPO policies - see Appendix 1 & 2.</p>
<p>Develop and adopt suitable Performance Indicators measuring the progress of the Service in achieving a workforce that has the necessary Welsh Language skills</p>	<p>Gweithgor Iaith</p>	<p>These have been agreed. Data is being gathered on these during 2010/11 and will be reported from April 2011.</p>	<p>See Appendix 4 detailing the new performance indicators.</p>

Continuous self-awareness			
Introduce systems to identify serious shortages in bilingual capability within employee groups, and to clarify the procedure for resolving any shortages through training or re-distribution of staff	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Part of the Welsh Language Scheme and monitored through Workforce.	Work with HR Dept. to close the gap.
Increase the use of appropriate qualitative assessments in order to establish how effective we are performing regarding public relations	Corporate Comms. Manager	Bilingual intranet. Bilingual website. Bilingual broadcast media interviews. Bilingual publications. Established a system of noting press calls dealt with in Welsh.	Corporate Communications material
Integrate the work of monitoring the profile of the service into the annual processes associated with the Wales Programme for Improvement	Corporate Planning Manager	This has been agreed using the new Performance Indicators.	See Appendix 4.
Ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Authority, including statistical and descriptive information on the linguistic profile of the service and its performance. This is in addition to the regular updates to the Welsh Language Board	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)	The annual monitoring report is reported to the Authority and the Welsh language performance indicators will be reported. Members also received information regarding the latest revised Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 before and after consultation and approval from the WLB.	See Appendix

4. Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Performance Indicators

The Service's Welsh Language Scheme is committed to achieving 12 Local Performance Indicator (NB a new set of performance indicators were agreed in January 2010 but these will not be reported on until April 2011 – see Appendix).

For 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, the figures for existing indicators are as follows;

PI1	Number and % of emergency calls that were successfully dealt with in Welsh.
Comment	<p>During the 2009/2010 financial year, the Control Room received 11,231 (10,237 in 2008/09) emergency calls from the public.</p> <p>Of 11,231 calls: Bilingual greeting, the call continued in English, 5161 ie 10.8% English greeting, the call continued in English, 1623 ie 14.5% Bilingual greeting, the call continued in Welsh, 369 ie 3.3%</p> <p>Other statistics recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual greeting, caller responded in Welsh, the call continued in English, 8 ie 0.07% • English greeting, caller responded in Welsh, transferred to bilingual operator, 1 ie 0.01% • English greeting, caller responded in Welsh, call continued in English, 6 ie 0.05% • Welsh greeting, call continued in English, 4 ie 0.04% • Bilingual greeting, caller responded in Welsh, call continued in English, no bilingual operator available, 0 ie 0% • English greeting, the call continued in Welsh, 0 ie 0% • Number calls not recorded or unknown, 8,009 ie 71.3%
PI2	Percentage and number of staff that have bilingual skills
Comment	<p>From March 2009, Welsh language skills are recorded during the Individual Development Review for each member of staff. This data and all other data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is currently being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce. .</p>
PI3	Number and % of main reception roles that were designated Welsh 'essential' and were filled by bilingual staff.
Comment	<p>All main reception posts are designated as Welsh essential. A total of 5 such posts were advertised during 2009/2010 and of these one is</p>

	filled on a temporary basis, two are filled by Welsh learners and two are filled by fluent Welsh speakers. This data should be more comprehensively available for the next reporting period as all other data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is currently being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce.
PI4	Number and % of staff who have received Welsh language training to a specific competency level.
Comment	<p>Number of staff who have sat and passed Level 1 linguistic skills courtesy test (1 April 2009- 31 March 2010) = 169 ie 15.36%</p> <p>Number of staff who have sat and passed Level 2 linguistic courtesy test (1 April 2009– 31 March 2010) = 71 ie 6.45%</p> <p>Number of staff who attended Gloywi Iaith course (March 2010) = 11 ie 1%</p>
PI5	Number and % of staff within the service that can speak Welsh – by department, by job grade, by workplace.
Comment	From March 2009, Welsh language skills are recorded during the Individual Development Review for each member of staff. This data and all other data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is currently being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce (building on the data previously researched by Cwmni Iaith in relation to this performance indicator).
PI6	Number and % of staff who have received Language Awareness training.
Comment	Between 1st April 2009 and 31 March 2010, 91 language awareness sessions had been conducted (of which 6 were conducted through the medium of Welsh) to 625 members of staff, ie 56.81%.
PI7	Percentage and number of posts designated as Welsh ‘essential’ filled by staff that have bilingual skills.
Comment	All data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce.

PI8	Percentage and number of posts designated as Welsh 'desirable' filled by staff that have bilingual skills;
Comment	All data relating to Welsh language skills and learning is being collated and recorded in a new HR department database called Workforce
PI9	Number of complaints form sources apart from staff or their representatives regarding the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and % of complaints dealt with, in accordance with the standards set by the Authority.
Comment	One complaint received regarding the advertisement in the press of an ICT post in the medium of English only, the issue was dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant under stage one of the Service complaint procedure.
PI10	Number of complaints from staff or their representatives regarding language issues
Comment	One complaint was received with reference the displaying of Welsh only signage at a community event. The issue was resolved under stage one of the Service complaint procedures.
PI11	Performance against any specific targets adopted as part of the performance management framework.
Comment	Performance Indicators set for recording during 2010/11 (see Appendix 4)
PI12	Number of agencies and contractors who have received guidance to comply with the Welsh Language Scheme.
Comment	Every agency and contractor receives information that they must comply with the Welsh Language Scheme. Approximately 100 contractors are on the Service's approved list of contactors and for the first time during 2009/10 a series of contactor seminars was held to introduce contactors to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police policies and procedures – and these seminars included information on the significance of the Welsh Language Scheme.

Home Fire Safety Checks

A total of 32,802 home fire safety checks were delivered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service during 2009/10.

In November 2009, a new fire records management system (RMS) was established and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service can now monitor the number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered to homeowners and the language in which these were requested and delivered. For the period 1st November 2009 – 31st March 2010, these figures recorded are as follows;

Total number of Home Fire Safety Checks requested in Welsh

Conwy	66
Denbighshire	62
Flintshire	3
North Gwynedd	646
South Gwynedd	209
Wrexham	3
Ynys Mon	112
Total HFSCs requested in Welsh	1101

Total number of Home Fire Safety Checks completed in Welsh

Conwy	85
Denbighshire	72
Flintshire	2
North Gwynedd	656
South Gwynedd	201
Wrexham	3
Ynys Mon	126
Total HFSCs completed in Welsh	1145

Appendix 1

A copy of the Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 will be inserted here before this report is submitted to the Welsh Language Board



Welsh Language
Scheme - approved F

Appendix 2 – SAPPO Policies

GWASANAETH TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE ORDERS

Section 1 Order No. 5

Subject: Welsh Language Scheme

1. Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Contents	1
2	Definitions and abbreviations	1
3	Purpose	2
4	Scope	2
5	Responsibilities	2
6	Internal/External Related and Other Relevant Documents	2
7	Introduction	2
8	Background	2
9	Declaration	3
10	Linguistic Skills Strategy	3
11	Policy Review	3

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

- 2.1 SAPPO - Service Administrative Policy & Procedure Order. A mandatory internal document, which must be complied with, detailing an Administrative Order in the form of a Service Policy or Procedure(s), which is controlled from within NWFRS's Documentation System.
- 2.2 Bilingual - Within this document this refers to the Welsh and English language.
- 2.3 NWFRS - North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 To assist employees of NWFRS to comply with the requirements of The Welsh Language Act 1993.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy extends to all areas of the Service and is directed at all persons employed by the Service.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Corporate Communications Manager for the content, issue and any further amendment of this Order.

5.2 To ensure the continuous effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures, it is the responsibility of all personnel to indicate any weakness, omission or amendment that may be considered in order to improve the policy's effective use.

5.3 It is the responsibility of all relevant personnel to make themselves familiar with this Order to ensure that all areas are adhered to.

6. Internal/external related and other relevant documents

6.1 Welsh Language Act 1993.

6.2 NWFRS Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13

6.3 NWFRS SAPPO Order No1 Section No 8 Linguistic Skills Strategy

7. Introduction

7.1 ***This SAPPO relates to the NWFRS Welsh Language Scheme - a comprehensive document which can be viewed on the Service's website and intranet. Hard copies of the document are also available at every NWFRS location.***

8. Background

8.1 The Service's revised Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 (NWFRS's third Scheme which builds on the first two schemes) has been prepared in accordance with Section 16 of the Welsh Language Act 1993. Following a process of consultation with the public and with NWFRS staff, the Scheme was approved by members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in December 2009 and received official approval from the Welsh Language Board on 21 January 2010.

9. Declaration

9.1 NWFRS has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality.

9.2 Staff are required to comply with the policy requirements as detailed in the Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13.

10. Linguistic Skills Strategy

10.1 This strategy was launched in February 2009 and full details are contained in SAPPO Order No1 Section No 8 - it has since been incorporated into the Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13. This strategy is a statutory requirement which helps to provide a planned and strategic infrastructure for implementing the Welsh Language Scheme into the future.

11. Policy Review

- 11.1 All policies and procedures which form the basis of a SAPPO, will be reviewed on a pre-determined basis. This will be the responsibility of the Head of the Department responsible for the Order, and conducted after every 1, 2 or 3 years, depending on the importance of the document, from the date of issue or amendment.
- 11.2 This Order will be reviewed every three years when the Welsh Language Scheme itself will be reviewed.

Simon A Smith
Chief Fire Officer

SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE ORDERS

Section 1 Order No. 8

Subject: Linguistic Skills Strategy

1. Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Contents	1
2	Definitions and Abbreviations	2
3	Purpose	2
4	Scope	2
5	Responsibilities	2
6	Internal/External Related and Other Relevant Documents	2
7	Introduction	2
8	Aim of Strategy	3
9	Achieving the Strategy	3
10	Specific Benefits to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	6
11	Linking to Key Corporate Contexts	6
12	Benefits to Staff	6
13	Policy Review	7
	Appendix 1	8
	Initial Equality Impact Assessment	

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

NWF&RS	- North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
SAPPO	- Service Administrative Policy & Procedure Order. A mandatory internal document, which must be complied with, detailing an Administrative Order in the form of a Service Policy or Procedure(s), which is controlled from within NWF&RS's Documentation System.
HR	- Human Resources
SLDC	- Service Learning and Development Centre
ALTE	- Association of Language Testers in Europe
Cwmni Iaith	- An independent company specialising in promoting the Welsh language and supporting organisations in developing bilingual practices.
IDR	- Individual Development Review

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the Linguistic Skills Strategy as part of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service Welsh Language Policy.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy extends to all areas of the Service and is directed at all persons employed by the Service.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Corporate Communications Manager for the content, issue and any further amendment of this Order.
- 5.2 To ensure the continuous effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures, it is the responsibility of all personnel to indicate any weakness, omission or amendment that may be considered in order to improve the policy's effective use.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of all relevant personnel to make themselves familiar with this Order to ensure that all areas are adhered to.

6. Internal/External Related and Other Relevant Documents

- 6.1 SAPPO Section 1 Order No. 5 - Welsh Language Scheme
- 6.2 SAPPO Section 6 Order No. 23 – Individual Development Reviews (see page 6)

7. Introduction

- 7.1 The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Welsh Language Scheme 2006-2009 sets out how the Authority will abide by the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality. It's aim is to deliver a service that is of the same high standard and quality in both languages. It serves to;
- 7.1.1 Offer the public a real language choice
- 7.1.2 Recognise that service users are able to express their views and needs better in their preferred language
- 7.1.3 Recognise that offering a language choice is a matter of good practice.
- 7.2 The Scheme is approved by the Welsh Language Board under section 16 of the Welsh Languages Act 1993 and is reviewed regularly (every three years).
- 7.3 The Linguistic Skills Strategy is a statutory requirement to provide a means of responding appropriately to the Service's commitments contained in the Welsh Language Scheme. The purpose of this Strategy is to take the Welsh Language Scheme further by providing a planned and strategic infrastructure for future implementation. It also satisfies the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for Wales 2008-2011.
- 7.4 This means providing staff with linguistic skills in accordance with the Welsh Language Scheme in order to enable the provision of services of equal quality, facility and breadth in both English and Welsh. It means satisfying service needs where there is a

shortage of Welsh speakers within the workforce by adopting and implementing this Strategy.

7.5 The Linguistic Skills Strategy therefore ;

7.5.1 Facilitates the proper implementation of the statutory Welsh Language Scheme in relation to staffing services to the public

7.5.2 Mainstreams the Strategy in the context of key aspects of corporate management.

8. Aim of Strategy

8.1 The strategy aims to reduce risks such as failure to achieve equality and customer care standards, failure to empathise and identify with customer needs, complaints and dissatisfaction.

9. Achieving the Strategy

9.1 The Five Objectives

9.1.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy has the following five objectives, which are based on the methodology recommended by the Welsh Language Board;

9.1.2 Conduct and continually update an audit of the bilingual requirements of workplaces and posts.

9.1.3 Conduct and continually update an audit of the linguistic skills of existing staff.

9.1.4 Establish appropriate arrangements for comparing the above – ie the skill needs with existing skill resources.

9.1.5 Establish an implementation programme for closing the skills gap.

9.1.6 Establish appropriate arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of the strategy's implementation.

9.2 Objective 1 – Bilingual Requirements of Workplaces and Posts

9.2.1 An Audit of the Bilingual Requirements of Workplaces and Posts, was carried out in 2007 and a Role Evaluation Project report produced by Cwmni Iaith.

9.2.2 This project involved carrying out research into the linguistic requirements of each type of role within the Service, taking into account bilingual service delivery considerations within local communities and the present capacity to deliver a bilingual service within present team structures.

9.2.3 This project identified which roles within the Service should be designated Welsh essential and how much flexibility should be given to designating a linguistic skill within the requirement stage. The Service has since assigned ALTE framework Level 1-5 competences (see Appendix for ALTE framework) to each type of role within the Service, providing a greater understanding of the standard of Welsh required for the different posts.

9.3 Objective 2 – Linguistic skills of Existing Staff

9.3.1 An Audit of the Linguistic Skills of Existing Staff, has been carried out and

around 80% of Service staff have indicated the level of Welsh which they believe they possess, based on guidelines similar to the ALTE framework. In order to increase the information on the bilingual skills of existing staff to nearer 100%, this information will become a requirement of the Individual Development Review process for **all** staff. In this way, the information will be assessed and recorded for all staff and will be updated annually. Information regarding linguistic skills will also be required on job application forms.

9.3.2 To ensure that this information is collected consistently a self assessment of linguistic skills will be part of the IDR process for all staff.

9.4 Objective 3 – Gap Analysis of objectives 1 & 2

9.4.1 This objective involves establishing appropriate arrangements for comparing the first two objectives – ie the skill needs of each role within the Service with existing skill resources.

9.4.2 A list of all types of roles within the Service matched to the required level of Welsh assigned by Cwmni Iaith and the level of Welsh assigned by the person in the role at the time (currently completed by around 80% of staff) has been compiled and this will be analysed to obtain a snapshot of how much work is required to bridge the gap.

9.4.3 This comparison is being achieved through a HR computerised gap analysis method that is updated regularly in order to be able to compare and monitor the linguistic skills of staff as part of the Individual Development Reviews conducted by managers and as part of any new recruitment or staff restructuring carried out by managers. HR internal proceedings and procedures will fully acknowledge and consider ability in Welsh to be a skill, side by side with other necessary skills.

9.5 Objective 4 – Linguistic Skills Development

9.5.1 The Service will close the identified gap gradually, taking a long term perspective through establishing well defined practices in staff training and support, recruitment, and reorganisation and redeployment of staff.

9.5.2 This involves;

9.5.2.1 Increasing the number of staff who can confidently speak or write Welsh and encourage them to use their skills more often to contribute to ensuring a choice of languages for the public - achieved by raising awareness of the Service's commitment to offer a bilingual service by providing Welsh Language Awareness sessions which are compulsory for all staff. This course is being delivered by the Corporate Communications Department.

9.5.2.2 From January 2009, all new members of staff will be required to have the ability to show basic (Level 1) Welsh language courtesy skills on joining the Service. The emphasis is on speaking Welsh and the test is an oral one, recorded on tape (involves help provided before interview and use of a training CD). From January 2010, all new staff will be required to achieve Level 2 on joining the Service (using the Level 2 training course if necessary).

9.5.2.3 Existing staff will be encouraged to achieve Level 1 and Level 2 on a

- voluntary basis.
- 9.5.2.4 Existing staff who have direct contact with the public will be encouraged to achieve Level 4/5, through intensive Welsh language training.
- 9.5.2.5 From January 2010, staff seeking promotion within the service will be required to achieve Level 2.
- 9.5.2.6 Training courses will enable staff to learn or improve their Welsh. A local college will provide Level 1 and 2 training courses to staff which are supplemented by Welsh Language CDs (tests will be assessed independently by a local college). The tests are linked to a nationally recognised accreditation.
- 9.5.2.7 Through the Gweithgor Iaith working group, staff already fluent in Welsh will be identified in each county of North Wales who are willing to act as champions of the Strategy to offer assistance and advice to non-Welsh speakers prior to sitting Level 1 and 2 tests as and when required.
- 9.5.2.8 The Linguistic Skills Strategy will be incorporated into the Service's policy on Equality and Diversity – with reference to the Seven Strands of Diversity in Wales which include the Welsh language.
- 9.5.2.9 The Service's recruitment policy will also reflect the aims of the Linguistic Skills Strategy by reviewing the wording of recruitment material to refer to the required competences in a 'friendly' manner, to stress the need of oral Welsh and to refer to the opportunities to improve/learn Welsh as well as target recruitment material effectively.

9.5.2 The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) competences (Appendix 1) provides the basis of the NWF&RS Level 1 and 2 tests and correlate as follows;
 NWF&RS Level 1 correlates to ALTE A1
 NWF&RS Level 2 correlates to ALTE A2
 NWF&RS Level 3 correlates to ALTE B1

9.6 Objective 5 – Review and Report

- 9.6.1 The Review and Report Implementation of the Strategy, will be addressed once the gap has been successfully narrowed. The Service will review the Welsh Language Strategy on a regular basis, working according to the Welsh Language Board's indicators. This work will involve;
- 9.6.1.1 Reviewing front line services: ie the number and %age of all staff who have a direct contact with the public, as well as staff in main reception areas, contact centres or one stop shop roles denoted 'Welsh essential' and filled by bilingual staff.
- 9.6.1.2 Aiming to achieve the desired number and %age of the staff who have received training in Welsh to a specific competency level.
- 9.6.1.3 Aiming for a desired number and %age of staff who have received language awareness training.
- 9.6.1.4 Being able to identify the number and %age of staff within the

Service who can speak Welsh – by service department, by job grade, by workplace.

10. Specific Benefits to NWF&RS

- 10.1 The main benefits of adopting the Linguistic Skills Strategy are;
 - 10.1.1 Working together towards one innovative Welsh Language Scheme which encourages all new staff to demonstrate basic linguistic courtesy in Welsh
 - 10.1.2 Providing language choice in the recruitment and appointment processes
 - 10.1.3 Encouraging and supporting staff to learn Welsh or improve their skills through established awareness and training regimes
 - 10.1.4 Identifying posts with a need for a specific level of ability in Welsh
 - 10.1.5 Working towards a guaranteed language choice at primary public interfaces
 - 10.1.6 Raising awareness of all staff – both current and new - regarding the commitment to offer a bilingual service
 - 10.1.7 Working towards attracting more applications from Welsh speakers and learners
 - 10.1.8 Ensuring HR internal proceedings and procedures fully acknowledge and consider ability in Welsh to be a skill, side by side with other necessary skills
 - 10.1.9 Making the most of every opportunity to define the commitment to the Welsh language as part of the effort to acknowledge Race and Diversity matters in Wales

11. Linking to Key Corporate Contexts

- 11.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy is linked to the following;
 - 11.1.1 Recruitment and appointment procedures
 - 11.1.2 'Investors in People' and Staff Development Plans
 - 11.1.3 Training Strategy
 - 11.1.4 The Service's corporate plan
 - 11.1.5 The Equalities and Diversity programme
 - 11.1.6 The Customer Care regime

12. Benefits to Staff

- 12.1 The Linguistic Skills Strategy brings the following benefits to staff;
 - 12.1.1 The Strategy treats language skills in exactly the same way as any other skills which may be essential or desirable for certain posts – this is a principle generally accepted by the trade union movement
 - 12.1.2 By providing an objective means of determining skill requirements, the Strategy

provides protection from over-subjective assessments

- 12.1.3 The Strategy is part of ensuring consistency of approach in determining the language requirements of posts
- 12.1.4 The emphasis placed on staff training, development and support will be advantageous to staff in enhancing their skills and competitiveness in the wider labour market
- 12.1.5 The emphasis is on forward planning for the acquisition of the necessary skills gradually – not sweeping change.

13

Policy Review

- 13.1 All policies and procedures which form the basis of a SAPPO, will be reviewed on a pre-determined basis. This will be the responsibility of the Head of the Department responsible for the Order, and conducted after every 1, 2 or 3 years, depending on the importance of the document, from the date of issue or amendment.
- 13.2 This Order will be reviewed annually.

Simon A Smith
Chief Fire Officer

ALTE Language Skills Framework

LEVELS	ALTE Work Typical Abilities			ALTE Overall General Ability		
	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
A1 ALTE Breakthrough level	CAN take and pass on simple messages of a routine kind, such as 'Friday meeting 10 am'.	CAN understand short reports or product descriptions on familiar matters, if these are expressed in simple language and the contents are predictable.	CAN write a simple routine request to a colleague, such as 'Can I have 20X please?'	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices, instructions or information.	CAN complete basic forms, and write notes including times, dates and places.
A2 Level 1	CAN state simple requirements within own job area, such as 'I want to order 25 of...'	CAN understand most short reports or manuals of a predictable nature within his/her own area of expertise, provided enough time is given.	CAN write a short, comprehensive note of request to a colleague or a known contact in another company.	CAN express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.	CAN understand straightforward information within a known area, such as on products and signs and simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters.	CAN complete forms and write short simple letters or postcards related to personal information.
B1 Level 2	CAN offer advice to clients within own job area on simple matters.	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and theoretical articles within own work area.	CAN make reasonably accurate notes at a meeting or seminar where the subject matter is familiar and predictable.	CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.	CAN understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within a familiar area.	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.
B2 Level 3	CAN take and pass on most messages that are likely to require attention during a normal working day.	CAN understand most correspondence, reports and factual product literature he/she is likely to come across.	CAN deal with all routine requests for goods or services.	CAN follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	CAN scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.	CAN make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests.
C1 Level 4	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work and argue for or against a case.	CAN understand correspondence expressed in non-standard language.	CAN handle a wide range of routine and non-routine situations in which professional services are requested from colleague or external contacts.	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, to read the media for information or to understand non-standard correspondence.	CAN prepare/draft professional correspondence, take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write an essay which shows an ability to communicate.
C2 Level 5	CAN advise on/handle complex delicate or contentious issues, such as legal or financial matters, to the extent that he/she has the necessary specialist knowledge.	CAN understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language.	CAN make full and accurate notes and continue to participate in a meeting or seminar.	CAN advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	CAN understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts.	CAN write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.

Appendix 3 – press releases

For immediate release – Friday 7th August 2009

Fire and Rescue Service rewards staff commitment to Welsh language

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has recognised two members of its staff for their outstanding commitment towards the Welsh language and presented them with awards at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol maes at Bala today (Friday 7th August).

Glyn Morris, an operational firefighter based at Rhyl Fire Station, won the award for 'Contribution to the Welsh Language' and Antje Erler, fire station cook at Caernarfon, was voted as the fire and rescue service 'Learner of the Year'. Both staff were nominated for their awards by their peers.

Since beginning his career at Wrexham Fire Station back in 1986, Glyn has encouraged the use of Welsh in the fire and rescue service. As a firefighter in Wrexham, he organised a Welsh Language Course (WLPAN) for his fellow firefighters to learn and improve their Welsh skills. Providing fire safety education is an integral part of a firefighter's duty and Glyn has worked diligently to provide fire safety education to children in the Rhyl and Prestatyn areas through the medium of Welsh. He is also a workplace 'Champion' of the Welsh Language and now assists his colleagues in attaining the Introduction to Welsh qualification (Level 1) which is required by all new members of staff and encouraged for existing staff as part of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Welsh Language Scheme.

Glyn lives in Prestatyn with his wife and two children. Together with his trophy, he was presented with a voucher for £30, kindly donated by Blas ar Fwyd, Llanrwst.

On being presented with his award, Glyn said: "I am really proud to have won as I feel passionate that the Welsh Language should be encouraged in every aspect of Welsh life. I wholeheartedly support the Welsh Language Scheme adopted by the fire and rescue service as it gives all members of staff an opportunity to learn Welsh, to be aware of Welsh culture and be courteous in the language. I enjoy supporting fellow workers in their efforts to learn Welsh so that they can offer a real language choice to the residents of North Wales to receive a service in the language they feel most comfortable speaking."

Antje Erler is originally from Germany and since moving to live in Wales has put a big effort into learning Welsh to help her settle into her community and into her job at Caernarfon Fire Station. She has attended Welsh classes locally as well as passing North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Level 1 test recently with flying colours.

Antje lives in Cwm y Glo, Caernarfon, with her partner and two children. Together with her trophy, she was presented with a voucher for £30, kindly donated by The Black Boy Inn, Caernarfon.

Antje said: "Winning this award is a huge honour for me as North Wales is my adoptive home and Welsh is my third language after German and English. It was a challenge as the Welsh Language is not an easy language to learn but being fluent in German actually helped with my pronunciation. I've tried to improve my Welsh a little every day

by learning new words and initiating conversations with colleagues. Many of the staff here at Caernarfon speak Welsh as their first language so I thought it was really important to be able to serve up their meals and provide a service to them in their own language.”

Colin Hanks, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: “In North Wales we live in a bilingual community and we as a Service believe that it is extremely important that as many of our staff as possible can converse with residents in their chosen language.

“We thoroughly agreed with the nominators of these awards that both Glyn and Antje showed real commitment to learning and promoting the language and determination to use and encourage others to use their Welsh language skills in the workplace – many congratulations and well done to them both.”

For immediate release – Tuesday 22 September, 2009

Fire and Rescue Service pledges to continue to breathe fire into Welsh

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has been making excellent progress in its commitment towards delivering bilingual services to the public and offering a real language choice to people in English and Welsh.

Now the fire and rescue service is keen to hear people’s views on its plans for continuing to improve on this in the future.

Its draft Welsh Language Scheme for the next three years sets out how the fire and rescue service will continue to abide by the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Colin Hanks explains: “This is our third Welsh Language Scheme which builds on our first two schemes which we published in 1999 and 2006.

“We would value your opinion on this revised scheme which sets out how we intend to continue to improve on the bilingual services we offer to the public in Wales.

“We have been working hard towards providing equal services in Welsh in the last three years. Significant milestones have been achieved, such as the introduction of basic Welsh language tests for new recruits and those seeking promotion and a Welsh language intranet for staff, and the profile of the Welsh language in our fire and rescue service has been well and truly raised.

“Over the next three years we are making a commitment to build even further on what we have already achieved and establish strong foundations for bilingualism which will continue to see gradual improvement for years to come.”

The public can find out more by logging on to the website www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk or requesting a copy by contacting North Wales Fire and Rescue Service on 01745 535285 – people are invited to respond to the consultation by the deadline on Friday 20th November 2009.

Welsh language firmly on North Wales Fire and Rescue Service agenda

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service says it will ensure that the Welsh language remains firmly on its agenda - and this week received the official seal of approval of the Welsh Language Board on its plans for exactly how it aims to do this.

The fire and rescue service has made excellent progress in its commitment towards delivering bilingual services to the public and offering a real language choice to people in English and Welsh and is now keen to ensure that it continues to improve in the future.

Its Welsh Language Scheme for the next three years sets out how the fire and rescue service will continue to abide by the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Colin Hanks explains: "This is our third Welsh Language Scheme which builds on our first two schemes which we published in 1999 and 2006.

"This revised scheme sets out how we intend to continue to improve on the bilingual services we offer to the public in Wales, and the public had an opportunity to tell us what they thought of our plans.

"We have been working hard towards providing equal services in Welsh in the last three years. Significant milestones have been achieved, such as the introduction of basic Welsh language tests for new recruits and those seeking promotion and a Welsh language intranet for staff, and the profile of the Welsh language in our fire and rescue service has been well and truly raised.

"Over the next three years we are making a commitment to build even further on what we have already achieved and establish strong foundations for bilingualism which will continue to see gradual improvement for years to come."

Meri Huws, Chair of the Welsh Language Board, said; "It gives me great pleasure to confirm that the Welsh Language Board has approved the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's revised Welsh language Scheme - we wish the Service well with the scheme's implementation and look forward to continuing to work alongside its staff in promoting the language."

A copy of the revised scheme can be obtained by logging on to the website www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk .

For immediate release – Monday 8th March 2010

Community Awards Ceremony

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service held its fourth Community Awards Ceremony on Friday 5th March which took place at the St George's Hotel, Llandudno. The ceremony was devised in order to recognise members of staff and the community who have worked hard to improve community safety in North Wales.

The outstanding contribution to a charity or charities award went to a person who has worked tirelessly, throughout the year to raise money, and given up large amounts of their own time in their endeavour to benefit others.

This year's award winner was Nigel Sephton from Deeside Fire Station. Nigel has been involved with the Firefighters Charity for many years and is currently the Secretary for the Charity in North Wales.

During the last year Nigel Sephton not only organised, but completed a bicycle tour of all North Wales fire stations, with the money raised being donated to the Firefighters Charity. This took place over six days in September. Nigel's effort during this high endurance challenge was immense, both physically and logistically.

Over the years Nigel has organised and participated in numerous car wash events, supported Deeside Fire Station's community bonfire, and various other fund-raising initiatives to support the Firefighters Charity as well as other local charities. He has always shown boundless enthusiasm and commitment in his fund-raising activities.

Second award

The Young Firefighter of the Year award went to a young firefighter who has stood out and showed above average levels of professionalism and community engagement, as well as understanding the core values of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

This year the award went to a member of staff who has recently left the YFA and is now a Community Fire Safety Practitioner - Heidi Sanderson.

Heidi joined the Holyhead YFA as a cadet aged 14, and during her time at the branch she developed her knowledge and skills, before deciding to embark on a career working for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, as a Community Fire Safety Practitioner, based on Ynys Môn.

After leaving the YFA cadets Heidi became a lay instructor with the Holyhead branch and was recognised as the 'Young Achiever of the year' at the Plas Cybi awards in 2008.

However, such was Heidi's commitment to Holyhead YFA, that she has subsequently returned as an instructor and has worked with local firefighters in an effort to set an example to newer members of the team.

Heidi has also given her time to help out on other programmes such as the work experience week and the Phoenix project.

Heidi is an excellent example for young people throughout her community and beyond. She is always ready to help and has been invaluable in assisting to run the YFA at Holyhead.

Third award

The award for outstanding contribution from a member of the operational staff recognised an individual who regularly works above and beyond the requirements of their normal duties.

Richard Westwood is a Watch Manager in the Community Safety Team and has worked on many projects over the last year, in particular with young drivers and their peers. The road safety work aims to engage and educate children and young people in different elements of road safety, so that they become responsible road users. In the last 12 months over 1,200 young people have been spoken to, during various initiatives which Richard has been instrumental in organising.

He assisted with the North Wales Police Engagement Vehicle, a Subaru Impreza that was taken to different venues across North Wales, to engage with young drivers, to explain how speed, seatbelts, mobile phones, drink, drugs and peer pressure all increase the risk of death or injury whilst driving, particularly for this age group.

Richard led on organising these events and attended every night over the Easter break.

Richard has also been instrumental in organising and delivering the Motor Education Scheme, a partnership initiative with North Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Services, NHS Trust and the Youth Justice Service, designed to educate young people who are considered to be at risk, or who have already been involved in vehicle crime.

During Road Safety Week, Richard assisted at a two day event that included the participation of various partner agencies, and engaged more than 140 students in relation to road safety.

Richard often gives up his evenings to provide valuable input to those who have recently passed their driving test, on how to stay safe and enjoy driving for many years to come, as part of the Pass Plus Cymru course.

In addition to this he has attended various safety days at Dangerpoint, and has even stood in as Father Christmas at the centre's Christmas Fayre.

Richard has demonstrated a passion and enthusiasm to make a real difference and reduce the number of road traffic collisions on North Wales roads, subsequently making North Wales a safer place to live, work or visit.

Fourth Award

The award for Outstanding contribution from a member of the support staff was shared between two individuals this year. This award recognises individuals who work above and beyond their normal duty on the support side of the Service.

Paul Chamberlain works in the ICT department. Paul has made a significant contribution to the successful completion of the Firelink phase 'A' programme over the last 3 years which is replacement radio system for the Service. He has operated at a level above his day-to-day responsibilities and demonstrated an exceptional level of technical ability. He has also led the Wales Region on Fleet mapping issues, which has culminated in a comprehensive solution to a very complex issue. He has at all times ensured that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's interests have been uppermost by delivering an efficient and safe communication system for all operational firefighters.

The quality of Paul's work is exemplary and he manages a number of contracts, including one that generates income for the Service through site sharing.

Paul is a very conscientious person and is committed to delivering the best quality services to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the community it serves.

The second recipient of this award was someone who has quietly and diligently worked on behalf of the service in the unsung function of planning and performance. Shan Morris joined North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in the old days of "Best Value" as the Best Value/Project officer.

Since then she uses her keen analytical mind to analyse proposed legislation and its potential impact on North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and has worked tirelessly to ensure that we interpret and comply with the law, particularly as it relates to performance and governance issues. She has represented the Services' interests on many a Welsh Assembly working group and has created a performance team which provides managers with the information they need to manage.

This year Shan took on the very demanding responsibility of leading the Operational Assurance team that went into Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to peer assess their health and safety and training systems.

Fifth Award

The Community Safety partner award was to recognise the work of partner agencies or public bodies who work effectively in partnership with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in their quest to deliver vital community safety messages and to promote shared organisational goals.

In February 2008, a pilot scheme commenced for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to utilise Gofal a Thrwsio Gwynedd and Mon to undertake home fire safety checks on behalf of the Service.

Gofal a Thrwsio has a direct link into people's homes and this is a great way for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to reach our target audience and offer them free advice and interventions, in a bid for them to stay safe from fire in their homes.

A member of staff from Gofal a Thrwsio will carry out the home fire safety check at the homes whilst undertaking other work. This means that the occupant is only disturbed once and benefits from the added security that a working smoke alarm provides.

To date, more than 3,000 home fire safety checks have been completed by Gofal a Thrwsio on behalf of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and now, due to the initial success of this scheme, other counties in North Wales have signed up to the same service level agreement, which was implemented two years ago in Ynys Môn and Gwynedd.

Sixth Award

The Retained Station of the Year award went to the station that has demonstrated that they provide a professional and efficient service to their local community, that stands above the rest.

Crews from Prestatyn were nominated on the account of their availability, prompt response to emergencies and work they carry out in the community.

In addition, they have consistently maintained a full crew of six, to ensure that the appliance is always available, so as to provide the exemplary service that their community and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service can rely upon.

Members of staff from Prestatyn are also extremely pro active in the work that they do with the Young Firefighters Association. A branch is run from the station and meets once a week, and they have taken part in a number of activities with the cadets over the years that the team has been in operation, such as the YFA weekend, fundraising and attending competitions.

Prestatyn crew members are also pro active in supporting community fire safety, and are, like other fire stations in the area, undertaking home fire safety checks. To date this year they have carried out over 500 of these free checks making the homes of occupiers in Prestatyn safer from fire.

Seventh award

The award for the outstanding contribution to the Welsh language went to David Lawson who is based at Conwy Fire Station. He is a conscientious Welsh Language Champion who works hard to provide support and encouragement to members of staff who wish to learn Welsh. David assists them with practising their language skills and helps them to achieve level 1 and 2 success in the NWFRS Welsh language CD programme.

One method that David often employs to achieve his great success is to carry out station drills and daily work around the station through the medium of Welsh.

David is an exemplary Champion of the language.

Eighth award

The Wholetime station of the year award went to a station that has been involved in superior and innovative work in partnership with the 'Communities First' in their local area.

Bangor Fire Station has been working closely with Chris O'Neal and his team from Communities First, for the past two years.

Maesgeirchen is a housing community just outside Bangor, which contains over seven hundred residences, with the majority of the houses being owned by either the Local Authority or Tai Eryri.

The estate has a long history of anti social behaviour and arson related fires. Historically, firefighters had been under attack, both verbally and physically during operational incidents, that had not only hampered the crew's ability to carry out their duties, but had resulted in members of staff being at significant risk of serious injury as a direct result of youth crime in this area.

Chris O'Neal has managed to interact with the youths and explained to them the roles of the emergency services in the community, which has resulted in an improvement in the relationship, not only with the Fire and Rescue Service but with the Police and other agencies too.

During 2009 four multi agency environmental days were organised in the Maesgeirchen area, with the aim of bringing back community spirit. Chris and his team managed to secure over six thousand pound over a twelve-month period for these events.

As a result of the work that crews from Bangor have been involved with, along with Chris and his team, the Maesgeirchen community has benefited from a significant reduction in the number of incidents that crews have been required to attend, and they have noticed a far more positive relationship with the residents of the estate.

Because of this great partnership with the Communities First Team in Bangor the whole time station of the year goes to Bangor Fire Station.

Ninth award

The 'Employer of the year award' was in recognition of a local employer who regularly releases staff to carry out fire fighting duties in the community. These employers are essential in assisting to keep fire appliances available across North Wales.

T J Roberts and Sons in Bala is a close family run business and two of their members of staff are firefighters in Bala and often both of them will leave the shop to turn out to incidents.

The Watch Manager from Bala, Mark Roberts has been working at this butcher's for 28 years, of which 16 years he has also been a member of the retained duty system in Bala.

Ron Tustin runs a Gas Servicing company and only employs one member of staff, Andy Price. He allows him to turn out to incidents in the Conwy area. This means that when Andy responds to calls Ron loses his entire workforce and has to manage alone until the incident closes and his employee returns. Ron also re-arranges Andy's work to ensure that he is kept in the local area so as to keep Conwy's appliance available for deployment.

As a result of Andy turning out to incidents Ron has lost business and money on occasions, but as a result of Ron's community spirit to assisting his local fire station to providing maximum cover to the community, he sees his financial loss as a small price to pay to keep the local residents safe from fire.

Tenth Award

This award was presented to four individuals who have provided a unparalleled commitment and served for the Fire and Rescue Service in North Wales for the longest period as members of the retained duty system.

All four recipients are currently working as Watch Managers at their respective stations, and have all received their long service and good conduct medals.

Michael Evans joined the Service in 1975 and has served his entire career in Pwllheli.

Charles Brimecombe also joined in 1975 and has served all of his career at Beaumaris.

Arthur Jones joined in 1977 and has served his entire career at Abersoch.

Stephen Nevitt joined in 1976 and served all of his career at Rhyl Fire Station.

A raffle was held on the evening to raise funds for two chosen charities. Guests raised £550 which will now be shared between Tŷ Gobaith in Conwy and the Firefighter's Charity.

Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer said, "The community awards were presented to staff and agencies who have gone the extra mile in an effort to make North Wales a safer place to live. We are very proud of our staff at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the awards ceremony was a great way to show the Service's appreciation to individuals and teams as well as utilising the event to raise money for well deserved charities in a relaxing, enjoyable atmosphere."

Appendix 4

New Welsh Language Performance Indicators – data available from April 2011

	Welsh Language Performance Indicators	Collected by	Compiled and checked by	Reported by	Reported to	Reporting period	Reporting point
1.	The number and % of presentations to schools in Welsh	Educationalists Community Fire Safety	Educationalists Community Fire Safety	Dave Evans Community Safety Manager	Richard Fairhead Senior Fire Safety Manager	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
2.	The number and % of children who as a result of a presentation received fire safety advice through the medium of Welsh.	Educationalists Community Fire Safety	Educationalists Community Fire Safety	Dave Evans Community Safety Manager	Richard Fairhead Senior Fire Safety Manager	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
3.	The number and % of home fire safety checks carried out through the medium of Welsh.	Any staff / partner agency	Merryn Murray Fire RMS Administrator	Merryn Murray Fire RMS Administrator	Richard Fairhead Senior Fire Safety Manager	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
4.	The number and % of staff who have attained success in the Level 1 Welsh language tests.	SLDC	SLDC	Gary Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
5.	The number staff and % who	SLDC	SLDC	Gary	Ruth	Annually	April/May following

	Welsh Language Performance Indicators	Collected by	Compiled and checked by	Reported by	Reported to	Reporting period	Reporting point
	have attained success in the Level 2 Welsh language tests.			Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Simmons ACFO		end of financial year
6.	The number and % of staff who have attained success in Level 3 in Welsh	SLDC	SLDC	Gary Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
7.	The number and % of staff that have received training in Welsh to an agreed qualification level.	SLDC	SLDC	Gary Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March
8.	The number and % of staff that have received language awareness training	SLDC	SLDC	Gary Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March
9.	The number and % of jobs where Welsh is essential that are filled by staff that have bilingual skills (to the designated standard)	John Franco Data Management Assistant	John Franco Data Management Assistant	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March
10.	The number and % of jobs where Welsh is desirable that are filled by staff that have bilingual skills (to the designated standard)	John Franco Data Management Assistant	John Franco Data Management Assistant	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March

Welsh Language Performance Indicators		Collected by	Compiled and checked by	Reported by	Reported to	Reporting period	Reporting point
11.	The performance set against any target that is adopted as part of the performance management framework – targets for 2009/10 are;	HR	HR	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	End of financial year
	Number and % of new staff who have attained Level 1 success	SLDC	SLDC	Gary Brandrick SLDC Development Manager	Ruth Simmons ACFO	Annually	End of financial year
	Number and % of staff who have been promoted and have gained Level 2 success						
12.	The number and % of calls dealt with in Welsh at County Offices within a specified period – 1 st week of May & 1 st week of November each year	County Administrators	County Administrators	County Safety Managers	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	April/ May following end of financial year
13.	The number and % of letters received and issued in Welsh at County Offices within a specified period – 1 st week of May & 1 st week of November each year	County Administrators	County Administrators	County Safety Managers	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
14.	The number and % of staff that have bilingual skills (to the designated standard)	John Franco Data Management Assistant	John Franco Data Management Assistant	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March

Welsh Language Performance Indicators		Collected by	Compiled and checked by	Reported by	Reported to	Reporting period	Reporting point
15.	The number and % of main reception roles that were designated Welsh essential and were filled by bilingual staff	HR	HR	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March
16.	The number and % of staff within the service that can speak Welsh - by department, by job grade, by the workplace.	HR	HR	Llinos Gutierrez-Jones HR Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	As at 31 st March
17.	The number and % of complaints from sources not including staff or their representatives about the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme and the % of complaints that were dealt with, in accordance with the standards set by the Authority.	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	End of financial year
18.	The number and % of complaints from staff or their representatives about language issues.	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Ian Williams Executive Support Manager	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
19.	The number and % of agencies and contractors that receive guidance to comply with our Welsh Language Scheme.	All Department Heads	All Department Heads	All Department Heads	Colin Hanks ACFO	Annually	April/May following end of financial year
20.	The number and % of	Control	Watch	Reg Davis	Linda	Annually	April/May

Welsh Language Performance Indicators		Collected by	Compiled and checked by	Reported by	Reported to	Reporting period	Reporting point
	emergency calls that were dealt with in Welsh		Managers (checking only – system compiles data)	& Victoria Abberley Performance Analysts	Roberts Control Manager		following end of financial year

Appendix 5

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Bilingual Workplaces Scheme

End of project report

April 2010

Project:	Two-part application; To establish Language Champions and to Introduce Language Choice in Meeting	Last updated:	February 2010
Author:	Tracey Williams	Status:	Corporate Communications Manager
Reference:		Version:	8/4/10

Objectives:

The project we outlined for the Bilingual Workplaces Scheme application is an important part of our Welsh Language Scheme for 2010-2013 and is a two-part project, - to Establish Language Champions and to Introduce Language Choice in Meetings. This is the first time the promotion of the language within the workplace has been included in our Welsh Language Scheme.

We felt that we had been successful in taking great steps forward in promoting the language in the Fire and Rescue Service, and that we had also reached a position whereby we had raised awareness amongst our staff, had created enthusiasm, and were ready to take this further.

Therefore, the aim of the project was to reach out to all members of staff in every county in North Wales, and to create an opportunity for everyone to work together to improve the language. Our internal resources, such as our bilingual intranet set up in 2008, the staff newsletter 'Y Fflam' and our weekly document, 'Chief's Update' have all helped to co-ordinate the project.

Targets for Establishing Language Champions	How targets were met
Personalising the bilingual strategy at local level	27 Champions were established initially, and they were given guidance in a Champions Seminar with many

	<p>speakers from other agencies sharing their experience. 'Tanwen' mugs were given to all attendees to raise promotional awareness. By the end of March, 19 of them were completing monthly reports listing their promotional activities. The Service had decided beforehand to offer £250 remuneration per annum to Champions who completed monthly reports.</p>
<p>Staff respond better when receiving messages from colleagues they work with on a daily basis</p>	<p>Many members of staff have taken advantage of the Champions' assistance, especially staff from retained stations.</p>
<p>Targeting new staff to sit the Level 1 and 2 tests, newly set up in the Service, and raising awareness of our Linguistic Skills Strategy</p>	<p>Since the establishment of Champions, more members of staff have sat the Service's spoken Welsh-learning tests (see output table) – many of them having received the Champions' support. As mentors to members of staff, Champions give badges to learners.</p>
<p>Establishing local Champions is a visual means of showing corporate support to bilingualism, and is a statement of intent on behalf of the Service</p>	<p>In establishing local Champions, we have been able to raise awareness of our strategy, e.g. one of the Champions won an award for his work in our Community Awards Ball this year.</p>
<p>They take their responsibilities seriously, and are eager to promote the language in the workplace</p>	<p>A new email address for Champions was established in order to send them information fortnightly with clear promotional ideas, this was done with assistance from Coleg Llysfasi. Champions have shown willingness to promote the language. Naturally, some are more active than others.</p>
<p>By giving guidance locally, they are raising confidence amongst staff to use Welsh.</p>	<p>Every opportunity was taken to raise the profile of the Champions amongst staff, with posters, information on the intranet, items in the Chief's Update for example.</p>

Targets for the introduction of language choice in specific meetings	How targets were met
Encouraging teams in various locations to introduce language choice in meetings as good practice and as a means of ensuring that everyone can participate and that no-one feels excluded.	This aim was discussed with members of staff who had ability in Welsh. Initially, the aim was to trial one meeting in the Gwynedd area, but soon it appeared that there was lack of confidence in chairing meetings in Welsh. Courses in Welsh Language Improvement and Chairing Meetings were conducted, with assistance from Coleg Llandrillo, in order to raise confidence amongst staff.
Not by procuring simultaneous translation services necessarily, but by developing the skills of chairpersons who have Welsh-language skills to be able to summarize discussions for non-Welsh speakers, and to open and close meetings bilingually.	Simultaneous translation is available and we have bought equipment in order to offer this service internally. In addition to the above courses, a new minutes booklet for Welsh-speaking staff has been launched, which includes advice on how to open and close meetings bilingually, as well as a glossary of terms. It has been emphasized that the Welsh spoken need not be perfect.

Performance:

Item	Cost	Schedule
Champions Seminar	£495.66	October 2009
Tanwen Mugs	£405	October 2009
Coleg Llysfasi promotional ideas in fortnightly emails	£600	Monthly October 2009-March 2010
Learners badges for use by champions	£630	November 2009
Minutes booklets to promote the chairing of meetings in Welsh	£1375	March 2010
Courses on Language Improvement and Chairing Meetings in Welsh	£500	February 2010

Allowance for Champions (6 months since starting)	£3375	March 2010
Simultaneous translation equipment	£5717	February 2010
Posters for Champions	Internal cost	January 2010
	Total of £13097.66	

Change and impact:

During the project, some significant changes occurred which had an impact on the work.

In the initial weeks, it was agreed to pay Champions in order to be fair to retained firefighters who have other full-time jobs. It was agreed to pay £250 per annum to every champion, and in order to receive this money, they will have to prepare a monthly report on their promotional work.

Also, it became apparent early on that establishing bilingual meetings would call for training in bilingual chairing. There was a low response level from staff to bilingual chairing – we have therefore changed the emphasis to confidence-raising, and courses on Language Improvement and Bilingual Chairing have been arranged.

Project output and quality:

Since setting up this project, which has happened at a time when the Fire and Rescue Service's Welsh Language Scheme has been amended, the profile of the Welsh language within the Service has extended significantly, and there is more emphasis on learning and using the language, and then on measuring progress. A number of staff have taken the opportunity to take part in our CD programme for learning spoken Welsh, by sitting the Level 1 and 2 tests, and in attending new courses;

The number of staff who have passed Level 1 since 1 April 2009	163
The number of staff who have passed Level 2 since 1 April 2009	71
The number of staff who have attended Language Improvement courses	22
The number of staff who have attended a course on Bilingual Chairing	11

Further plans following the project:

Following this project, the campaign to use Champions to promote the language internally will continue and be extended, with plans to hold another seminar this year to attract more champions to take part. The emails with promotional ideas will continue, with specific effort to follow up on the support work done by champions.

The post of Translator with the Fire and Rescue Service has been vacant since June 2009, and since then the job-description has been changed to Translator and Welsh Language Liaison Officer. The new person will be in post from May 2010, reporting to the Communications Manager. It is expected that 40% of this post is language promotion work within the Service.

In addition, the intention is to continue to offer Language Improvement courses for staff, as needed, and to encourage staff to use the Welsh language in internal meetings.

Both elements of the project are an important part of our Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13, which includes a linguistic skills strategy, and we will report on the development of the scheme regularly to our Executive Group, our Fire Authority and the Welsh Language Board.

We will also continue to share developments with the other Welsh fire and rescue services through our Language Group which meets regularly.